THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
IN AMERICA

VOLUME II

1790 to 1945

The three volumes of *The Cambridge History of Religions in America* trace the historical development of religious traditions in America, following both their transplantation from other parts of the world and the inauguration of new religious movements on the continent of North America. This story involves complex relationships among these religious communities as well as the growth of distinctive theological ideas and religious practices. The net result of this historical development in North America is a rich religious culture that includes representatives of most of the world's religions.

Volume II focuses on the time period from 1790 until 1945, a date that marks the end of the Second World War. One result of the religious freedom mandated by the Constitution was the dramatic expansion of the religious diversity in the new nation, and with it controversy and conflict over theological and social issues increased among denominations. Religion, for example, played a role in the Civil War. The closing decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the rising prominence of Roman Catholicism and Judaism in the United States as well as the growth of a variety of new religious movements, some that were products of the national situation and others that were imported from distant parts of the globe. Modern science and philosophy challenged many traditional religious assumptions and beliefs during this century and a half, leading to a vigorous debate and considerable controversy. By the middle of the twentieth century, religion on the North American continent was patterned quite differently in each of the three nations – the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Stephen J. Stein received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1970 and subsequently taught in Indiana University's Department of Religious Studies for thirty-five years. He has received numerous grants and fellowships, including two from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1994, he served as the President of the American Society of Church History. In 1995, Stein received the Tracy M. Sonneborn Award for Excellence in Teaching and Research at Indiana University. He edited three volumes in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* and *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*. Stein's volume, *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers*, was awarded the Philip Schaff Prize by the American Society of Church History in 1994. He is a coeditor of the journal *Religion and American Culture*.

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Edited by Stephen J. Stein, *Indiana University*

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STEPHEN J. STEIN

Indiana University

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CONTRIBUTORS

CATHERINE L. ALBANESE, University of California, Santa Barbara, Emerita
MICHAEL BARKUN, Syracuse University
PHILIP L. BARLOW, Utah State University
MARGARET BENDROTH, American Congregational Association
EDITH L. BLUMHOFER, Wheaton College
JEFFREY M. BURNS, Franciscan School of Theology
MATTHEW BUTLER, University of Texas, Austin
CLAUDE CLEGG, Indiana University
JOHN CORRIGAN, Florida State University
EDWARD E. CURTIS IV, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
SUSAN CURTIS, Purdue University
DENNIS C. DICKERSON, Vanderbilt University
HASIA R. DINER, New York University
DANIEL L. DREISBACH, American University
JOHN H. ERICKSON, Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary
ROBERT C. FULLER, Bradley University
RICHARD M. GAMBLE, Hillsdale College
CHESTER L. GILLIS, Georgetown University
STEPHEN D. GLAZIER, University of Nebraska at Kearney
LESLIE C. GRIFFIN, University of Houston
TONA J. HANGEN, Worcester State University
KENNETH J. HEINEMAN, Ohio University, Lancaster
GILBERTO M. HINOJOSA, University of the Incarnate Word
CLARA SUE KIDWELL, University of North Carolina
ROGER LUNDIN, Wheaton College
DAVID B. MARSHALL, University of Calgary
MICHAEL J. MCCLYMOND, St. Louis University
GEORGE MCKENNA, City College of New York
RANDALL M. MILLER, Saint Joseph's University
JUSTIN NORDSTROM, Pennsylvania State University

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Robert A. Orsi, Northwestern University
G. Kurt Piehler, Florida State University
E. Allen Richardson, Cedar Crest College
Russell E. Richey, Candler School of Theology
Jon H. Roberts, Boston University
Peter J. Thuesen, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis
Grant Underwood, Brigham Young University
Marguerite Van Die, Queen's University
Diane Winston, University of Southern California

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

STEPHEN J. STEIN

A new chapter in the history of American religions was inaugurated with the formation of the United States following the War for Independence. The century and a half after 1790 witnessed astonishing changes in the circumstances of the North American continent and in the religious traditions and institutions located on it. The United States evolved into a world power, and the religious institutions that were part of American society and culture came to occupy significant positions of cultural influence. Conflict and controversy were also part of the record as the religious traditions interacted variously with one another and with the social and political developments in the nation and the world. This Introduction to the second volume of *The Cambridge History of Religions in America* looks briefly at some of the judgments rendered by the authors of the essays that follow dealing with this period of American religious history.

In 1787 after the end of the Revolutionary War, representatives from the thirteen English colonies gathered for a convention in Philadelphia, a meeting that extended from late May until mid-September, in which they drafted the U.S. Constitution. The Preamble of that document affirms a set of high social ideals. "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America." More than one year had passed after that convention before a sufficient number of colonies ratified the Constitution; then on 4 February 1789, presidential electors named George Washington the first president of the United States. Two states, however, did not approve the Constitution until additional rights were guaranteed, including one that addressed religion, a process that took until December of 1791 to complete. The First Amendment to the Constitution in the Bill of Rights addressed directly the issue of religion in the new nation. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment

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of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." With this provision, the new nation adopted an unprecedented position regarding the place of religion in American society.

The First Amendment prohibited the establishment or governmental support of any religion on the national or federal level. There would therefore be no "American religion." The Constitution did not, however, restrict the right of individual states to favor or support a particular religious tradition. Several states, for example, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, did by law favor one religion over others. Only slowly with the passage of time did those states end those relationships. It was, for example, 1833 before the last links between Congregationalism and the state of Massachusetts were severed. It is also noteworthy that the federal Constitution prohibited any religious test for office holding, thereby opening federal offices to persons of any or no religious persuasion. These foundational principles on which this new government was established, including the separation of church and state, owed much to the insights and views of early leaders influenced by the Enlightenment, including most notably James Madison and Thomas Jefferson.

Religion also played a major role in Canada to the north and in Mexico and other parts of New Spain to the south and west of the United States in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. In Canada three different religious traditions exercised major influence in diverse geographical regions. In areas of heavy British settlement, Anglican establishments enjoyed the advantage of governmental support and funding. In some regions, however, especially in the Maritimes, evangelicals were discontented with the establishment and created alternative religious institutions; they sought legislative support for their diverse activities and moral causes, and they prospered. Roman Catholicism was especially strong in Quebec and other parts of French Canada. Other religious traditions, including those of Jews and Africans, occupied the role of outsiders. Ironically, that was also true of Native American traditions. In New Spain the Roman Catholic Church functioned side by side with Native American traditions, which often reshaped and "Mexicanized" Spanish Christianity. The mix of European and native beliefs and practices produced a rich religious amalgam. Monastic communities, including the Jesuits and the Franciscans, played major roles in the Christianization of Spanish America. The Catholic Church was the most powerful institution south of the new United States.

In the United States the growing diversity of religious opinions and judgments was evident in the rise of "denominations," a term applied to the different religious communities distinguished from one another by their distinctive theological judgments, religious opinions, moral commitments, and organizational patterns. Many of these denominations declared

their organizational schemes to be revealed in Scripture and therefore more than simply optional patterns. Among the organizational categories commonly employed by American religious communities were congregations and assemblies, conferences and circuits, and general conventions and synods. Over the course of time these diverse ways of organizing the local units and the denominations themselves were the source of denominational and interdenominational controversy and conflict. Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, for example, defended the religious value of the organizational patterns identified in their respective denominational names. Conflict and competition increased denominational consciousness with the passage of time.

Many were the changes and challenges affecting denominations in the first half of the nineteenth century. The westward geographical expansion of the United States was accompanied by the movement of American citizens across the continent. Massive immigration into the nation brought a large influx of members of religious traditions not previously present in large numbers, including Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews. These and the other religious communities faced the daunting task of both meeting the needs of their members and trying to reach out to others, including the Native Americans displaced by the westward migratory process and the newly freed African Americans after the Civil War. The expanding national context – both geographical and demographical – also provided a positive environment for the formation and growth of new religious movements.

The changing situation in the United States gave rise to increasing religious debate and theological controversy. Much of the conflict within denominations and traditions had its foundation in longstanding disagreements as, for example, debates among Reformed theologians over such issues as original sin, predestination, and the nature of the sacraments. The rising prominence of Deists and Unitarians introduced fresh controversy regarding the very nature of God. Anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism became increasingly prominent with the rapidly expanding numbers of Roman Catholics and Jews present in the nation in the nineteenth century. The burning of Catholic convents was one manifestation of the former; General Ulysses S. Grant's order during the Civil War expelling all Jews from the Territory of Tennessee was a reflection of the latter. Even within specific Christian denominations, controversy often broke out over liturgy and worship patterns, sacraments, or theological issues. Within Judaism there was debate regarding the necessity and function of dietary laws. New religious movements that developed on the edges of the religious world, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, founded by Joseph Smith, provoked not only theological debate, but also often physical

violence. The murder of Smith was one of the most dramatic expressions
of religious hatred.

Africans imported as slaves to North America brought West African reli-
gious traditions to the continent, traditions that featured gods, demigods,
and ancestral spirits as forces to be dealt with in daily life. Muslim slaves
brought Islam to America. Christian slaveholders viewed the Africans as
inferior, but often they did not require their slaves to abandon African reli-
gions, nor did they seek to convert them to Christianity. The Methodists
and the Baptists were the most successful denominations in reaching out
to African slaves; the emotional side of evangelicalism appealed strongly to
the slaves with the result that slaves often combined evangelicalism with
African spiritual patterns.

Disagreement between the North and the South over slavery was the
cause of the American Civil War in the 1860s. Protestant churches played
a central role in the political debate preceding that conflict as well as in
the war itself. The struggle tore apart several Protestant denominations.
Religious communities on both sides of the war supplied material sup-
port and chaplains to the combatants. Revivals were held in Union and
Confederate military camps. The ravages of death and disease accompany-
ing the war were extensive, and when the conflict ended, the nation was
still divided.

In the nineteenth century the dynamic character of Protestant
Christianity in America was especially evident in the powerful revivals
and camp meetings in periods often identified by historians as "Great
Awakenings." Among the most successful evangelical revivalists in the
century were Charles Grandison Finney and Dwight L. Moody. The impact
of the revivals was greatest upon the Congregational and Presbyterian and
the Methodist and Baptist communities. The latter two denominations
enjoyed steadily increasing religious affiliation during the nineteenth cen-
tury, including African American converts. A Holiness movement and
subsequently Pentecostalism were also products of American evangelical
culture, triggered by powerful leaders committed to specific theological
views that defined them as distinctive within the larger world of American
Protestantism.

In the new United States Roman Catholicism initially occupied a
modest place, numbering only some forty thousand members in 1790,
led by John Carroll, the first bishop. Membership soon increased dramati-
cally, however, as immigrants arrived from Ireland, France, Germany, and
Poland; yet Roman Catholics were still treated as outsiders. Internally, the
Church faced the task of building institutions to train priests and edu-
cate lay Catholics. By 1850 the flood of immigrants had transformed the
Catholic Church into the largest Christian denomination in the United

States, numbering one and a half million members. One result of immigration was the creation of ethnic parishes, a pattern that led at times to controversy within the American Church. During this period of remarkable growth, female religious orders played a major role in the development of the parochial school system. With the passage of time, Roman Catholicism was no longer a subculture of outsiders, but rather a fully assimilated religious tradition within American society.

The Jewish community in the United States was primarily the product of heavy immigration beginning in the 1820s. Judaism set these immigrants apart from other Americans; they often experienced some hostility, but the animosity directed against Jews was never equivalent to the hostility against Catholics. The first rabbis did not arrive in the United States until the 1840s. Among American Jews, there was considerable laxity with respect to Jewish law; Jews chose individually whether or not to follow kosher and other ritual practices. The Jewish denominational divisions within the United States eventually included Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism. Each of these branches established its own colleges and seminaries, among which were Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The African American religious communities were in considerable measure a product of the legalized segregation that existed in the United States following the Civil War. A variety of other factors also shaped the character of black religious life in the decades following the war. Some black schools and colleges were founded by the Freedman's Bureau. The Methodists and Baptists were the primary denominational affiliations of the freed blacks. In 1895 the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. was organized. Holiness and Pentecostal churches also were founded by blacks. William J. Seymour, a Holiness preacher, triggered the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, an explosion of Spirit that continued for three years and launched a Pentecostal wave. In the latter wave, women gained clerical authority. Subsequent African American religious developments outside of the Christian framework in the twentieth century included the launching of the Peace Mission movement by Father Divine and the founding of the Nation of Islam (i.e., the Black Muslims) by Elijah Muhammad. These developments ultimately played a role in the civil rights movement.

Eastern Orthodox Christianity began in Alaska in 1794 when Orthodox monks arrived from a Russian monastery. Later the headquarters of the movement in America was transferred to San Francisco. This Christian communion eventually enjoyed close relations with the Episcopal Church in America. It has, however, experienced financial and administrative problems, in part because independent Orthodox parishes and jurisdictions have been formed by diverse national groups, resulting in fragmentation

and conflict. Orthodox Christians have also been challenged as they have adapted to the New World and yet have still attempted to maintain their Old World connections and culture.

New Religious Movements (NRMs) is a category that has been constructed to embrace sects, cults, and other alternative religious movements. These groups are characterized by innovation and divergences from the religious mainstream. Among the NRMs that emerged in the decades following the American Revolution are the Shakers, who believed their founder, Ann Lee, was a female Christ; the Unitarians, who declared a single unitary God and subordinated Christ and the Holy Ghost; the Mormons, founded by Joseph Smith, Jr., who translated a new scripture, the Book of Mormon; the Adventists, whose founder William Miller set an 1844 date for the return of Christ to the earth; and the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose founder Charles Taze Russell announced the imminent return of Christ to the earth. These leaders and their movements are but some of the most successful of the NRMs

American Indian religions were place based, related directly to the environment in which they were located. Beliefs and religious practices varied greatly from region to region. Dreams and visions were important. Native American sacred patterns, however, came under attack by Christian missionaries. Christianity was used by the American government to "civilize" and assimilate Native Americans. Conflicts with Native Americans in the Ohio Valley were very bloody. Tribes on the Great Plains sought power through the Sun Dance. The religious rites of the Pueblo peoples were different from those of the Navajos. After the Civil War different Christian denominations were assigned to different reservations, an explicit attack upon traditional Native American values. American Indians, however, found covert ways to carry out their traditions even in the face of this attempt to Christianize the tribes. Black Elk, a Sioux medicine man, lived in two worlds, the Lakota and the Catholic. He is an example of the syncretism that occurred in many cases as Native American and Christian views existed side by side.

Islam arrived in America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with African slaves, perhaps tens of thousands. Christian attempts to convert them met with resistance, and therefore some African Islamic practices remained as part of the African American religious subculture. In the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, it was immigrants from the Ottoman Empire who formed the majority of Muslim Americans. After World War I, Islam enjoyed some success in America. Muslim-derived traditions also began, including the Moorish Science Temple of America in the 1920s begun by Noble Drew Ali and the Nation of Islam established by W. D. Fard in 1930. Muslim Americans have often lived

with a sense of being part of two worlds, their local community and the global Islamic world.

Asian religions arrived in the United States with Chinese laborers in the nineteenth century as well as with Indian immigrants. The Chinese brought Buddhism and Taoism and were also influenced by Confucianism; the Indians were Sikhs and Hindus. As a result, temples and gurdwaras were soon present in America. The fifty volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East* published between 1879 and 1910 in England provided another kind of access to religions of the East in America during this time period. The most dramatic evidence of debate concerning Asian religions in America in this period was the World's Parliament of Religions held in 1893 in Chicago as part of the Columbian Exposition. This highly publicized inter-faith gathering was planned as a statement of Christian dominance, but the result was a challenge of sorts to that exclusive claim. Among the speakers were Vivekananda, a follower of Hinduism, and Anagarika Dharmapala, a Buddhist, both of whom spoke eloquently on behalf of their traditions. The parliament opened debate concerning religious diversity in America and also contributed to the passage of the racist Immigration Act of 1924, which ended Asian immigration, a restriction in place until 1965.

Metaphysical religions drew on a variety of sources and were manifest in manifold ways in the new nation. The sources included country magic, esotericism, divination, and astrology, as well as Native American and African American rituals. Among the manifestations in nineteenth-century America were Unitarianism and Transcendentalism, mesmerism and Swedenborgianism, and Theosophy and Spiritualism. The advocates of these diverse expressions affirmed that the mind was primary, ruling all reality. Ideas were central for all metaphysical religions. By the early twentieth century the influence of metaphysical religions on the religious, spiritual, and cultural mainstream of America was substantial, although few Americans at that time were conscious of this element in their worldview.

Among the social forces transforming the United States in the closing quarter of the nineteenth century was the massive influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, China, and Mexico. Roman Catholic institutions that aided Catholic immigrants in the transition to America included national parishes, parochial schools, religious orders, and mutual aid societies. Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were assisted in the assimilation process by such organizations as the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, fraternal orders such as B'nai B'rith, and women's auxiliaries. Protestants arriving in the Midwest, especially Germans and Scandinavians, were assisted by local congregations already established in the region. World War I and the subsequent passage of restrictive legislation in 1924 brought the flood of immigrants to a close.

Cities played a major role in shaping modern American religion. Despite widespread judgment that cities worked against religious values, religions have been repeatedly transformed and revitalized in the urban context by organizations such as the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and Sunday schools. Religious parades featuring persons such as Father Divine or venerating the Virgin Mary in the streets have provided energy to religious causes, as has the playing of gospel music on street corners. Religious reformers have often confronted urban realities and been energized to pursue moral causes that have reshaped cities. Cities became the center and the measure of American life in the decades following the Civil War.

In those same decades the United States became a world power based on expanding industrial might. Accompanying that development were all kinds of problems triggered by the industrial age – labor strife, low wages, exploitation of workers including children, and racial prejudice. Protestant reformers espoused a Social Gospel that addressed the crises at hand and espoused the rights of workers to organize in unions. Churches intervened directly in conflicts and provided assistance to those in need. Advocates of a Social Gospel proposed ways to curb the exploitation of laborers. The First World War expanded job opportunities, but the sense of crisis surrounding the conflict did not strengthen the rights of workers. The war, in fact, primarily served the interests of business, not of workers. The Depression and widespread woes followed, triggering Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal as well as the publication of Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker* and Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society.*

The publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 marked the beginning of a new era in the relationship between science and biblical theology. Some theologians accepted theistic evolution; others declared it contrary to divine revelation. Progressives sought middle ground in the debate involving science and religion. Often when religious thinkers embraced evolution, they were censored and disciplined by the communities to which they belonged. Science did engage religion directly too, for example, as in William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). There was, however, no widespread acceptance of the role of science in the study of religion, as the Scopes monkey trial in 1925 confirmed. Conservative Protestants regarded the Bible as a sufficient guide in matters of science; they also espoused supernaturalism, by contrast to liberal Protestants who viewed the creative order as evidence of Divine Mind. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, some theologians turned to human religious experience as the basis for doctrine, downplaying the Bible as a source of revelation.

Protestant Fundamentalists were at odds with liberal theologians and progressive social thinkers. As a movement, Fundamentalism began in the

second half of the nineteenth century. Among its defining issues were the authority of an inerrant Bible, a premillennial view of history, vigorous anti-Catholicism, and general distrust of liberals. Powerful urban revivalists, including Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday, gave voice to deep pessimism regarding the present, relying on belief in a future premillennial return of Christ to the earth. Fundamentalism has manifested a continuing presence in more recent times through such organizations as the Campus Crusade for Christ, *Christianity Today*, Fuller Seminary, and Rick Warren's Saddleback Church.

The economic depression of the 1930s mobilized millions of Roman Catholic and Jewish laborers who composed a major new element in the American workforce. Labor unions became powerful political forces in this era, supporting the minimum wage and social welfare programs. The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt signaled a new day economically on the national level. Roosevelt's New Deal included social security and the right of collective bargaining for unions. Nevertheless, there were powerful opponents of his social programs including the Republican Party; most conservative Protestants in the South; and the radio preacher Father Charles Coughlin, who called the New Deal the "Jew Deal."

Father Coughlin's anti-Semitism was a striking example of religiously inspired prejudice present in the United States. "Nativism" is the general term for hostility toward outsiders, or those who are not part of a mainstream. In the United States religiously inspired nativism has been directed repeatedly against Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and other religious outsiders. Nativists have employed vicious stereotypes in all kinds of publications and media to attack religious and cultural opponents. Nativist rhetoric also has been utilized frequently to gain support for political and military undertakings.

And there were American military undertakings – wars – involving the United States during the twentieth century. World War I began in Europe in 1914; in 1917 American armed forces joined the conflict despite opposition throughout the nation. Eventually Protestant evangelicals, the Federal Council of Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church supported the war against Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. German Americans experienced the greatest difficulties, but even they were divided; many eventually fought in the armed forces. Members of the peace churches exercised exemptions from conflict. Chaplains of all religious persuasions were in the armed forces.

World War II began in Europe in 1939, and the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 ended religious debates in the United States about the conflict. Adolf Hitler's threat to Jews had become an issue that generated religious condemnation of Nazi anti-Semitism. But there were

still some American religious leaders who were anti-Jewish, including Gerald L. K. Smith and Father Coughlin. Religious groups that dissented from the war, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, experienced considerable harassment. The prosecution of the war, including precision bombing that killed millions of civilians and the use of the atomic bomb, sharply divided Americans. The conclusion of World War II did not end America's involvement in military conflicts during the century; the Korean and Vietnam wars lay ahead.

Religious developments were also significant in other parts of the North American continent and the Carribbean area in the years following the American Civil War. The Dominion of Canada formed in 1867 was overwhelmingly Christian. Roman Catholics composed 43 percent of the population, and collectively Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists were 52 percent. Non-Christian groups, including Jews and Eastern religions, were relatively small in number and were located principally in western Canada. Protestants aggressively set out to define Canada in their image. Contention over the school system revealed high levels of religious intolerance and bigotry. Catholic minority rights were also fiercely debated. Continuing immigration created new challenges; for example, an effort in 1906 to create a federal Lord's Day Act was unsuccessful. The ecumenical effort to unify the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational denominations into the United Church of Canada was successful in 1925. There were several other Protestant groups outside of that community including Pentecostals, Adventists, and Disciples of Christ. By the time of the Second World War religious diversity was clearly on the rise in Canada.

In the same time period, the Mexican religious story was essentially a Roman Catholic tale even though Protestantism was experiencing some slow growth. Freedom of worship did not exist in Mexico until 1860, and it was another ten years before the first Protestant congregations were formed. In 1940 Mexico was still 96 percent Catholic. The years from 1865 to 1890, in which the church was in opposition to a liberal state, were times of devotional renewal and bureaucratic reorganization. In the period from around 1900 to 1930, the Catholic Church experienced fresh energy as a result of the ferment of revolution from outside and the impact of new social doctrines within the Church. The faithfulness of the priests and of the people was extraordinary across this period. By 1945, Mexico and Catholicism were still linked in primary ways, but more than 250,000 diverse Protestants were also present, and the number was growing – evidence of expanding religious pluralism.

The story of religion in the Caribbean from 1865 to 1945 includes dramatic changes in a region where creolization has been a dominant motif for much of its recorded history. The Caribbean has been a context rich

with new religions created out of the conflation and interaction of African, Christian, and native traditions including, for example, Haitian Vodou, Cuban Santeria, and Trinidadian Orisa. The twentieth century witnessed the growth of other imported religious movements such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and Pentecostalism. The pattern is clear: residents in the Caribbean have often borrowed religious traditions from elsewhere and then adapted and modified them to their own particular uses, thereby creating a rich and varied religious context.

Several essays in this volume deal with the diverse ways that American religion in general and different specific religions and their leaders have been portrayed or analyzed in particular media over time. One essay examines religion in American literature from 1790 to 1945 as depicted by authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner, and others. A second essay looks at the ways that religious leaders and communities have utilized various media, from the printed page to radio, in that same time period. Among the prominent religious figures examined in this regard are Father Charles E. Coughlin, Billy Sunday, and Aimee Semple McPherson. A third essay addresses the ways that the public press has handled religion in general and specific religions in the period from early America to the mid-twentieth century. Among the examples examined are the complicated relationships between the news media and George Whitefield, the Prophet Matthias, and Dwight L. Moody. A fourth essay focuses on the legal history that documents the ways that federal courts interpreted the U.S. Constitution in the years from 1790 to 1947, moving away from positions that supported the notion that the United States was a Christian nation to the judgment that it was a secular state based on the principle of the separation of church and state.

Finally, two essays in the volume address other very different topics. One is an examination of religious music in the United States from 1790 to the present. It ranges widely in content, from *The Bay Psalm Book* to Isaac Watts' hymn "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," from black gospel music such as Thomas A. Dorsey's "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" to the *Gregorian Institute Hymnal* published in 1954. The other essay is a study of the diverse ways that religion has fostered and supported patriotism in the United States. It follows the fortunes of a distinctive American civil religion through the nation's history, from colonial times to the close of the opening decade of the twenty-first century.

Section I

RELIGION IN NORTH AMERICA

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE 1790S

JOHN CORRIGAN

The religious landscape of the 1790s was widely diverse. Religious groups fleeing persecution in Europe, African traditions that had survived the Middle Passage, a variety of Native American religious forms, religion brought to North American shores by persons seeking commercial success or otherwise aspiring to social and political achievement, and a rising tide of Enlightenment-derived criticism of religion made the 1790s a decade of contrasting religious styles, contested spaces, and sharply framed arguments. In the new nation, under the banner of religious freedom and separation of church and state, religion flourished in a multitude of cultural settings and in an abundance of practices, some formal, others informal. Debates about religious ideas were common, and experimentation with practices was in evidence everywhere. There sometimes was friction between religious groups. There also was a determination to overcome differences in making an American polis. Most importantly, religion in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century was complex and fluid, sometimes defined within traditional institutional structures and sometimes represented by detailed networks of occult religious ideas, arcane practices, magic, folk wisdom, and supernatural lore that was passed on from generation to generation outside the channels of ecclesiastical communications.

The religious lives of many Native Americans were in flux in 1790. The massive depopulation of indigenous peoples from disease and the practical consequences of the relentless expansion of Euro-American cultures into tribal territories diminished the capability of Native Americans to resist adaptation. Increased missionary efforts by Protestants and Catholics alike led to more conversions, and by degrees, as Indians adopted settled ways of life and property ownership on European models, indigenous traditions weakened. Tribal beliefs had much to do with the beginnings of the world and the people who inhabited it, and stories about the central importance of local geographies in those processes remained the backbone of religious devotions. As the Euro-American population increased, however, the

markers of sacred place became less visible. Colonists hunted some totemic animals to near extinction and claimed sacred sites for their own settlements or as part of commercial initiatives. Such developments, alongside the ongoing relocation of Indians to new places, diluted the power of place and altered Native American traditions across the entire front of encounter with the new American nation.

The late-eighteenth-century religion of the eastern woodlands Abenaki, Wampanoag, and Narragansett was not identical to the religion of Cherokee and Seminole in the South or to that of the Great Plains Sioux. Distinctive elements remained strong throughout the next century, especially during periods of conflict with Christian Americans when tribal traditions periodically were revived and reinforced under the leadership of charismatic leaders and prophets. Native American religions that differed from one another in certain ways, nevertheless, manifested some patterns of similarity. Cosmogonies in which earth-diving animals emerged from water with patches of sod that became the world, or in which the first people climbed from underground into light, through caves or holes, were common. The world was populated by spirits of various sorts, good and bad, and generally overseen by a Great Spirit, who was sometimes personified but more often not. Death was followed by afterlife, and the worlds of the living and the dead were conjoined, as part of the ongoing interplay of the visible and the invisible in the universe. Ritual life fostered the remembrance of traditions, especially through recitations in the oral cultures of Native Americans, of stories about animals, ghosts of ancestors, the stars and planets, wind, sex, kinship, demons, hunting, and warfare. Much religion was focused on healing, not only with regard to disease, but in connection with events such as childbirth or recovery from grief. Shamans interpreted revelations that came to persons in dreams and, when necessary, passed over into the invisible world in order to retrieve lost souls. Medicine men relied upon the power redolent in feathers, bones, stones, plants, and other sacred objects to effect cures and to guard against evil. Tribal chiefs, another locus of authority within the tribe, had a less specifically religious role, but were revered for their wise understanding of the connectedness of the visible world with the supernatural realm, as well as for their example of virtue.

The relentless effort to make Indians Christian had the obvious consequence of lessening diversity. Some aspects of Native American religious life, however, remained lively even after conversion, a testament to the enduring power of Indian religious commitments. At the same time, the survival of certain elements of Indian traditions among the converted ironically enabled communication between Native American and Christian worldviews. The pervasiveness in the everyday lives of Euro-Americans of many ideas and practices that were outside of the formal religious lives of

Christians and frequently antithetical to church doctrines – perspectives on the supernatural, healing, evil, spirits, eclipses, lightning strikes, and so forth – made possible a certain amount of compatibility with Indian traditions. In many cases there was something held in common between Christians and Indians, a fact not lost on some eighteenth-century observers who worried about the state of the American soul. The Northampton Congregationalist pastor Jonathan Edwards, who engaged in missionary work with Indians, pictured unconverted Native Americans as "devil's captives" living in a "kingdom of Satan." But his contemporary, Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale College in the 1790s, imagined a more complex relationship between Indians and Christians in which members of both groups labored in darkness under the evil influence of occult religion. Recognizing a resemblance between Indian rain dancing and English magic, Stiles lamented that so much of the everyday lives of persons within both groups was shaped by such wickedness. Such comparisons resulted in the judgment that some Indian converts were "half Christians" and that some Euro-Americans were correspondingly half heathen.[1]

A longstanding myth about the origins of the indigenous peoples of the Americas – that they were descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of the Jews and therefore distant religious kin to Euro-American Christians – helped to frame some intellectual space for thinking about similarities between Indians and Euro-Americans in the early Republic. In the 1790s, however, Christians still lumped tribes together and more often saw only difference with their own religion. Even in cases where there was some communication at the level of occult or magical beliefs, early Americans had difficulty seeing "religion" in Indian life, and so were disinclined to reflect seriously about its place in the emerging fabric of relations between religiously diverse groups.

The earliest encounters between Native Americans and Europeans were structured by the latter as occasions for cultural domination, which included, under the circumstances, conversion of Indians to Roman Catholicism. Spanish and French missionary initiatives had proven successful in converting Indians to Catholicism for over two centuries, but in 1790 the relevance of French and Spanish Catholicism to the religious makeup of the United States was minimal. The California mission system of the padres was flourishing as converted Indians adapted their lives to the social and commercial agendas of the Spanish, but that territory was

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[1] Gerald R. McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards and American Indians: The Devil Sucks Their Blood," *New England Quarterly* 72:4 (Dec. 1999): 540; Douglas L. Winiarski, "Native American Popular Religion in New England's Old Colony, 1670–1770," *Religion and American Culture* 15:2 (2005): 170.

not yet part of the United States. The Florida missions were long gone, most destroyed by English attacks early in the century. French-founded communities at Baton Rouge (1699), Detroit (1701), Mobile (1702), New Orleans (1718), and St. Louis (1763) were Catholic missionary outposts with little connection to the eastern seaboard and virtually no influence on the religious ordering of the new nation. The center of Catholic life was in Maryland, where the Archdiocese of Baltimore was established in 1789 and John Carroll, a former Jesuit, was ordained the first bishop in the United States in 1790. Carroll was well educated and a thoughtful student of Enlightenment writers. He involved himself in a wide range of social work, as a cofounder of the Library Company of Baltimore in 1795, the Maryland Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge in 1800, the Baltimore Female Humane Association, the Humane Impartial Society for the relief of indigent women, and charity schools. By Carroll's reckoning, Catholics numbered fewer than forty thousand in a population of about four million, most were of English background (with some Irish Catholics in Pennsylvania and a scattering in several cities), and the middle Atlantic region was the geographical center of Catholicism. Ongoing immigration from Ireland and southern Germany eventually became a flood in the half century after 1790, as over a million Catholic immigrants arrived on American shores. At the time of the founding of the Diocese of Baltimore, a three-million-square-mile territory, Catholics were a barely visible community among the overwhelmingly Protestant population. In 1776, there were twenty-four priests in the colonies, all former Jesuits as the Society of Jesus had been suppressed by Rome at that time. When Carroll called the first Catholic synod in America in 1791, twenty-two priests attended. The short-handed clergy grew slowly, the first priest in America being ordained in 1793; the first seminary, St. Mary's College and Seminary, which was administrated by the Fathers of St. Sulpice, was founded in Baltimore in 1791. Georgetown Academy, a Jesuit initiative, began offering classes that same year. Carroll did not lay the cornerstone for the first cathedral, in Baltimore, until 1808, two years after he became archbishop.

The most pressing issue for the Catholic Church during the decade was governance, and in particular the role of lay trustees in overseeing individual congregations. Leadership of virtually all Christian churches in the United States – Protestant and Catholic alike – had to come to terms with a laity that was very assertive and inclined to view their role as more expansive than was the case in most of Europe. In most Catholic congregations, trusteeship worked in close collaboration with the hierarchy. Some trustees, however, embraced a democratic style more ambitiously. With a raised consciousness about their "rights" and "liberties" in the decades after the Revolution, some American Catholics inclined toward a style of

governance that borrowed from Protestantism, as Archbishop Ambrose Marechal of Baltimore observed in 1818.

> The American people pursue with a most ardent love the civil liberty which they enjoy. For the principle of civil liberty is paramount with them, so that absolutely all the magistrates from the highest to the lowest are elected by popular vote. . . . Likewise all the Protestant sects . . . are governed by these same principles, and as a result they elect and dismiss their pastors at will. Catholics in turn, living in their midst, are . . . exposed to the danger of admitting the same principles of ecclesiastical government.[2]

In New York, the trustees of St. Peter's Church had declared themselves fit to choose and to dismiss their pastor in 1786. The lay trustees of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia followed suit, choosing their own pastor three years later. Further south the model of trusteeship in the Anglican Church and the practical need for Catholic trusteeships in the priest-poor Catholic colony of Maryland had set the tone for church affairs since the early seventeenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century, a congregation in Norfolk extended its claim to authority by denying the bishop any right to interfere in any of their religious matters, and punctuated their declaration by referencing the civil rights and religious liberties guaranteed by the laws of Virginia. Such attitudes continued well into the nineteenth century in Charleston, New Orleans, upstate New York, and parts of the Old Northwest. In some instances, ethnic tensions – which were to play a major role in the later development of American Catholicism – were to blame, as Irish congregations sought ways to rebel against the French bishops and priests who had been installed to rule them. In some cases, property was at issue; the trustees, having purchased the land, built the church, and made financial provisions for the affairs of the congregation, did not wish to cede supervision of that to a clergyman whom they considered ill-qualified. Lay Catholics in Philadelphia and elsewhere took their bishops to court over disagreements about leadership responsibilities. In other congregations, Catholic laity led Bible study groups, performed burials, and engaged in spiritual advising in the absence of a priest or in protest against an unwanted pastor. Carroll recognized that a greater supply of priests was needed to lead congregations, and he took steps to consolidate authority in the hierarchy. The spirit of trusteeship, nevertheless, remained vibrant and emerged in altered form in the 1890s as an Americanist Catholicism.

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[2] Ambrose Marechal, "Archbishop Marechal's Report to Propaganda Fide, 16 October 1818," in John Tracy Ellis, ed., *Documents of American Catholic History* (Milwaukee, 1955), 219.

The American Catholic church relied on assistance from abroad in organizing itself in the republic. The Sulpicians who founded St. Mary's Seminary numbered eleven by 1795 (all immigrants), increasing by one-third the number of priests in the nation. Some taught at Georgetown; others embarked on missions to Native Americans. The seminary struggled, advancing only thirty priests to ordination by 1815, and diocesan priests remained in very short supply for decades. Several religious orders contributed to various kinds of practical initiatives during this period, while others arrived in order to establish a more specifically spiritual presence, such as the two dozen Cistercians who arrived in Maryland in 1802 and remained there a few years before moving on to a permanent home in Kentucky. In the first part of the nineteenth century, new orders of nuns were especially important for the development of a Catholic infrastructure oriented toward education, health, and missionizing.

The piety of Catholics in 1790 was shaped in important ways by the Enlightenment, and this was especially the case with persons of high status. One of the many Irish Catholics among the predominantly English Catholic population was Mathew Carey, a member of St. Mary's parish in Philadelphia, which was founded before the Revolution. Carey grew up in privilege in Dublin, was educated by Jesuits, and became committed to radical republicanism, a perspective that he brought to America in 1784. He became a bookseller and the publisher of a newspaper and national magazine, as well as the first Catholic Bible in America (1790). Schooled on Erasmus, Locke, and Voltaire, he expressed his religious sensibilities in his diary in a language that demonstrated his broad view of religion. His entry for 1 January 1787 would have been approved by deists and liberal Protestants of the time: "Began the new year with a solemn invocation of the divine being and a supplication to shield me from the manifold misfortunes that have hitherto pursued me."[3] Fifty years later, as Romanization gathered momentum, Catholic piety would take more traditional forms, replacing Enlightenment-era liberalisms with more scripted prayer and standardized devotions to the Virgin and to saints.

Relations between Catholics and Protestants in America were complicated by the fact of the long European history of contestation between those two branches of Christianity. Although the spirit of liberty and democracy was strong in the 1790s, it was sufficient neither to erase collective memories of centuries of intolerance and violence nor to overcome habits of political and social organization that privileged one religious group over the other. Some colonies had passed laws prohibiting Catholics from

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[3] Carey, quoted in Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York, 2002), 16–17.

holding public office, and in several instances, as in the case of New York, Jesuits and other clergy were expressly forbidden residency under penalty of imprisonment. Protestant calls to arms during the French and Indian War (1754–63) fanned animosities toward Catholics in the Northeast, and a strong residue of that rhetoric continued to inform Protestant thinking about Catholics. In the 1790s, most Catholics, and especially those who were affluent or had served in the Revolution, were not direct targets of intolerance; and because Catholics were such a small percentage (1 percent) of the population, their potential opponents did not consider them an imminent threat to subvert the Protestant churches and impose Roman rule. Nevertheless, friction between Catholics and Protestants grew steadily, and with upticks in Catholic immigration early in the next century, rhetoric became violence in the form of mob attacks on Catholic churches, convents, and neighborhoods.

Diversity among Protestant denominations was visible everywhere in the new nation. The guarantee of religious freedom in the First Amendment and the constitutional separation of church and state helped to shape an environment in which denominations, no longer officially supported by tax revenue, competed for members and experimented with polity. Against that background, the Anglican Church experienced some of the most far-reaching changes in the period following the Revolution. Only about half of the Anglican clergy, and especially those in the Northeast, remained Loyalists. Others either were patriots (a small minority) or attempted to remain neutral. Many signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe, Benjamin Franklin, John Marshall, George Mason, John Jay, Robert Morris, Patrick Henry, John Randolph, and Francis Hopkinson, were Anglicans. Anglican churches began to close during the Revolution, a process hastened by American legislation making prayers for the king a crime. With disestablishment, typified by the thoroughgoing reform of the church in Virginia in 1784, the now independent Anglican churches, recognizing that "Church of England" did not ring well in American ears, settled on "Episcopal" instead. A convention in Maryland in 1780 was the first to adopt the designation, and "Protestant Episcopal church" became standard following the first General Convention of the denomination in Philadelphia in 1789. That convention framed a constitution that built upon principles that had been enunciated in several previous conventions in Philadelphia, New Brunswick, New York, and New Jersey in 1783 and 1784. Those principles were (1) democratically organized authority that included laity alongside clergy in all church councils; (2) a denomination unattached to any civil powers, domestic or foreign; and (3) a ministry consisting of deacons, priests, and bishops. Samuel Seabury, a missionary

for the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New York, had been consecrated a bishop by nonjuring bishops in Scotland in 1784, and upon returning to America spent his energies organizing the church in Connecticut. A convention in Philadelphia in 1785 planned for the English consecration of bishops; and in 1787, after Parliament set aside the requirement of a loyalty oath to the crown for American bishops, William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York were consecrated bishops in England. The General Convention in 1789 consequently validated Seabury's ordination and settled other matters, allowing the state churches to unite. The church began consecrating its own bishops in 1792. The *Book of Common Prayer* of 1789 proved serviceable for over a century until it required revision.

The newly organized Protestant Episcopal Church was arranged into dioceses, each of which was presided over by a bishop, and parishes within the diocese. At the Philadelphia convention in 1789, nine dioceses were represented. In 1776, there were approximately five hundred Anglican congregations, and by the early 1790s, half of those churches had closed and membership was less than ten thousand. In 1801, a discouraged Samuel Provoost resigned as bishop of New York and left for rural solitude. During the Second Great Awakening, membership began to increase, to about twenty-five thousand by 1820. Until that time, however, there was little growth and little innovation compared to the new developments taking place in other denominations. The denomination survived in a static state, at times holding on in some states by the barest of threads. The church, while unstable, was deeply rooted in tradition, reliant upon the *Book of Common Prayer* and the ritual life that had comprised Anglican worship prior to the Revolution. It built on that platform in the early nineteenth century under the leadership of ambitious and creative bishops such as John Henry Hobart and Alexander Viets Griswold.

Methodist societies had been a part of Anglican churches in America since the 1760s. The societies had developed especially through the leadership of Francis Asbury, who arrived in America from England in 1771 and rode many thousands of miles on horseback over the next several decades preaching, enforcing discipline, structuring the societies, and fostering the exuberant emotional style that was characteristic of Wesleyan piety. John Wesley himself kept a close eye on American developments, and in 1784 he dispatched to New York three ministers – Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey – to convene a meeting of Methodist lay preachers, sixty of whom turned out late that year in Baltimore to found the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Wesley had equipped the ministers with a prayer book, *The Sunday Service* of the Methodists in North America, along with twenty-four *Articles of Religion* (one more article was

added later), which were adapted from the Anglican *Thirty-Nine Articles* and defined religious authority, sacraments, and justification by grace, while rejecting Catholic belief in purgatory, the practice of celibacy by clergy, and the Latin Mass. At that "Christmas Conference" in Baltimore, lay preachers, including Asbury, were ordained, and a strongly worded opposition to slavery was enunciated. Methodists from that time forward were in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement. On the Fourth of July 1790, which fell on a Sunday, Methodists preached against slavery as a transgression of God's laws and as an institution antithetical to the spirit of democracy.

In 1771, there were about six hundred Methodists in America. Growth of the denomination initially was slow until the early 1790s when the efforts of Asbury and others were rewarded with a steady inflow of persons into the church. The abolitionist stance of the church was partly responsible for inroads made among African Americans, about two thousand of whom belonged to the church in 1786. Asbury crossed the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky in 1790, and the circuit-riding Methodist preachers who followed him made converts and fostered fledgling religious communities through regular visitation and preaching the message of rebirth. Preachers often appointed laypersons as local religious leaders who could guide the community in prayer and study for weeks at a time in between visits by the circuit rider. Beginning about 1799, when weather permitted, Methodists and those curious about Methodism would gather in periodic camp meetings for a week or two. Roused and inspired by highly expressive and emotional preaching by clergy and laypersons, those in attendance often displayed physical signs of being "slain in the Spirit." The jerking motions, howling, laughing, rolling on the ground, barking, and other "exercises" not only were performances of the emotional piety of Methodists, but also served to make Methodism visible and attractive to many other Americans. By 1791, the denomination had grown to 238 clergy and 58,000 members. By 1805, the denomination had grown to 120,000 members, and while circuit-riding preachers and camp meetings were to play a central role in the extraordinary growth of Methodism in the nineteenth century, congregations began to acquire the membership necessary to build houses of worship and support ministers. The profile of the church accordingly became more complex as missionary outreach was blended with the supervision and support of settled congregations.

The Baptists were well established in America by 1795, numbering over 1,100 churches, according to the Baptist preacher and outspoken advocate of disestablishment Isaac Backus, and over 73,000 members, of whom as many as one-fourth were African American. In the immediate wake of the Great Awakening, at least 130 Baptist churches were formed by

Congregationalists who found the characteristic Baptist emphases on baptism of professing believers and separation of church and state to be more appealing than Congregational traditions. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were three main groups of Baptists, distinguished one from the other by theological differences, styles of church organization, or both. The smallest group was General Baptists, who took an Arminian position on free will and believed in a general atonement, that is, that salvation was possible for any person who believed in Jesus Christ, not just for the elect. They were located in North Carolina, Virginia, and New England, and by 1770 they were disorganized and numbered only a handful of churches. Associated with them were the emergent Free Will Baptist churches, which grew up in North Carolina under the leadership of Paul Palmer and in New Hampshire where Benjamin Randall gathered a congregation in 1780. By 1782 the Free Will Baptists there had established twelve churches and a Quarterly Meeting to discuss and clarify points of doctrine and the worship service, which in most cases included foot washing in addition to the usual Baptist rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Particular-Regular Baptists, who believed in a Calvinist particular salvation that came to each individual person rather than humanity as a whole, were located largely in the Middle Colonies and were the largest and best organized of the three groups. Because the Middle Colonies had been more diverse and tolerant, and less inclined to tax citizens for the support of a church, Baptists there did not develop the degree of wariness toward the state as did Baptists in New England, where religion was not entirely disestablished in some states until well into the nineteenth century. The Philadelphia Association, which Baptists founded in 1707, had effectively supervised growth and monitored conformity throughout the eighteenth century, so that by the 1790s there was a vibrant and extensive Regular Baptist infrastructure. The association in the 1760s had sent James Manning to found Rhode Island College (Brown University) as a Baptist competitor to the schools in New Haven, Princeton, Williamsburg, and Cambridge. The association likewise had built a strong publishing operation, planned and organized missions, and assisted in the founding of new churches. Separate Baptists, the third group, grew rapidly in the years after the Awakening, largely in New England, before expanding to the South, where they dominated the Baptist landscape, Regular Baptists being very few in number in the South. They were similar in theological outlook to the Regular Baptists, both groups being steeped in the Calvinist perspectives of the revivals of the 1740s–70s. Their differences were largely in terms of their views of the relationship of the state to the churches and in their views regarding the degree to which church supervision of individual conversions was desirable, a point on which the Separatists declared themselves minimalists.

The emergence of Separatist Baptists out of Congregational churches in the eighteenth century was a disaffection that was felt by the guardians of Congregational tradition, but they were not yet worried over the future of their denomination. As the established church in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire prior to the Revolution, Congregationalism had a deep base and a strong infrastructure. It also had some measure of flexibility, congregations typically detailing their views of doctrine and their services to suit the tastes of the local membership. In 1783, after the emergence of the Baptist churches in New England, Congregational churches still outnumbered Baptist churches by five to one, and an overwhelming majority of churchgoers belonged to Congregational churches. After the Revolution, however, with the push for disestablishment gaining momentum in New England towns where state revenues traditionally had paid the salaries of Congregational clergy, laws were passed enabling dissenters such as Baptists to designate other churches as the beneficiaries of their taxes. The political climate also changed, as popular notions of freedom, equality, and democracy made their way into thinking about the religious order of New England. Other aspects of Enlightenment thought, and especially the emphasis on the capability of unaided human reason to discern truth, likewise were having an effect on Congregationalism, making for it a predicament in which it increasingly began to appear a closed and conservative patriarchy that was at the same time drifting from revealed religion into the dangerous currents of rationalist humanism. Charles Chauncy (1705–87), the pastor of Boston's First Church, represented in his ministerial role something of the complexity of the situation. Chauncy was one of the most vocal defenders of the old order, certain of the authority of the university-trained clergy, of the status of his church of elite Bostonians, and of the right of the Puritan-descended leadership of the Congregationalist churches to take a leading role in the shaping of public life. At the same time he was a Universalist, entertained the notion of reincarnation, had fomented rebellion against England, and preached frequently about the power of human reason.

Dissent in New England took its toll on clergy such as Chauncy, who fretted that moral order and the clergy's place as guardians of that moral order were in jeopardy. In the late 1790s, concerned clergy preached and wrote with increasing alarm about the decay of New England and the diminishing prospect for a nation under God. Their jeremiads mingled traditional defenses of clerical authority and religious doctrine with warnings about those who would subvert liberty and tradition, and especially about the nefarious activities of the so-called Bavarian Illuminati, a shadowy French-controlled atheistical society allegedly dedicated to the overthrow of the religious order, the subversion of democracy, and the triumph

of a thoroughly rational political and social ideology. Charlestown minister Jedidiah Morse, revealing the conspiracy in a series of sermons preached at the outset of the Franco-American crisis of 1798–99, fulminated about an imminent reign of terror in America. His words attracted the attention of John Adams and George Washington, among others, and contributed to the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts in the summer of 1798. Although the anxieties about the French-led conspiracy soon diminished, the anxieties of the clergy and their congregations remained high as a democratic and experimental spirit took hold, diversity grew, and New England religious orthodoxy eroded.

Congregationalism responded to change with a series of revivals that began in the 1790s and continued well into the nineteenth century. The revivals grew out of fears about the spiritual decay that was pronounced in jeremiads, but they also were the consequence of a commitment that Congregationalism made to mission activities. In 1792, the General Association of Connecticut undertook an initiative to supply itinerant evangelists to populations that had moved westward, and it reinforced that effort in 1798 by establishing the Missionary Society, with Massachusetts (1799) and New Hampshire (1801) following in creating sister societies. The focus upon conversion that defined the work of those societies spilled over into New England towns and urban areas, leading to sporadic revivals beginning in the early 1790s. The catalyst for the Awakening was Yale president Rev. Timothy Dwight's condemnation of infidelism and his insistence that Americans recommit themselves to an emotionally rich and doctrinally sound Christianity in a series of sermons and most notably in "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy" (1798). The Yale revival, which took hold in impressive fashion in 1802, continued in fits and starts for over twenty years. During that time Congregationalism in New England as a whole benefited from the Awakening as it spread and took hold. Piety was to some extent revived, and most importantly the Congregationalist churches developed a complex of organizations and projects that drew the churches into collaborations. Those collaborations facilitated the expansion of the denomination and recentered it through its investment in voluntary organizations and pointed involvement in reforming the social and political worlds of New England and the western frontier. However, at the same time that a Calvinist Congregationalism was directing the successes of the denomination, Enlightenment thought that had penetrated the churches was shaping a new movement, Unitarianism, that would lead to deep divisions in the churches in the early nineteenth century.

Presbyterianism was to the mid-Atlantic region what Congregationalism was to New England in terms of its being the largest denomination. Compared to New England, the region was highly diverse. New Jersey, for

example, had a religious population spread among a range of denominations in 1765, including Presbyterian (55), Quaker (39), Anglican (21), Dutch Reformed (21), Baptist (19), Dutch Lutheran (4), German Reformed (2), and Seventh Day Baptist (2) churches. A wood block of the New York City skyline in 1771 similarly noted diversity, identifying the houses of worship of Dutch Reformed (3), Anglican (3), Presbyterian (3), Lutheran (2), French Huguenot, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker, Moravian, and Jewish congregations. Presbyterians made up one-quarter of churchgoers in the Middle Colonies in 1790, with 220 congregations nationwide, sixteen presbyteries, four synods, and 177 ministers.

In addition to its size, Presbyterianism in 1790 enjoyed the advantages of being well established (the first meeting of the presbytery in 1706 followed by a synod in 1716), highly organized, wealthy, and committed to education, having founded the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1746. Presbyterians had already experienced schism in America and had healed it when Old Side and New Side factions united in forming the synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1758. Presbyterians were patriots in the Revolution (signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon and Benjamin Rush were Presbyterians), in obvious distinction from their Anglican neighbors in several nearby states, and so were positioned to take a leading role in the republic as defenders of American ideals of liberty and democracy, a status that served them well in their vast missionary enterprises. Presbyterians and Congregationalists, both descended from the Westminster Confession, had cooperated closely through the eighteenth century, frequently sharing each other's pulpits, forming joint committees, exchanging delegates between their church judicatories, and even identifying themselves as members of both groups. The eventual 1801 Plan of Union, which was in effect for several decades, virtually joined the two denominations.

The general synod of 1788 brought into being the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA). The "Puritan Sabbath" remained central to the church, as did the Lord's Supper, which was celebrated semiannually or quarterly, and Bible study and family prayers. There was some disagreement about the extent to which the church should become involved in the political and governmental affairs of the republic. Scotch and Scots-Irish Covenanters and Seceders, who believed that the church should distance itself from those areas of public life, experimented with their own forms of association, forming a separate presbytery and church (Associate Reformed Church, 1782). For the most part, however, the PCUSA remained the large tent of Presbyterianism, and it was the driving force behind the expansion of the church into the frontier as Kentucky, Tennessee, and points beyond that were opened to settlement at the end of the eighteenth century.

Presbyterian missionary efforts grew out of the evangelical initiatives cul-
tivated at the Log College of William Tennent. Ministers such as James
McGready, whose preaching attracted large crowds in Kentucky, and
Barton Stone, who led the Cane Ridge revival in 1801, succeeded because
of a combination of their advocacy of the new birth and a strict discipline,
and a sensitiveness to democratic ideals that infused the frontier popula-
tion. The emotional vibrancy of such religion on the frontier was generally
welcomed, but the camp meeting setting eventually led to some concern
on the part of Presbyterians whose valuation of religion lay more in dig-
nified services and deliberate and committed social reform. Out of those
differences eventually came defections and divisions, including the coales-
cence of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the first decade of the
nineteenth century.

Sharing the diverse religious landscape of the middle Atlantic region,
the Society of Friends grew steadily as a denomination over the course of
the eighteenth century, and particularly in Pennsylvania, which became
both their religious haven and a territory in which they flourished eco-
nomically. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, two-thirds of the
population of the Delaware Valley, or about three thousand persons, were
Quakers. By the time of the Revolution, there were over twenty thousand
Quakers in Pennsylvania alone – making it the third largest group behind
Presbyterians and German Reformed – and many more in New Jersey,
Rhode Island, and North Carolina, for a total of well over fifty thousand
nationally. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Yearly Meeting had
long been a means by which Quakers gathered to address issues of doctrine
and discipline, and quarterly and monthly meetings had been standard
for a century or more as well. The General Yearly Meeting for Friends of
Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey and the Adjacent Provinces, so-named
in 1790, was the most important meeting of Quakers in the world, along-
side the London meeting. Friends had suffered severe persecution in New
England in the mid-seventeenth century (as they had in England), and
had been the target of much venomous writing well into the eighteenth.
Enemies first accused them of heretical ideas, noting that they ordained
no clergy, practiced no sacramental devotions, embraced quasi-mystical
patterns of worship, and were unwilling to accept Calvinist notions of a
deformed humanity. Later, critics would complain about their commit-
ment to the equal place of women in religious life, passionate antislav-
ery advocacies, and financial successes, especially in Philadelphia where
"meetinghouses became countinghouses." Their pacifism led to serious
problems for them during the Revolution, when they were fined, impris-
oned, or otherwise prosecuted, and they suffered social exclusion and public
beratings for their seeming lack of patriotism. Such pressures led some to

form the Society of Free Quakers in 1780 to indicate their support of the cause against England.

Important and influential social and political roles came with financial success and with Quakers' reputations as upright and honest. In addition to taking their places in government and public affairs besides persons of other denominations, Quakers were highly active in reform activities. They built a strong public profile not only in their opposition to slavery – by 1780 all of the Yearly Meetings but those in Virginia had condemned slave owning as cause for expulsion from the community – but also through their efforts to enact penal reforms, organize relief for the poor, develop educational institutions, and engage in interdenominational missionary activity. There were some ongoing debates among Friends, most the loose ends of disagreements that had never been tied up in the wake of the Keithian Schism in the Philadelphia area in the 1690s. Some urban Quakers who rubbed shoulders daily with non-Quakers and were exposed to Enlightenment theories about human capability and reason developed nuances that struck others as departures from orthodoxy. Quakers in rural areas, in particular, were wary of developments that held potential to undermine the emotional and quasi-mystical animus of their faith. Such tensions lay below the surface of Quaker institutional life as the denomination moved westward in the early nineteenth century, built meetinghouses, and established new Yearly Meetings.

When Michael Schlatter was sent by the Amsterdam classis to take stock of the German Reformed church in Pennsylvania at mid-century, he inventoried fifteen thousand German Reformed and four ordained ministers. By the time of the Revolution, the German Reformed were the second most numerous group in Pennsylvania, among a German population of approximately 225,000 in the colonies. The German Reformed churches worked closely with the Dutch Reformed, relying upon the Amsterdam classis for some financial support and for arranging clergy for the American churches. The latter task proved difficult, and by the early 1790s, fully a third of congregations were attempting to make do without a pastor. Westward migration did not help matters. The formal relationship with Amsterdam came to an end in 1792, when the initial meeting of the Synod of the Reformed German Church of the United States of America gathered twenty-two ministers to adopt a constitution, refine its process of ordaining clergy, and plan for the administration of the 178 congregations it was to supervise. In urban areas such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, among second- and third-generation Germans, English was the language of church services, but a large percentage of church members preferred German, and the issue came to a head early in the nineteenth century when disagreement led to schism. Pietism, not revivalism, constituted the core of religious life, but

on the frontier, Pietism could shade into the creative and boisterous spirituality associated with the revivals. Church leadership responded to the influences of revival Protestantism by establishing Sunday schools in 1806 and by establishing a seminary. The seminary, during the time that it was located at Mercersburg (after 1837), served as a center for the Mercersburg Revival led by John W. Nevin and Philip Schaff, who, in their opposition to sectarianism, sought to pull the church back into the mainstream of a theologically robust and precise Reformed Protestantism.

The Dutch Reformed churches were located largely in New York and New Jersey. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were twenty-nine churches in New York, which was well more than half of all the churches in New York at that time. Like the German Reformed churches, the Dutch faced difficult challenges in supplying pastoral leadership for their congregations, and by the mid-eighteenth century had determined that local authority was needed to properly administrate the church. The American churches had formed an assembly (1747), which subsequently had declared itself independent of the Amsterdam classis in 1754. With a view to the importance of education for the preparation of church leaders, as well as for the betterment of the laity, the church sought a charter for a college in the New Jersey town of New Brunswick, and it was granted in 1766 for Queen's College, later Rutgers. In 1784, two years after the birth in Kinderhook, New York, of the Dutch Reformed Martin van Buren, the first U.S. president born an American citizen, John Henry Livingston, a Yale graduate who was ordained in the Amsterdam classis in 1770, founded the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. It is the oldest Protestant seminary in the United States. The church adopted a constitution in 1792, and two years later representatives met for the first time in a synod as the Reformed Church. In the early nineteenth century, debates about language, which affected virtually all religious groups with non-Anglophone backgrounds, led to schisms. Those schisms were constituted equally by concerns over the seeming liberal and Arminian drift of the church from a hard Calvinist theology.

Lutheranism also flourished in the middle Atlantic region. By the time of the Revolution, German Lutherans were established in the area around Philadelphia and had formed communities in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and the southern colonies. Lutheranism was exceptionally diverse in its manifestations in America at that time, with many different catechisms and songbooks among the congregations in Pennsylvania. Many Lutheran immigrants, who arrived in a steady stream during the eighteenth century, were untutored in the rudiments of doctrine and worship, and clergy were in short supply. The Pietistic mission society in Halle sent a dozen pastors in the forty years up to 1786, but such support was

unusual, and the building of a Lutheran church in America ended up in the hands of Henry Melchior Mühlenberg and the weak Ministerium of Pennsylvania that included thirty-three of the forty-four pastors in America in 1776. At the time of Mühlenberg's death in 1787, the denomination was better organized and was in the process of adopting, in many places, his revised liturgy, but the Lord's Supper still was celebrated less often than in Germany. By the early 1790s, the Pennsylvania Ministerium was no longer able to supervise effectively the growing and spreading Lutheran population. Synods were formed in North Carolina (1791), New York (1792), South Carolina (1787), and, eventually, Ohio (1818). As was the case with other non-Anglophone groups, language increasingly was a topic of debate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it remained so with the mass immigrations of German-speaking Lutherans that began in the 1830s. In the 1790s, Swedish, Dutch, and Finnish Lutherans were much less numerous, were settled in New York and along the Delaware, and manifested distinctive emphases, such as the Swedish preference for English language. The leadership of all of those groups worked with the German synod in Pennsylvania, especially through the agency of Mühlenberg.

Other groups of German background contributed to the religious diversity of the new nation. The first Mennonite congregation was in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and Mennonites from Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands eventually settled in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Their preference for separation from the broader culture, together with their opposition to war and military service, kept them on the fringes of society and complicated any act of support for the Revolution. The case was similar for Amish, and especially the Old Order Amish, who settled near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1737 and remained apart from society. Without meetinghouses or Sunday schools, the Amish maintained religion through informal and family-centered devotional activities, and lengthy weekly worship services. The Church of the Brethren, followers of the Pietist Alexander Mack, also was settled near Germantown, as were the Dunkers. At the end of the eighteenth century, the sectarian Brethren, together with some Mennonites, had begun to involve themselves in the public life of the nation through opposition to slavery. Also vocal in their opposition to slavery were the Moravians, who in the mid-eighteenth century were settled in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in a community founded by Count von Zinzendorf himself, and in North Carolina. More importantly, Moravians proved themselves expert missionaries to the Indians and made impressive gains in that work on the western frontier during the 1780s and 1790s. Their missionizing role in late-eighteenth-century America is frequently recalled in connection with the massacre of ninety-six converted

Indians by a contingent of Pennsylvania militia at the Moravian mission at Gnadenhutten, Ohio, in 1782.

Not all religious groups that came to America from Europe founded churches that developed strong institutional cores by the end of the eighteenth century. Huguenots, Protestants who were persecuted in Catholic France, immigrated to America in large numbers. Prior to the Revolution, at least sixty thousand had arrived in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, South Carolina, and Virginia. They tended to be from educated and skilled parts of French society and likely for that reason did not experience difficulty in making a life for themselves in the colonies. For that same reason, they assimilated easily, and most soon joined other Protestant churches. In 1790, there were several Huguenot congregations, including a large one in Savannah, which at the beginning of the twenty-first century was the only remaining Huguenot church in the United States. A highly organized sectarian group that flourished briefly and then likewise all but disappeared was the Shakers, whose valuation of celibacy made their survival as a religious group difficult. In 1790, however, there was considerable interest in their ideas and emergent way of life, and members were constantly added (although turnover was high). In the decade of the 1790s the Shakers for the first time looked to an American-born leader, Joseph Meacham, who had taken over upon the death of James Whitaker in 1787. He appointed Lucy Wright as coleader, and so instituted the dual lines of male and female authority – a structuring of the church that mirrored the Shaker notion of God as Father-Mother – that became the hallmark of Shaker government. During this time, Shakers embraced a more thoroughgoing communalism with regard to property ownership and founded communities at Hancock (1790), Harvard (1791), and Shirley (1793), Massachusetts; at East Canterbury, New Hampshire (1793); and in Connecticut and Maine. Their distinctive worship included strenuous dancing and ecstatic possession, and their crafting of furniture and other artifacts represented their commitment to simplicity. Their efforts at institutional structuring of the religion were not as imaginative – nor, given the realized eschatology of the group, as urgent – as was their ordering of everyday life. They reached a stable membership of as many as five thousand persons in eighteen communities during the mid-nineteenth century before declining.

African religious traditions had been transplanted to the United States as a result of the slave trade, in spite of the discouragement offered by slave owners and others for the practice of those traditions. Those traditions varied widely, depending on region and other factors, and included Islam and even traces of Christianity alongside of tribal religions. The Fon, Yoruba, Ewe, and other coastal groups from which a great number of

slaves were taken believed in a God who reigned over the universe, and for some, God was both female and male. Lesser deities were associated with healing, military success, weather, the punishment of evildoers, and other more specific responsibilities. The spirits of ancestors animated the African world much like the lesser deities, occasionally involving themselves in the everyday lives of people. Ancestors and local deities were honored through ritual, singing, and prayer, and by visitations to sacred sites and graves. Trained male and female mediums (and some untrained) occupied important positions within a tribe's hierarchy and served as bridges to the invisible world of ancestors and spirits, and a line of defense against witchcraft. In America, the Protestant ritual of baptism in which the "old" person died and the "new" person was born, filled with the Holy Spirit, through immersion in water, coordinated in important ways with African puberty rituals, which could involve spirit possession and immersion in a river, from which a child emerged an adult.

In 1790, there were approximately 680,000 black slaves in a national population of 2.8 million, and about 95 percent of those slaves were in the South. There were about 60,000 free blacks in 1790. Slaves often were brought to the Caribbean before their delivery to American ports, and in that process, which brought together on plantations persons of varied backgrounds and religious traditions, there was a dilution of African cultures as persons of diverse religious backgrounds learned to live together. What little common ground could be salvaged was further endangered through deliberate intermixing that took place in the United States. Plantation slave cultures that eventually took shape in the South secured some aspects of African theology and ritual, but no tribal religions survived the forced migration intact. Some burial ceremonies, healing rituals, practices related to courtship and marriage, means of communicating with spirits, styles of personal decoration, and other such rudiments remained. But they functioned independently of the African systems in which they originated. And, increasingly with the passing of time, they were altered as they came into contact with Christianity. That contact was ambitiously pursued by missionaries, and their preaching often struck a chord with blacks in part because it resonated with the tradition of the itinerant "good talkers" of West Africa who were known for their skill at storytelling and consulted for their wisdom and knowledge. That similarity helped to bridge African religions to Christianity.

Black preachers, in developing techniques of rhythm, repetition, singing, demonstrative and physical display, and exploitation of biblical images, fused tribal backgrounds with Protestant styles of worship. Preaching was the catalyst for the translation of African and Christian traditions into a vernacular that was characterized by its emotional spirituality, rhetorical

richness, and distinct material culture. George White, who was licensed by the Methodist church as a "coloured preacher" in 1807, reported that during one meeting where he was exhorting, "a numerous body of people … fell prostrate under the divine power … at which my own heart glowed with inexpressible joy, and renewed resolution to proceed in obedience to my Master's command; exhorting to repentance all I met with."[4]

The revivalist enterprise brought tens of thousands of black southerners into Baptist and Methodist churches by 1800. The revival emphases on rebirth, the emergence of a new person, and especially highly expressive camp meeting behaviors were analogous in certain respects to African traditions of trance, spirit possession, singing, dancing, drumming, and mediumship. The ecstatic performance of revival included profession of encounters with the Holy Spirit, energetic preaching, Christian prophecy, and the singing of hymns, as well as an assortment of physical exercises – clapping, jumping, jerking, shouting, and barking. Within this lively blending of religious cultures, spirituals emerged, in some cases through vocal responses to preaching. Blacks, both slave and free in the South, joined Protestant churches (there were few black Catholics outside of New Orleans), some became preachers, and some eventually were licensed and ordained. The first African American Baptist congregation had gathered on a Virginia plantation in the 1750s, and the black Baptist preacher George Liele had organized black churches in Savannah and in South Carolina in the 1770s. In 1788, the First African Baptist Church was founded in Savannah by Andrew Bryan. The circumstances in the North brought about by abolitionist campaigning enabled the founding of black congregations by African Americans who would no longer tolerate discrimination at church. The Bethel African Methodist and the St. Thomas African Episcopal churches were founded in Philadelphia in 1794 by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, respectively. In the next century, women claimed an increasingly more important role as exhorters, deacons, members of black Catholic religious orders, and eventually ordained ministers. They followed the path blazed by the female subject of *Elizabeth, a Colored Minister of the Gospel Born in Slavery* (1889), who preached in Virginia in the 1790s, and when threatened with arrest explained that her ordination was from God, not men.

As many as 10 percent of slaves might have been Muslim upon arrival in North America. There are insufficient records to inform a picture of African American Islam in 1790, but the example of Omar Ibn Said (1770–1864)

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[4] George White, "A Brief Account of the Life, Experience, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George White, an African," in Graham Russell Hodges, ed., *Black Itinerants of the Gospel: The Narratives of John Jea and George White* (Madison, 1993), 61.

demonstrates the presence of Muslims at this time. Said, who was brought to Charleston, South Carolina, from the Muslim state of Futa Toro in West Africa about 1807, was a Muslim scholar who had made a pilgrimage to Mecca before being sold to slavers in Africa. He authored a number of Arabic works as a slave in the South, including an autobiography composed after he had converted to Christianity.[5]

In 1790 there were an estimated two thousand Jews in America. Charleston, South Carolina, was the center of colonial Judaism, with other congregations in Philadelphia, Savannah, New York, Richmond, and Newport. Those congregations made provisions for the supply of kosher meat, circumcised their sons, and built synagogues, including the Touro synagogue in Newport, where the first Jewish sermon in America, delivered in Spanish, was preached in 1771. All of those congregations were Sephardic, formed from persons of Spanish and Portuguese background. After about 1750, Sephardic immigration all but ended, and when immigration began to increase in the nineteenth century, it consisted largely of Ashkenazim. In the late eighteenth century, Jewish communities were mostly urban, and the members of those communities were commercially inclined. Social intercourse in such settings led to rapid acculturation, so that by the 1770s English translations of key Jewish liturgies as well as the prayer book were available. Sephardic Jews in America at that time were more flexible in their identity as Jews than later immigrants. Their ideas about keeping kosher were adaptable, they intermarried with non-Jews, and the children of those marriages generally were raised Protestant. There was a shortage of rabbis for most of the eighteenth century, and when by the turn of the century that situation had improved, the rabbi, in addition to his role as teacher, had become a preacher, a community organizer, and an active ambassador to the dominant Protestant culture. The Americanization of Judaism had only begun in the 1790s. With renewed immigration, the process would accelerate in the nineteenth century, through the agency of Rabbis Isaac Leeser in Philadelphia and Isaac Meyer Wise in Cincinnati.

The Enlightenment in America manifested in various ways in the late eighteenth century. Among all of the religious developments in America in the 1790s, the emergence of a religious rationalism, sometimes referred to as Deism, and at other times by its enemies as "infidelism," was the clearest sign that in the aftermath of the Revolution the nation's religious sensibilities had shifted. Prior to the Revolution, New England Congregationalist ministers Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Mayhew, and Ebenezer Gay, among

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[5] Omar Ibn Said, *Autobiography of Omar Ibn Said*, ed. John Franklin Jameson, *American Historical Review* 30 (July 1925): 787–95.

others, had begun stressing human capability in their theological writings. In the South, where Thomas Jefferson eventually would delete from his Bible references to miracles and redemption and leave a retouched picture of Jesus as a moral teacher, there was considerable interest in the rationalist currents that were flowing into Anglicanism. Deism caught on there and elsewhere in the South, such as in Charleston, and in the Middle and New England colonies among the upper classes. Vermont's Ethan Allen penned *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* in 1784, which was followed by Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794–96) and former Revolutionary War chaplain Joel Barlow's influential translation of the Comte de Volney's French classic, *Ruins; or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (1799). Writings such as those blended a criticism of formal religion, and especially its abuse of power, with a case for the capability of human reason, unaided by revelation, to know truth and to shape a moral world. Elihu Palmer, an anti-Calvinist ex-Presbyterian minister, founded the Deistical Society of New York in 1794 on eleven principles, all derived from the premise that the best moral and intellectual system is one that brings the most happiness to humanity. His weekly Deist paper, the *Temple of Reason*, was published from 1800 to 1803. Although the Deistical Society did not last, the ideas that undergirded it fostered the movement toward scientism and humanism in nineteenth-century Protestantism, bearing fruit as Unitarianism, and various sorts of liberal religion. The metaphysical and poetic tones redolent in the nineteenth-century's Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and other antebellum writers had not yet coalesced in 1790. They were, however, in the making, driven by a complex of social and intellectual challenges that were taking place under the unfolding umbrella of religious freedom and disestablishment.

Amidst all of the church building, missionizing, theological debates, and reconstructions of polity, many Americans in the early republic ordered their lives with some regard for ideas and rituals that were outside of the orthodoxies of the various denominations. In some cases, competing forms of community, with rich symbology and cultivated mystery, provided a locus for alternative expression of religious feelings. Such was the case of the fraternity of the Masonic Order, which claimed a large and broad membership, from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Revere, and George Washington, and a number of other founders and powerful commercial persons, alongside less affluent persons in smaller towns. Masons in the early Republic periodically added rituals to their meetings and imagined themselves to be a religious group, although a vow of secrecy prevented them from defending themselves against criticism that they were atheistical and antidemocratic. In 1790, Masonry already was an important part of community and imagined community in America, and such groups proliferated in the

early nineteenth century so that by the 1890s, the number of males active in fraternities rivaled the males in the churches. In addition to organized quasi-religious communities such as the Masons, the last decade of the eighteenth century was a time when persons supplemented their denominational life with a rich inventory of ideas about witches and curses, thunder and ghosts, the healing power of herbs, and the wisdom of astrology. People practiced rituals of purification and protection, celebration and invocation, which had been delivered to them from previous generations of folkways that ran outside denominational life. The ethnic and religious diversity of the nation added substantially to such a religious culture, as neighbors exchanged theories about the invisible world and learned from each other new ways to negotiate its magic, dangers, and possibilities.

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Section I

RELIGION IN NORTH AMERICA

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE 1790S

JOHN CORRIGAN

The religious landscape of the 1790s was widely diverse. Religious groups fleeing persecution in Europe, African traditions that had survived the Middle Passage, a variety of Native American religious forms, religion brought to North American shores by persons seeking commercial success or otherwise aspiring to social and political achievement, and a rising tide of Enlightenment-derived criticism of religion made the 1790s a decade of contrasting religious styles, contested spaces, and sharply framed arguments. In the new nation, under the banner of religious freedom and separation of church and state, religion flourished in a multitude of cultural settings and in an abundance of practices, some formal, others informal. Debates about religious ideas were common, and experimentation with practices was in evidence everywhere. There sometimes was friction between religious groups. There also was a determination to overcome differences in making an American polis. Most importantly, religion in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century was complex and fluid, sometimes defined within traditional institutional structures and sometimes represented by detailed networks of occult religious ideas, arcane practices, magic, folk wisdom, and supernatural lore that was passed on from generation to generation outside the channels of ecclesiastical communications.

The religious lives of many Native Americans were in flux in 1790. The massive depopulation of indigenous peoples from disease and the practical consequences of the relentless expansion of Euro-American cultures into tribal territories diminished the capability of Native Americans to resist adaptation. Increased missionary efforts by Protestants and Catholics alike led to more conversions, and by degrees, as Indians adopted settled ways of life and property ownership on European models, indigenous traditions weakened. Tribal beliefs had much to do with the beginnings of the world and the people who inhabited it, and stories about the central importance of local geographies in those processes remained the backbone of religious devotions. As the Euro-American population increased, however, the

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markers of sacred place became less visible. Colonists hunted some totemic animals to near extinction and claimed sacred sites for their own settlements or as part of commercial initiatives. Such developments, alongside the ongoing relocation of Indians to new places, diluted the power of place and altered Native American traditions across the entire front of encounter with the new American nation.

The late-eighteenth-century religion of the eastern woodlands Abenaki, Wampanoag, and Narragansett was not identical to the religion of Cherokee and Seminole in the South or to that of the Great Plains Sioux. Distinctive elements remained strong throughout the next century, especially during periods of conflict with Christian Americans when tribal traditions periodically were revived and reinforced under the leadership of charismatic leaders and prophets. Native American religions that differed from one another in certain ways, nevertheless, manifested some patterns of similarity. Cosmogonies in which earth-diving animals emerged from water with patches of sod that became the world, or in which the first people climbed from underground into light, through caves or holes, were common. The world was populated by spirits of various sorts, good and bad, and generally overseen by a Great Spirit, who was sometimes personified but more often not. Death was followed by afterlife, and the worlds of the living and the dead were conjoined, as part of the ongoing interplay of the visible and the invisible in the universe. Ritual life fostered the remembrance of traditions, especially through recitations in the oral cultures of Native Americans, of stories about animals, ghosts of ancestors, the stars and planets, wind, sex, kinship, demons, hunting, and warfare. Much religion was focused on healing, not only with regard to disease, but in connection with events such as childbirth or recovery from grief. Shamans interpreted revelations that came to persons in dreams and, when necessary, passed over into the invisible world in order to retrieve lost souls. Medicine men relied upon the power redolent in feathers, bones, stones, plants, and other sacred objects to effect cures and to guard against evil. Tribal chiefs, another locus of authority within the tribe, had a less specifically religious role, but were revered for their wise understanding of the connectedness of the visible world with the supernatural realm, as well as for their example of virtue.

The relentless effort to make Indians Christian had the obvious consequence of lessening diversity. Some aspects of Native American religious life, however, remained lively even after conversion, a testament to the enduring power of Indian religious commitments. At the same time, the survival of certain elements of Indian traditions among the converted ironically enabled communication between Native American and Christian worldviews. The pervasiveness in the everyday lives of Euro-Americans of many ideas and practices that were outside of the formal religious lives of

Christians and frequently antithetical to church doctrines – perspectives on the supernatural, healing, evil, spirits, eclipses, lightning strikes, and so forth – made possible a certain amount of compatibility with Indian traditions. In many cases there was something held in common between Christians and Indians, a fact not lost on some eighteenth-century observers who worried about the state of the American soul. The Northampton Congregationalist pastor Jonathan Edwards, who engaged in missionary work with Indians, pictured unconverted Native Americans as "devil's captives" living in a "kingdom of Satan." But his contemporary, Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale College in the 1790s, imagined a more complex relationship between Indians and Christians in which members of both groups labored in darkness under the evil influence of occult religion. Recognizing a resemblance between Indian rain dancing and English magic, Stiles lamented that so much of the everyday lives of persons within both groups was shaped by such wickedness. Such comparisons resulted in the judgment that some Indian converts were "half Christians" and that some Euro-Americans were correspondingly half heathen.[1]

A longstanding myth about the origins of the indigenous peoples of the Americas – that they were descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of the Jews and therefore distant religious kin to Euro-American Christians – helped to frame some intellectual space for thinking about similarities between Indians and Euro-Americans in the early Republic. In the 1790s, however, Christians still lumped tribes together and more often saw only difference with their own religion. Even in cases where there was some communication at the level of occult or magical beliefs, early Americans had difficulty seeing "religion" in Indian life, and so were disinclined to reflect seriously about its place in the emerging fabric of relations between religiously diverse groups.

The earliest encounters between Native Americans and Europeans were structured by the latter as occasions for cultural domination, which included, under the circumstances, conversion of Indians to Roman Catholicism. Spanish and French missionary initiatives had proven successful in converting Indians to Catholicism for over two centuries, but in 1790 the relevance of French and Spanish Catholicism to the religious makeup of the United States was minimal. The California mission system of the padres was flourishing as converted Indians adapted their lives to the social and commercial agendas of the Spanish, but that territory was

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[1] Gerald R. McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards and American Indians: The Devil Sucks Their Blood," *New England Quarterly* 72:4 (Dec. 1999): 540; Douglas L. Winiarski, "Native American Popular Religion in New England's Old Colony, 1670–1770," *Religion and American Culture* 15:2 (2005): 170.

not yet part of the United States. The Florida missions were long gone, most destroyed by English attacks early in the century. French-founded communities at Baton Rouge (1699), Detroit (1701), Mobile (1702), New Orleans (1718), and St. Louis (1763) were Catholic missionary outposts with little connection to the eastern seaboard and virtually no influence on the religious ordering of the new nation. The center of Catholic life was in Maryland, where the Archdiocese of Baltimore was established in 1789 and John Carroll, a former Jesuit, was ordained the first bishop in the United States in 1790. Carroll was well educated and a thoughtful student of Enlightenment writers. He involved himself in a wide range of social work, as a cofounder of the Library Company of Baltimore in 1795, the Maryland Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge in 1800, the Baltimore Female Humane Association, the Humane Impartial Society for the relief of indigent women, and charity schools. By Carroll's reckoning, Catholics numbered fewer than forty thousand in a population of about four million, most were of English background (with some Irish Catholics in Pennsylvania and a scattering in several cities), and the middle Atlantic region was the geographical center of Catholicism. Ongoing immigration from Ireland and southern Germany eventually became a flood in the half century after 1790, as over a million Catholic immigrants arrived on American shores. At the time of the founding of the Diocese of Baltimore, a three-million-square-mile territory, Catholics were a barely visible community among the overwhelmingly Protestant population. In 1776, there were twenty-four priests in the colonies, all former Jesuits as the Society of Jesus had been suppressed by Rome at that time. When Carroll called the first Catholic synod in America in 1791, twenty-two priests attended. The short-handed clergy grew slowly, the first priest in America being ordained in 1793; the first seminary, St. Mary's College and Seminary, which was administrated by the Fathers of St. Sulpice, was founded in Baltimore in 1791. Georgetown Academy, a Jesuit initiative, began offering classes that same year. Carroll did not lay the cornerstone for the first cathedral, in Baltimore, until 1808, two years after he became archbishop.

The most pressing issue for the Catholic Church during the decade was governance, and in particular the role of lay trustees in overseeing individual congregations. Leadership of virtually all Christian churches in the United States – Protestant and Catholic alike – had to come to terms with a laity that was very assertive and inclined to view their role as more expansive than was the case in most of Europe. In most Catholic congregations, trusteeship worked in close collaboration with the hierarchy. Some trustees, however, embraced a democratic style more ambitiously. With a raised consciousness about their "rights" and "liberties" in the decades after the Revolution, some American Catholics inclined toward a style of

governance that borrowed from Protestantism, as Archbishop Ambrose Marechal of Baltimore observed in 1818.

> The American people pursue with a most ardent love the civil liberty which they enjoy. For the principle of civil liberty is paramount with them, so that absolutely all the magistrates from the highest to the lowest are elected by popular vote.... Likewise all the Protestant sects ... are governed by these same principles, and as a result they elect and dismiss their pastors at will. Catholics in turn, living in their midst, are ... exposed to the danger of admitting the same principles of ecclesiastical government.[2]

In New York, the trustees of St. Peter's Church had declared themselves fit to choose and to dismiss their pastor in 1786. The lay trustees of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia followed suit, choosing their own pastor three years later. Further south the model of trusteeship in the Anglican Church and the practical need for Catholic trusteeships in the priest-poor Catholic colony of Maryland had set the tone for church affairs since the early seventeenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century, a congregation in Norfolk extended its claim to authority by denying the bishop any right to interfere in any of their religious matters, and punctuated their declaration by referencing the civil rights and religious liberties guaranteed by the laws of Virginia. Such attitudes continued well into the nineteenth century in Charleston, New Orleans, upstate New York, and parts of the Old Northwest. In some instances, ethnic tensions – which were to play a major role in the later development of American Catholicism – were to blame, as Irish congregations sought ways to rebel against the French bishops and priests who had been installed to rule them. In some cases, property was at issue; the trustees, having purchased the land, built the church, and made financial provisions for the affairs of the congregation, did not wish to cede supervision of that to a clergyman whom they considered ill-qualified. Lay Catholics in Philadelphia and elsewhere took their bishops to court over disagreements about leadership responsibilities. In other congregations, Catholic laity led Bible study groups, performed burials, and engaged in spiritual advising in the absence of a priest or in protest against an unwanted pastor. Carroll recognized that a greater supply of priests was needed to lead congregations, and he took steps to consolidate authority in the hierarchy. The spirit of trusteeship, nevertheless, remained vibrant and emerged in altered form in the 1890s as an Americanist Catholicism.

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[2] Ambrose Marechal, "Archbishop Marechal's Report to Propaganda Fide, 16 October 1818," in John Tracy Ellis, ed., *Documents of American Catholic History* (Milwaukee, 1955), 219.

The American Catholic church relied on assistance from abroad in organizing itself in the republic. The Sulpicians who founded St. Mary's Seminary numbered eleven by 1795 (all immigrants), increasing by one-third the number of priests in the nation. Some taught at Georgetown; others embarked on missions to Native Americans. The seminary struggled, advancing only thirty priests to ordination by 1815, and diocesan priests remained in very short supply for decades. Several religious orders contributed to various kinds of practical initiatives during this period, while others arrived in order to establish a more specifically spiritual presence, such as the two dozen Cistercians who arrived in Maryland in 1802 and remained there a few years before moving on to a permanent home in Kentucky. In the first part of the nineteenth century, new orders of nuns were especially important for the development of a Catholic infrastructure oriented toward education, health, and missionizing.

The piety of Catholics in 1790 was shaped in important ways by the Enlightenment, and this was especially the case with persons of high status. One of the many Irish Catholics among the predominantly English Catholic population was Mathew Carey, a member of St. Mary's parish in Philadelphia, which was founded before the Revolution. Carey grew up in privilege in Dublin, was educated by Jesuits, and became committed to radical republicanism, a perspective that he brought to America in 1784. He became a bookseller and the publisher of a newspaper and national magazine, as well as the first Catholic Bible in America (1790). Schooled on Erasmus, Locke, and Voltaire, he expressed his religious sensibilities in his diary in a language that demonstrated his broad view of religion. His entry for 1 January 1787 would have been approved by deists and liberal Protestants of the time: "Began the new year with a solemn invocation of the divine being and a supplication to shield me from the manifold misfortunes that have hitherto pursued me."[3] Fifty years later, as Romanization gathered momentum, Catholic piety would take more traditional forms, replacing Enlightenment-era liberalisms with more scripted prayer and standardized devotions to the Virgin and to saints.

Relations between Catholics and Protestants in America were complicated by the fact of the long European history of contestation between those two branches of Christianity. Although the spirit of liberty and democracy was strong in the 1790s, it was sufficient neither to erase collective memories of centuries of intolerance and violence nor to overcome habits of political and social organization that privileged one religious group over the other. Some colonies had passed laws prohibiting Catholics from

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[3] Carey, quoted in Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York, 2002), 16–17.

holding public office, and in several instances, as in the case of New York, Jesuits and other clergy were expressly forbidden residency under penalty of imprisonment. Protestant calls to arms during the French and Indian War (1754–63) fanned animosities toward Catholics in the Northeast, and a strong residue of that rhetoric continued to inform Protestant thinking about Catholics. In the 1790s, most Catholics, and especially those who were affluent or had served in the Revolution, were not direct targets of intolerance; and because Catholics were such a small percentage (1 percent) of the population, their potential opponents did not consider them an imminent threat to subvert the Protestant churches and impose Roman rule. Nevertheless, friction between Catholics and Protestants grew steadily, and with upticks in Catholic immigration early in the next century, rhetoric became violence in the form of mob attacks on Catholic churches, convents, and neighborhoods.

Diversity among Protestant denominations was visible everywhere in the new nation. The guarantee of religious freedom in the First Amendment and the constitutional separation of church and state helped to shape an environment in which denominations, no longer officially supported by tax revenue, competed for members and experimented with polity. Against that background, the Anglican Church experienced some of the most far-reaching changes in the period following the Revolution. Only about half of the Anglican clergy, and especially those in the Northeast, remained Loyalists. Others either were patriots (a small minority) or attempted to remain neutral. Many signers of the Declaration of Independence, including Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe, Benjamin Franklin, John Marshall, George Mason, John Jay, Robert Morris, Patrick Henry, John Randolph, and Francis Hopkinson, were Anglicans. Anglican churches began to close during the Revolution, a process hastened by American legislation making prayers for the king a crime. With disestablishment, typified by the thoroughgoing reform of the church in Virginia in 1784, the now independent Anglican churches, recognizing that "Church of England" did not ring well in American ears, settled on "Episcopal" instead. A convention in Maryland in 1780 was the first to adopt the designation, and "Protestant Episcopal church" became standard following the first General Convention of the denomination in Philadelphia in 1789. That convention framed a constitution that built upon principles that had been enunciated in several previous conventions in Philadelphia, New Brunswick, New York, and New Jersey in 1783 and 1784. Those principles were (1) democratically organized authority that included laity alongside clergy in all church councils; (2) a denomination unattached to any civil powers, domestic or foreign; and (3) a ministry consisting of deacons, priests, and bishops. Samuel Seabury, a missionary

for the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New York, had been consecrated a bishop by nonjuring bishops in Scotland in 1784, and upon returning to America spent his energies organizing the church in Connecticut. A convention in Philadelphia in 1785 planned for the English consecration of bishops; and in 1787, after Parliament set aside the requirement of a loyalty oath to the crown for American bishops, William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York were consecrated bishops in England. The General Convention in 1789 consequently validated Seabury's ordination and settled other matters, allowing the state churches to unite. The church began consecrating its own bishops in 1792. The *Book of Common Prayer* of 1789 proved serviceable for over a century until it required revision.

The newly organized Protestant Episcopal Church was arranged into dioceses, each of which was presided over by a bishop, and parishes within the diocese. At the Philadelphia convention in 1789, nine dioceses were represented. In 1776, there were approximately five hundred Anglican congregations, and by the early 1790s, half of those churches had closed and membership was less than ten thousand. In 1801, a discouraged Samuel Provoost resigned as bishop of New York and left for rural solitude. During the Second Great Awakening, membership began to increase, to about twenty-five thousand by 1820. Until that time, however, there was little growth and little innovation compared to the new developments taking place in other denominations. The denomination survived in a static state, at times holding on in some states by the barest of threads. The church, while unstable, was deeply rooted in tradition, reliant upon the *Book of Common Prayer* and the ritual life that had comprised Anglican worship prior to the Revolution. It built on that platform in the early nineteenth century under the leadership of ambitious and creative bishops such as John Henry Hobart and Alexander Viets Griswold.

Methodist societies had been a part of Anglican churches in America since the 1760s. The societies had developed especially through the leadership of Francis Asbury, who arrived in America from England in 1771 and rode many thousands of miles on horseback over the next several decades preaching, enforcing discipline, structuring the societies, and fostering the exuberant emotional style that was characteristic of Wesleyan piety. John Wesley himself kept a close eye on American developments, and in 1784 he dispatched to New York three ministers – Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey – to convene a meeting of Methodist lay preachers, sixty of whom turned out late that year in Baltimore to found the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Wesley had equipped the ministers with a prayer book, *The Sunday Service* of the Methodists in North America, along with twenty-four *Articles of Religion* (one more article was

added later), which were adapted from the Anglican *Thirty-Nine Articles* and defined religious authority, sacraments, and justification by grace, while rejecting Catholic belief in purgatory, the practice of celibacy by clergy, and the Latin Mass. At that "Christmas Conference" in Baltimore, lay preachers, including Asbury, were ordained, and a strongly worded opposition to slavery was enunciated. Methodists from that time forward were in the vanguard of the abolitionist movement. On the Fourth of July 1790, which fell on a Sunday, Methodists preached against slavery as a transgression of God's laws and as an institution antithetical to the spirit of democracy.

In 1771, there were about six hundred Methodists in America. Growth of the denomination initially was slow until the early 1790s when the efforts of Asbury and others were rewarded with a steady inflow of persons into the church. The abolitionist stance of the church was partly responsible for inroads made among African Americans, about two thousand of whom belonged to the church in 1786. Asbury crossed the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky in 1790, and the circuit-riding Methodist preachers who followed him made converts and fostered fledgling religious communities through regular visitation and preaching the message of rebirth. Preachers often appointed laypersons as local religious leaders who could guide the community in prayer and study for weeks at a time in between visits by the circuit rider. Beginning about 1799, when weather permitted, Methodists and those curious about Methodism would gather in periodic camp meetings for a week or two. Roused and inspired by highly expressive and emotional preaching by clergy and laypersons, those in attendance often displayed physical signs of being "slain in the Spirit." The jerking motions, howling, laughing, rolling on the ground, barking, and other "exercises" not only were performances of the emotional piety of Methodists, but also served to make Methodism visible and attractive to many other Americans. By 1791, the denomination had grown to 238 clergy and 58,000 members. By 1805, the denomination had grown to 120,000 members, and while circuit-riding preachers and camp meetings were to play a central role in the extraordinary growth of Methodism in the nineteenth century, congregations began to acquire the membership necessary to build houses of worship and support ministers. The profile of the church accordingly became more complex as missionary outreach was blended with the supervision and support of settled congregations.

The Baptists were well established in America by 1795, numbering over 1,100 churches, according to the Baptist preacher and outspoken advocate of disestablishment Isaac Backus, and over 73,000 members, of whom as many as one-fourth were African American. In the immediate wake of the Great Awakening, at least 130 Baptist churches were formed by

Congregationalists who found the characteristic Baptist emphases on baptism of professing believers and separation of church and state to be more appealing than Congregational traditions. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were three main groups of Baptists, distinguished one from the other by theological differences, styles of church organization, or both. The smallest group was General Baptists, who took an Arminian position on free will and believed in a general atonement, that is, that salvation was possible for any person who believed in Jesus Christ, not just for the elect. They were located in North Carolina, Virginia, and New England, and by 1770 they were disorganized and numbered only a handful of churches. Associated with them were the emergent Free Will Baptist churches, which grew up in North Carolina under the leadership of Paul Palmer and in New Hampshire where Benjamin Randall gathered a congregation in 1780. By 1782 the Free Will Baptists there had established twelve churches and a Quarterly Meeting to discuss and clarify points of doctrine and the worship service, which in most cases included foot washing in addition to the usual Baptist rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Particular-Regular Baptists, who believed in a Calvinist particular salvation that came to each individual person rather than humanity as a whole, were located largely in the Middle Colonies and were the largest and best organized of the three groups. Because the Middle Colonies had been more diverse and tolerant, and less inclined to tax citizens for the support of a church, Baptists there did not develop the degree of wariness toward the state as did Baptists in New England, where religion was not entirely disestablished in some states until well into the nineteenth century. The Philadelphia Association, which Baptists founded in 1707, had effectively supervised growth and monitored conformity throughout the eighteenth century, so that by the 1790s there was a vibrant and extensive Regular Baptist infrastructure. The association in the 1760s had sent James Manning to found Rhode Island College (Brown University) as a Baptist competitor to the schools in New Haven, Princeton, Williamsburg, and Cambridge. The association likewise had built a strong publishing operation, planned and organized missions, and assisted in the founding of new churches. Separate Baptists, the third group, grew rapidly in the years after the Awakening, largely in New England, before expanding to the South, where they dominated the Baptist landscape, Regular Baptists being very few in number in the South. They were similar in theological outlook to the Regular Baptists, both groups being steeped in the Calvinist perspectives of the revivals of the 1740s–70s. Their differences were largely in terms of their views of the relationship of the state to the churches and in their views regarding the degree to which church supervision of individual conversions was desirable, a point on which the Separatists declared themselves minimalists.

The emergence of Separatist Baptists out of Congregational churches in the eighteenth century was a disaffection that was felt by the guardians of Congregational tradition, but they were not yet worried over the future of their denomination. As the established church in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire prior to the Revolution, Congregationalism had a deep base and a strong infrastructure. It also had some measure of flexibility, congregations typically detailing their views of doctrine and their services to suit the tastes of the local membership. In 1783, after the emergence of the Baptist churches in New England, Congregational churches still outnumbered Baptist churches by five to one, and an overwhelming majority of churchgoers belonged to Congregational churches. After the Revolution, however, with the push for disestablishment gaining momentum in New England towns where state revenues traditionally had paid the salaries of Congregational clergy, laws were passed enabling dissenters such as Baptists to designate other churches as the beneficiaries of their taxes. The political climate also changed, as popular notions of freedom, equality, and democracy made their way into thinking about the religious order of New England. Other aspects of Enlightenment thought, and especially the emphasis on the capability of unaided human reason to discern truth, likewise were having an effect on Congregationalism, making for it a predicament in which it increasingly began to appear a closed and conservative patriarchy that was at the same time drifting from revealed religion into the dangerous currents of rationalist humanism. Charles Chauncy (1705–87), the pastor of Boston's First Church, represented in his ministerial role something of the complexity of the situation. Chauncy was one of the most vocal defenders of the old order, certain of the authority of the university-trained clergy, of the status of his church of elite Bostonians, and of the right of the Puritan-descended leadership of the Congregationalist churches to take a leading role in the shaping of public life. At the same time he was a Universalist, entertained the notion of reincarnation, had fomented rebellion against England, and preached frequently about the power of human reason.

Dissent in New England took its toll on clergy such as Chauncy, who fretted that moral order and the clergy's place as guardians of that moral order were in jeopardy. In the late 1790s, concerned clergy preached and wrote with increasing alarm about the decay of New England and the diminishing prospect for a nation under God. Their jeremiads mingled traditional defenses of clerical authority and religious doctrine with warnings about those who would subvert liberty and tradition, and especially about the nefarious activities of the so-called Bavarian Illuminati, a shadowy French-controlled atheistical society allegedly dedicated to the overthrow of the religious order, the subversion of democracy, and the triumph

of a thoroughly rational political and social ideology. Charlestown minister Jedidiah Morse, revealing the conspiracy in a series of sermons preached at the outset of the Franco-American crisis of 1798–99, fulminated about an imminent reign of terror in America. His words attracted the attention of John Adams and George Washington, among others, and contributed to the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts in the summer of 1798. Although the anxieties about the French-led conspiracy soon diminished, the anxieties of the clergy and their congregations remained high as a democratic and experimental spirit took hold, diversity grew, and New England religious orthodoxy eroded.

Congregationalism responded to change with a series of revivals that began in the 1790s and continued well into the nineteenth century. The revivals grew out of fears about the spiritual decay that was pronounced in jeremiads, but they also were the consequence of a commitment that Congregationalism made to mission activities. In 1792, the General Association of Connecticut undertook an initiative to supply itinerant evangelists to populations that had moved westward, and it reinforced that effort in 1798 by establishing the Missionary Society, with Massachusetts (1799) and New Hampshire (1801) following in creating sister societies. The focus upon conversion that defined the work of those societies spilled over into New England towns and urban areas, leading to sporadic revivals beginning in the early 1790s. The catalyst for the Awakening was Yale president Rev. Timothy Dwight's condemnation of infidelism and his insistence that Americans recommit themselves to an emotionally rich and doctrinally sound Christianity in a series of sermons and most notably in "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy" (1798). The Yale revival, which took hold in impressive fashion in 1802, continued in fits and starts for over twenty years. During that time Congregationalism in New England as a whole benefited from the Awakening as it spread and took hold. Piety was to some extent revived, and most importantly the Congregationalist churches developed a complex of organizations and projects that drew the churches into collaborations. Those collaborations facilitated the expansion of the denomination and recentered it through its investment in voluntary organizations and pointed involvement in reforming the social and political worlds of New England and the western frontier. However, at the same time that a Calvinist Congregationalism was directing the successes of the denomination, Enlightenment thought that had penetrated the churches was shaping a new movement, Unitarianism, that would lead to deep divisions in the churches in the early nineteenth century.

Presbyterianism was to the mid-Atlantic region what Congregationalism was to New England in terms of its being the largest denomination. Compared to New England, the region was highly diverse. New Jersey, for

example, had a religious population spread among a range of denominations in 1765, including Presbyterian (55), Quaker (39), Anglican (21), Dutch Reformed (21), Baptist (19), Dutch Lutheran (4), German Reformed (2), and Seventh Day Baptist (2) churches. A wood block of the New York City skyline in 1771 similarly noted diversity, identifying the houses of worship of Dutch Reformed (3), Anglican (3), Presbyterian (3), Lutheran (2), French Huguenot, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker, Moravian, and Jewish congregations. Presbyterians made up one-quarter of churchgoers in the Middle Colonies in 1790, with 220 congregations nationwide, sixteen presbyteries, four synods, and 177 ministers.

In addition to its size, Presbyterianism in 1790 enjoyed the advantages of being well established (the first meeting of the presbytery in 1706 followed by a synod in 1716), highly organized, wealthy, and committed to education, having founded the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1746. Presbyterians had already experienced schism in America and had healed it when Old Side and New Side factions united in forming the synod of New York and Philadelphia in 1758. Presbyterians were patriots in the Revolution (signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon and Benjamin Rush were Presbyterians), in obvious distinction from their Anglican neighbors in several nearby states, and so were positioned to take a leading role in the republic as defenders of American ideals of liberty and democracy, a status that served them well in their vast missionary enterprises. Presbyterians and Congregationalists, both descended from the Westminster Confession, had cooperated closely through the eighteenth century, frequently sharing each other's pulpits, forming joint committees, exchanging delegates between their church judicatories, and even identifying themselves as members of both groups. The eventual 1801 Plan of Union, which was in effect for several decades, virtually joined the two denominations.

The general synod of 1788 brought into being the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA). The "Puritan Sabbath" remained central to the church, as did the Lord's Supper, which was celebrated semiannually or quarterly, and Bible study and family prayers. There was some disagreement about the extent to which the church should become involved in the political and governmental affairs of the republic. Scotch and Scots-Irish Covenanters and Seceders, who believed that the church should distance itself from those areas of public life, experimented with their own forms of association, forming a separate presbytery and church (Associate Reformed Church, 1782). For the most part, however, the PCUSA remained the large tent of Presbyterianism, and it was the driving force behind the expansion of the church into the frontier as Kentucky, Tennessee, and points beyond that were opened to settlement at the end of the eighteenth century.

Presbyterian missionary efforts grew out of the evangelical initiatives cultivated at the Log College of William Tennent. Ministers such as James McGready, whose preaching attracted large crowds in Kentucky, and Barton Stone, who led the Cane Ridge revival in 1801, succeeded because of a combination of their advocacy of the new birth and a strict discipline, and a sensitiveness to democratic ideals that infused the frontier population. The emotional vibrancy of such religion on the frontier was generally welcomed, but the camp meeting setting eventually led to some concern on the part of Presbyterians whose valuation of religion lay more in dignified services and deliberate and committed social reform. Out of those differences eventually came defections and divisions, including the coalescence of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Sharing the diverse religious landscape of the middle Atlantic region, the Society of Friends grew steadily as a denomination over the course of the eighteenth century, and particularly in Pennsylvania, which became both their religious haven and a territory in which they flourished economically. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, two-thirds of the population of the Delaware Valley, or about three thousand persons, were Quakers. By the time of the Revolution, there were over twenty thousand Quakers in Pennsylvania alone – making it the third largest group behind Presbyterians and German Reformed – and many more in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and North Carolina, for a total of well over fifty thousand nationally. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Yearly Meeting had long been a means by which Quakers gathered to address issues of doctrine and discipline, and quarterly and monthly meetings had been standard for a century or more as well. The General Yearly Meeting for Friends of Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey and the Adjacent Provinces, so-named in 1790, was the most important meeting of Quakers in the world, alongside the London meeting. Friends had suffered severe persecution in New England in the mid-seventeenth century (as they had in England), and had been the target of much venomous writing well into the eighteenth. Enemies first accused them of heretical ideas, noting that they ordained no clergy, practiced no sacramental devotions, embraced quasi-mystical patterns of worship, and were unwilling to accept Calvinist notions of a deformed humanity. Later, critics would complain about their commitment to the equal place of women in religious life, passionate antislavery advocacies, and financial successes, especially in Philadelphia where "meetinghouses became countinghouses." Their pacifism led to serious problems for them during the Revolution, when they were fined, imprisoned, or otherwise prosecuted, and they suffered social exclusion and public beratings for their seeming lack of patriotism. Such pressures led some to

form the Society of Free Quakers in 1780 to indicate their support of the cause against England.

Important and influential social and political roles came with financial success and with Quakers' reputations as upright and honest. In addition to taking their places in government and public affairs besides persons of other denominations, Quakers were highly active in reform activities. They built a strong public profile not only in their opposition to slavery – by 1780 all of the Yearly Meetings but those in Virginia had condemned slave owning as cause for expulsion from the community – but also through their efforts to enact penal reforms, organize relief for the poor, develop educational institutions, and engage in interdenominational missionary activity. There were some ongoing debates among Friends, most the loose ends of disagreements that had never been tied up in the wake of the Keithian Schism in the Philadelphia area in the 1690s. Some urban Quakers who rubbed shoulders daily with non-Quakers and were exposed to Enlightenment theories about human capability and reason developed nuances that struck others as departures from orthodoxy. Quakers in rural areas, in particular, were wary of developments that held potential to undermine the emotional and quasi-mystical animus of their faith. Such tensions lay below the surface of Quaker institutional life as the denomination moved westward in the early nineteenth century, built meetinghouses, and established new Yearly Meetings.

When Michael Schlatter was sent by the Amsterdam classis to take stock of the German Reformed church in Pennsylvania at mid-century, he inventoried fifteen thousand German Reformed and four ordained ministers. By the time of the Revolution, the German Reformed were the second most numerous group in Pennsylvania, among a German population of approximately 225,000 in the colonies. The German Reformed churches worked closely with the Dutch Reformed, relying upon the Amsterdam classis for some financial support and for arranging clergy for the American churches. The latter task proved difficult, and by the early 1790s, fully a third of congregations were attempting to make do without a pastor. Westward migration did not help matters. The formal relationship with Amsterdam came to an end in 1792, when the initial meeting of the Synod of the Reformed German Church of the United States of America gathered twenty-two ministers to adopt a constitution, refine its process of ordaining clergy, and plan for the administration of the 178 congregations it was to supervise. In urban areas such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, among second- and third-generation Germans, English was the language of church services, but a large percentage of church members preferred German, and the issue came to a head early in the nineteenth century when disagreement led to schism. Pietism, not revivalism, constituted the core of religious life, but

on the frontier, Pietism could shade into the creative and boisterous spirituality associated with the revivals. Church leadership responded to the influences of revival Protestantism by establishing Sunday schools in 1806 and by establishing a seminary. The seminary, during the time that it was located at Mercersburg (after 1837), served as a center for the Mercersburg Revival led by John W. Nevin and Philip Schaff, who, in their opposition to sectarianism, sought to pull the church back into the mainstream of a theologically robust and precise Reformed Protestantism.

The Dutch Reformed churches were located largely in New York and New Jersey. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were twenty-nine churches in New York, which was well more than half of all the churches in New York at that time. Like the German Reformed churches, the Dutch faced difficult challenges in supplying pastoral leadership for their congregations, and by the mid-eighteenth century had determined that local authority was needed to properly administrate the church. The American churches had formed an assembly (1747), which subsequently had declared itself independent of the Amsterdam classis in 1754. With a view to the importance of education for the preparation of church leaders, as well as for the betterment of the laity, the church sought a charter for a college in the New Jersey town of New Brunswick, and it was granted in 1766 for Queen's College, later Rutgers. In 1784, two years after the birth in Kinderhook, New York, of the Dutch Reformed Martin van Buren, the first U.S. president born an American citizen, John Henry Livingston, a Yale graduate who was ordained in the Amsterdam classis in 1770, founded the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. It is the oldest Protestant seminary in the United States. The church adopted a constitution in 1792, and two years later representatives met for the first time in a synod as the Reformed Church. In the early nineteenth century, debates about language, which affected virtually all religious groups with non-Anglophone backgrounds, led to schisms. Those schisms were constituted equally by concerns over the seeming liberal and Arminian drift of the church from a hard Calvinist theology.

Lutheranism also flourished in the middle Atlantic region. By the time of the Revolution, German Lutherans were established in the area around Philadelphia and had formed communities in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and the southern colonies. Lutheranism was exceptionally diverse in its manifestations in America at that time, with many different catechisms and songbooks among the congregations in Pennsylvania. Many Lutheran immigrants, who arrived in a steady stream during the eighteenth century, were untutored in the rudiments of doctrine and worship, and clergy were in short supply. The Pietistic mission society in Halle sent a dozen pastors in the forty years up to 1786, but such support was

unusual, and the building of a Lutheran church in America ended up in the hands of Henry Melchior Mühlenberg and the weak Ministerium of Pennsylvania that included thirty-three of the forty-four pastors in America in 1776. At the time of Mühlenberg's death in 1787, the denomination was better organized and was in the process of adopting, in many places, his revised liturgy, but the Lord's Supper still was celebrated less often than in Germany. By the early 1790s, the Pennsylvania Ministerium was no longer able to supervise effectively the growing and spreading Lutheran population. Synods were formed in North Carolina (1791), New York (1792), South Carolina (1787), and, eventually, Ohio (1818). As was the case with other non-Anglophone groups, language increasingly was a topic of debate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it remained so with the mass immigrations of German-speaking Lutherans that began in the 1830s. In the 1790s, Swedish, Dutch, and Finnish Lutherans were much less numerous, were settled in New York and along the Delaware, and manifested distinctive emphases, such as the Swedish preference for English language. The leadership of all of those groups worked with the German synod in Pennsylvania, especially through the agency of Mühlenberg.

Other groups of German background contributed to the religious diversity of the new nation. The first Mennonite congregation was in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and Mennonites from Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands eventually settled in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Their preference for separation from the broader culture, together with their opposition to war and military service, kept them on the fringes of society and complicated any act of support for the Revolution. The case was similar for Amish, and especially the Old Order Amish, who settled near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1737 and remained apart from society. Without meetinghouses or Sunday schools, the Amish maintained religion through informal and family-centered devotional activities, and lengthy weekly worship services. The Church of the Brethren, followers of the Pietist Alexander Mack, also was settled near Germantown, as were the Dunkers. At the end of the eighteenth century, the sectarian Brethren, together with some Mennonites, had begun to involve themselves in the public life of the nation through opposition to slavery. Also vocal in their opposition to slavery were the Moravians, who in the mid-eighteenth century were settled in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in a community founded by Count von Zinzendorf himself, and in North Carolina. More importantly, Moravians proved themselves expert missionaries to the Indians and made impressive gains in that work on the western frontier during the 1780s and 1790s. Their missionizing role in late-eighteenth-century America is frequently recalled in connection with the massacre of ninety-six converted

Indians by a contingent of Pennsylvania militia at the Moravian mission at Gnadenhutten, Ohio, in 1782.

Not all religious groups that came to America from Europe founded churches that developed strong institutional cores by the end of the eighteenth century. Huguenots, Protestants who were persecuted in Catholic France, immigrated to America in large numbers. Prior to the Revolution, at least sixty thousand had arrived in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, South Carolina, and Virginia. They tended to be from educated and skilled parts of French society and likely for that reason did not experience difficulty in making a life for themselves in the colonies. For that same reason, they assimilated easily, and most soon joined other Protestant churches. In 1790, there were several Huguenot congregations, including a large one in Savannah, which at the beginning of the twenty-first century was the only remaining Huguenot church in the United States. A highly organized sectarian group that flourished briefly and then likewise all but disappeared was the Shakers, whose valuation of celibacy made their survival as a religious group difficult. In 1790, however, there was considerable interest in their ideas and emergent way of life, and members were constantly added (although turnover was high). In the decade of the 1790s the Shakers for the first time looked to an American-born leader, Joseph Meacham, who had taken over upon the death of James Whitaker in 1787. He appointed Lucy Wright as coleader, and so instituted the dual lines of male and female authority – a structuring of the church that mirrored the Shaker notion of God as Father-Mother – that became the hallmark of Shaker government. During this time, Shakers embraced a more thoroughgoing communalism with regard to property ownership and founded communities at Hancock (1790), Harvard (1791), and Shirley (1793), Massachusetts; at East Canterbury, New Hampshire (1793); and in Connecticut and Maine. Their distinctive worship included strenuous dancing and ecstatic possession, and their crafting of furniture and other artifacts represented their commitment to simplicity. Their efforts at institutional structuring of the religion were not as imaginative – nor, given the realized eschatology of the group, as urgent – as was their ordering of everyday life. They reached a stable membership of as many as five thousand persons in eighteen communities during the mid-nineteenth century before declining.

African religious traditions had been transplanted to the United States as a result of the slave trade, in spite of the discouragement offered by slave owners and others for the practice of those traditions. Those traditions varied widely, depending on region and other factors, and included Islam and even traces of Christianity alongside of tribal religions. The Fon, Yoruba, Ewe, and other coastal groups from which a great number of

slaves were taken believed in a God who reigned over the universe, and for some, God was both female and male. Lesser deities were associated with healing, military success, weather, the punishment of evildoers, and other more specific responsibilities. The spirits of ancestors animated the African world much like the lesser deities, occasionally involving themselves in the everyday lives of people. Ancestors and local deities were honored through ritual, singing, and prayer, and by visitations to sacred sites and graves. Trained male and female mediums (and some untrained) occupied important positions within a tribe's hierarchy and served as bridges to the invisible world of ancestors and spirits, and a line of defense against witchcraft. In America, the Protestant ritual of baptism in which the "old" person died and the "new" person was born, filled with the Holy Spirit, through immersion in water, coordinated in important ways with African puberty rituals, which could involve spirit possession and immersion in a river, from which a child emerged an adult.

In 1790, there were approximately 680,000 black slaves in a national population of 2.8 million, and about 95 percent of those slaves were in the South. There were about 60,000 free blacks in 1790. Slaves often were brought to the Caribbean before their delivery to American ports, and in that process, which brought together on plantations persons of varied backgrounds and religious traditions, there was a dilution of African cultures as persons of diverse religious backgrounds learned to live together. What little common ground could be salvaged was further endangered through deliberate intermixing that took place in the United States. Plantation slave cultures that eventually took shape in the South secured some aspects of African theology and ritual, but no tribal religions survived the forced migration intact. Some burial ceremonies, healing rituals, practices related to courtship and marriage, means of communicating with spirits, styles of personal decoration, and other such rudiments remained. But they functioned independently of the African systems in which they originated. And, increasingly with the passing of time, they were altered as they came into contact with Christianity. That contact was ambitiously pursued by missionaries, and their preaching often struck a chord with blacks in part because it resonated with the tradition of the itinerant "good talkers" of West Africa who were known for their skill at storytelling and consulted for their wisdom and knowledge. That similarity helped to bridge African religions to Christianity.

Black preachers, in developing techniques of rhythm, repetition, singing, demonstrative and physical display, and exploitation of biblical images, fused tribal backgrounds with Protestant styles of worship. Preaching was the catalyst for the translation of African and Christian traditions into a vernacular that was characterized by its emotional spirituality, rhetorical

richness, and distinct material culture. George White, who was licensed by the Methodist church as a "coloured preacher" in 1807, reported that during one meeting where he was exhorting, "a numerous body of people … fell prostrate under the divine power … at which my own heart glowed with inexpressible joy, and renewed resolution to proceed in obedience to my Master's command; exhorting to repentance all I met with."[4]

The revivalist enterprise brought tens of thousands of black southerners into Baptist and Methodist churches by 1800. The revival emphases on rebirth, the emergence of a new person, and especially highly expressive camp meeting behaviors were analogous in certain respects to African traditions of trance, spirit possession, singing, dancing, drumming, and mediumship. The ecstatic performance of revival included profession of encounters with the Holy Spirit, energetic preaching, Christian prophecy, and the singing of hymns, as well as an assortment of physical exercises – clapping, jumping, jerking, shouting, and barking. Within this lively blending of religious cultures, spirituals emerged, in some cases through vocal responses to preaching. Blacks, both slave and free in the South, joined Protestant churches (there were few black Catholics outside of New Orleans), some became preachers, and some eventually were licensed and ordained. The first African American Baptist congregation had gathered on a Virginia plantation in the 1750s, and the black Baptist preacher George Liele had organized black churches in Savannah and in South Carolina in the 1770s. In 1788, the First African Baptist Church was founded in Savannah by Andrew Bryan. The circumstances in the North brought about by abolitionist campaigning enabled the founding of black congregations by African Americans who would no longer tolerate discrimination at church. The Bethel African Methodist and the St. Thomas African Episcopal churches were founded in Philadelphia in 1794 by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, respectively. In the next century, women claimed an increasingly more important role as exhorters, deacons, members of black Catholic religious orders, and eventually ordained ministers. They followed the path blazed by the female subject of *Elizabeth, a Colored Minister of the Gospel Born in Slavery* (1889), who preached in Virginia in the 1790s, and when threatened with arrest explained that her ordination was from God, not men.

As many as 10 percent of slaves might have been Muslim upon arrival in North America. There are insufficient records to inform a picture of African American Islam in 1790, but the example of Omar Ibn Said (1770–1864)

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[4] George White, "A Brief Account of the Life, Experience, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George White, an African," in Graham Russell Hodges, ed., *Black Itinerants of the Gospel: The Narratives of John Jea and George White* (Madison, 1993), 61.

demonstrates the presence of Muslims at this time. Said, who was brought to Charleston, South Carolina, from the Muslim state of Futa Toro in West Africa about 1807, was a Muslim scholar who had made a pilgrimage to Mecca before being sold to slavers in Africa. He authored a number of Arabic works as a slave in the South, including an autobiography composed after he had converted to Christianity.[5]

In 1790 there were an estimated two thousand Jews in America. Charleston, South Carolina, was the center of colonial Judaism, with other congregations in Philadelphia, Savannah, New York, Richmond, and Newport. Those congregations made provisions for the supply of kosher meat, circumcised their sons, and built synagogues, including the Touro synagogue in Newport, where the first Jewish sermon in America, delivered in Spanish, was preached in 1771. All of those congregations were Sephardic, formed from persons of Spanish and Portuguese background. After about 1750, Sephardic immigration all but ended, and when immigration began to increase in the nineteenth century, it consisted largely of Ashkenazim. In the late eighteenth century, Jewish communities were mostly urban, and the members of those communities were commercially inclined. Social intercourse in such settings led to rapid acculturation, so that by the 1770s English translations of key Jewish liturgies as well as the prayer book were available. Sephardic Jews in America at that time were more flexible in their identity as Jews than later immigrants. Their ideas about keeping kosher were adaptable, they intermarried with non-Jews, and the children of those marriages generally were raised Protestant. There was a shortage of rabbis for most of the eighteenth century, and when by the turn of the century that situation had improved, the rabbi, in addition to his role as teacher, had become a preacher, a community organizer, and an active ambassador to the dominant Protestant culture. The Americanization of Judaism had only begun in the 1790s. With renewed immigration, the process would accelerate in the nineteenth century, through the agency of Rabbis Isaac Leeser in Philadelphia and Isaac Meyer Wise in Cincinnati.

The Enlightenment in America manifested in various ways in the late eighteenth century. Among all of the religious developments in America in the 1790s, the emergence of a religious rationalism, sometimes referred to as Deism, and at other times by its enemies as "infidelism," was the clearest sign that in the aftermath of the Revolution the nation's religious sensibilities had shifted. Prior to the Revolution, New England Congregationalist ministers Charles Chauncy, Jonathan Mayhew, and Ebenezer Gay, among

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[5] Omar Ibn Said, *Autobiography of Omar Ibn Said*, ed. John Franklin Jameson, *American Historical Review* 30 (July 1925): 787–95.

others, had begun stressing human capability in their theological writings. In the South, where Thomas Jefferson eventually would delete from his Bible references to miracles and redemption and leave a retouched picture of Jesus as a moral teacher, there was considerable interest in the rationalist currents that were flowing into Anglicanism. Deism caught on there and elsewhere in the South, such as in Charleston, and in the Middle and New England colonies among the upper classes. Vermont's Ethan Allen penned *Reason the Only Oracle of Man* in 1784, which was followed by Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794–96) and former Revolutionary War chaplain Joel Barlow's influential translation of the Comte de Volney's French classic, *Ruins; or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (1799). Writings such as those blended a criticism of formal religion, and especially its abuse of power, with a case for the capability of human reason, unaided by revelation, to know truth and to shape a moral world. Elihu Palmer, an anti-Calvinist ex-Presbyterian minister, founded the Deistical Society of New York in 1794 on eleven principles, all derived from the premise that the best moral and intellectual system is one that brings the most happiness to humanity. His weekly Deist paper, the *Temple of Reason*, was published from 1800 to 1803. Although the Deistical Society did not last, the ideas that undergirded it fostered the movement toward scientism and humanism in nineteenth-century Protestantism, bearing fruit as Unitarianism, and various sorts of liberal religion. The metaphysical and poetic tones redolent in the nineteenth-century's Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and other antebellum writers had not yet coalesced in 1790. They were, however, in the making, driven by a complex of social and intellectual challenges that were taking place under the unfolding umbrella of religious freedom and disestablishment.

Amidst all of the church building, missionizing, theological debates, and reconstructions of polity, many Americans in the early republic ordered their lives with some regard for ideas and rituals that were outside of the orthodoxies of the various denominations. In some cases, competing forms of community, with rich symbology and cultivated mystery, provided a locus for alternative expression of religious feelings. Such was the case of the fraternity of the Masonic Order, which claimed a large and broad membership, from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Revere, and George Washington, and a number of other founders and powerful commercial persons, alongside less affluent persons in smaller towns. Masons in the early Republic periodically added rituals to their meetings and imagined themselves to be a religious group, although a vow of secrecy prevented them from defending themselves against criticism that they were atheistical and antidemocratic. In 1790, Masonry already was an important part of community and imagined community in America, and such groups proliferated in the

early nineteenth century so that by the 1890s, the number of males active in fraternities rivaled the males in the churches. In addition to organized quasi-religious communities such as the Masons, the last decade of the eighteenth century was a time when persons supplemented their denominational life with a rich inventory of ideas about witches and curses, thunder and ghosts, the healing power of herbs, and the wisdom of astrology. People practiced rituals of purification and protection, celebration and invocation, which had been delivered to them from previous generations of folkways that ran outside denominational life. The ethnic and religious diversity of the nation added substantially to such a religious culture, as neighbors exchanged theories about the invisible world and learned from each other new ways to negotiate its magic, dangers, and possibilities.

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RELIGION AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL TRADITION

DANIEL L. DREISBACH

Religion is woven into the fabric of the American political experiment. Since the first permanent settlements in British North America, religion has been integral to the identity and mission of the American people and their political pursuits. The New England Puritans especially endeavored, in the words of Matthew 5:14, to build a "city set upon a Hill." Their polis, they believed, would remake political society and be a model for future commonwealths. Familiar features of colonial founding documents and other expressions of the colonists' political pursuits included invocations of divine blessing and acknowledgments of a sacred mission. Many early colonial charters and codes derived their ideas and provisions from the Bible. Most of the colonies eventually adopted a model of religious establishment they had known in the Old World. Local Puritan congregations enjoyed legal favor in much of New England – Rhode Island being the notable exception – and the Church of England was established throughout the South. Religious dissenters were afforded a measure of toleration in most colonies, although they were often burdened in the exercise of their religion and subjected to civil disabilities because of their religious beliefs and affiliations.

As European settlements grew in number and size up and down the Atlantic seaboard, there was a corresponding increase in the diversity of religious sects. The extraordinary religious diversity in the colonies was a potential source of rivalry and conflict among the sects competing for adherents and, sometimes, the legal and financial favor of the civil state. Colonial history has many examples of sectarian competition turning hostile and even bloody. Many sects, such as the Quakers and Baptists, suffered persecution in their new homeland. Although memory is more frequently drawn to dramatic sectarian clashes, the story of religions in America is most remarkable for the relative harmony among the diverse sects that were planted and flourished side by side in the American soil. Compared to Europe in the centuries following the Protestant Reformation, Americans witnessed little religious violence.

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The religious diversity in the North American colonies necessitated working out the terms, initially, of religious toleration and, eventually, of religious liberty. In polities where the rulers and the ruled are all of one faith, there is little demand for a policy of religious liberty. But where both those who wield state power and their subjects come from many denominations and where multiple sects compete for followers and public favor, peaceful coexistence requires a workable policy of toleration. Europeans learned this in the wake of the Reformation, which produced fractures in Christendom and more than a century of bloody wars of religion. Very early in the colonial experience, Americans began to grapple with these vexing issues. A commitment to religious liberty eventually found expression in several influential documents crafted in the wake of political independence, including the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1791).

A DEBATE ON CHURCH AND STATE

By the time the national Constitution was framed in the late 1780s, most Americans, despite some moderate Enlightenment influences, continued to believe religion's place and role in the polity must be prominent and public, and some continued to support the established church in their respective states. There was very little sentiment, however, for a national ecclesiastical establishment. The religious diversity in the fledgling constitutional republic meant that the establishment of a national church was practically untenable. No denomination was sufficiently dominant to command the legal favor of the national regime, and there was little likelihood that a political consensus would emerge as to which sect or combination of sects should constitute a national ecclesiastical establishment.

Few Americans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even among those who supported disestablishment, doubted the value and utility of a vibrant religious culture. A widely held assumption was that religion fostered the civic virtues and social discipline that gave citizens the capacity to govern themselves. Tyrants used the whip and rod to maintain social order, but this was unacceptable for a free, self-governing people. Religion, alternatively, instilled a moral compass that prompted citizens to behave in a responsible, disciplined manner. Religion was thus viewed as vital to self-government. No one made this argument more famously or succinctly than George Washington in his "Farewell Address," where he wrote, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens. . . .

[R]eason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."[1] Similar assertions are ubiquitous in the political literature of the founding era.[2]

Given the importance attached to religion in a system of self-government, American political theorists of the era thought deeply about how best to nurture popular religion and extend its influence in society. By the mid-eighteenth century, two conflicting schools of thought had emerged regarding how best to promote a vibrant religious culture. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, described the distinct options. "There are but two ways of preserving visible religion in any country. The first is by establishments. The second is by the competition of different religious societies."[3]

The first way was to maintain a legally established church. This was the practice in the Old World and in most of the colonies. In the early colonial period, the prevailing view had been that, insofar as religion was indispensable to social order and political happiness, it was the duty of all citizens to support religion through the auspices of the civil state, which officially and legally supported a particular sect or denomination. Proponents of a state church feared that the failure to establish a church and to provide it with the civil state's sustaining aid would impair religion's vitality and influence in society.

A second way to nurture a vibrant religious culture, championed by an unlikely coalition of moderate Enlightenment rationalists and religious dissenters, emerged on the threshold of independence. This approach proposed dismantling the old arrangement of one state, one church – that is, removing legal favors for one particular sect over all others. The old arrangement would be replaced with a disestablished order in which all sects would be on an equal footing before the law. Each religious denomination, proponents argued, was best left to compete for adherents and support in an open marketplace of ideas where, as Thomas Jefferson confidently predicted, "truth is great and will prevail if left to herself."[4] As this

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[1] George Washington, "Farewell Address, 19 Sept. 1796," in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, 37 vols. (Washington, DC, 1931–40), 35: 229.

[2] The notion that religion and morality are indispensable to civic virtue and social order was espoused by Americans from diverse religious and intellectual traditions, walks of life, and regions of the country. For illustrative expressions of this idea in the founding era, see Daniel L. Dreisbach, "George Washington on Religion's Place in Public Life," in Charles W. Dunn, ed., *The Future of Religion in American Politics* (Lexington, KY, 2009), 105–6.

[3] Benjamin Rush to Granville Sharp, 27 April 1784, in Benjamin Rush, *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, ed. L. H. Butterfield, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1951), 1: 330–1.

[4] "An Act for Establishing Religious Freedom," in William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (Richmond, 1823), 12: 85.

perspective gained ascendancy, matters of one's belief or disbelief and association with and support of a particular religious society were left to the voluntary choice of citizens; civil rights and prerogatives were no longer conditioned on a citizen's religious beliefs.

Critics of state churches argued that disestablishment and competition among sects, in the words of James Madison, resulted "in the greater purity & industry of the pastors & in the greater devotion of their flocks."[5] Disestablishment required sects to compete to survive. Churches and their clergy had to be exemplary and industrious, demonstrating to the world the purity and efficacy of their faith. Churches were forced to rely on the voluntary support of adherents rather than the benevolence of the civil state. Religious establishments, critics said, led to complacency, corruption, and intolerance.[6] By contrast, the combination of competition among sects, disestablishment, and religious liberty created an environment in which religions could flourish and beneficently inform public culture. Advocates for disestablishment argued, with growing confidence, that the termination of state aid for one particular church facilitated a vibrant religious culture in which the best and purest religion would dominate. This, they said, was good for the church, good for society, and good for the civil state.

By the time of independence, there was growing disagreement as to what policies and practices constituted an "establishment of religion." Church-state arrangements in the former colonies were in transition. The definition of "establishment" varied from region to region and from denomination to denomination.[7] All agreed that official, exclusive state preference for one church or sect over all others constituted an establishment. Not all agreed, however, that general assessments, which taxed all residents for the support of religion and, in some jurisdictions, allowed taxpayers to designate the church or minister to receive the tax, was a religious establishment. Most of the newly independent states retained laws, institutions,

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[5] James Madison to Jasper Adams, Sept. 1833, in Daniel L. Dreisbach, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic: Jasper Adams and the Church–State Debate* (Lexington, KY, 1996), 118–20.

[6] See James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments" [June 1785], in Robert A. Rutland, William M. E. Rachal, et al., eds., *The Papers of James Madison* (Chicago, 1973), 8: 301 ("What have been its fruits [fruits of ecclesiastical establishments]? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution.").

[7] For useful analyses of the meaning of "an establishment of religion" in the late colonial and early national periods, see Thomas J. Curry, *The First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment* (New York, 1986); Donald L. Drakeman, *Church, State, and Original Intent* (New York, 2010); Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill, 1994).

policies, or practices, such as religious test oaths and general assessments, which would be deemed religious establishments by twenty-first-century legal standards. Eight or nine states at the time of independence retained either an established church or something approximating a religious establishment. The Congregationalists enjoyed official favor in much of New England; the Episcopal Church was preferred by law throughout the South. A few states, such as Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, steadfastly rejected Old World models of an exclusive ecclesiastical establishment and, in so doing, created new models for religious toleration and disestablished polities. These new models would eventually prevail in America.

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE NEW STATES

After asserting their independence from England, the former colonies began to revise their laws to bring them into conformity with republican principles. Among the legal arrangements reviewed was the model of religious establishment inherited from England. Nowhere was this process more dramatic and, in the end, more influential than in Virginia. The Virginia Convention, assembled in Williamsburg in 1776, instructed its delegates at the Continental Congress to press for a declaration of independence from England. This bold initiative raised vexing questions about the nature of civil authority in the Commonwealth. The delegates thought it necessary to frame a new social compact, beginning with a declaration of man's natural rights, followed by a new plan of civil government. Among those appointed to a committee to prepare a state declaration of rights and constitution were George Mason and the young James Madison.

Mason was the principal draftsman of both a declaration of rights and a constitution. Although Madison was certainly interested in all portions of the Declaration, only the final article providing for religious toleration prompted him to take action. In the first significant public act in his long and distinguished political career, Madison objected to Mason's use of the word "toleration" because it dangerously implied that religious exercise was a mere privilege that could be granted or revoked at the pleasure of the civil state and was not assumed to be a natural right.[8] As early as 1774, Madison had come to think of *religious toleration*, the ultimate objective of most reformers of his day, as an inadequate halfway point on the path to *religious liberty*. The former often assumes an established church and is always a revocable grant of the civil state rather than a natural, unalienable right. Madison thought the right of religious exercise was too important

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[8] For Madison's account of this episode, see Douglass Adair, ed., "James Madison's Autobiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 2 (3rd ser., 1945): 199.

to be cast in the form of a mere privilege allowed by the civil authority and enjoyed as a grant of governmental benevolence. Instead, he viewed religious liberty as a fundamental right, possessed equally by all citizens, located beyond the reach of civil magistrates and subject only to the dictates of a free conscience.

Madison proposed replacing Mason's statement, "all Men shou'd enjoy the fullest Toleration in the Exercise of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conscience," with the phrase, "all men are equally entitled to the full and free exercise of {religion} accord[in]g to the dictates of Conscience."[9] Mason's draft reflected the most enlightened, liberal policies of the age and went further than any previous declaration in force in Virginia, but it did not go far enough to satisfy Madison. Key to Madison's restatement was the word "equally," which the Convention retained in subsequent drafts. This language meant that the unlearned Baptists of the central Piedmont had religious rights equal to those of the Anglican aristocrats of the Tidewater.

Article XVI of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, adopted in its final form on 12 June 1776, provided, "That religion, or the duty which we owe to our CREATOR, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practise Christian forbearance, love, and charity, towards each other."[10] The triumph of religious liberty over mere toleration is among America's greatest contributions to, and innovations of, political society.

Adoption of Article XVI unleashed a tumultuous decade-long battle to establish religious liberty in Virginia, culminating in passage of the Virginia "Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom." Drafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1777, the Virginia Statute is one of the most influential American documents on religious liberty. The bill failed to gain passage in 1779 when it was first introduced in the Virginia legislature, but it was eventually enacted in January 1786, following the legislative demise of a general assessment proposal that would have required all citizens to pay an annual tax for the support of teachers of the Christian religion. An eloquent preamble – four times the length of the act itself – sets forth reasons for religious freedom, among them that "Almighty God hath created the mind free," the purest religion is propagated by reason and not by coercion, it is "sinful and tyrannical" to compel a person to support a religion

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[9] *The Papers of James Madison*, ed. William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal (Chicago, 1962), 1: 173–4.
[10] "A Declaration of Rights" (1776), in Hening, *Statutes at Large*, 9: 111–12.

that "he disbelieves," and "civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions." The Statute provides "[t]hat no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry ..., nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."[11]

Massachusetts took up the delicate topic of religion in its Constitution of 1780. The church-state model reflected in this document differed from that adopted in Virginia. The Massachusetts Constitution acknowledged "the right as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly, and at stated seasons, to worship the SUPREME BEING." It also affirmed the citizen's right to worship "GOD in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience," without being "hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate," so long as one does "not disturb the public peace, or obstruct others in their religious worship." Having recognized protections for religious worship, it then affirmed a policy typically associated with ecclesiastical establishments: "As the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality; and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community, but by the institution of the public worship of GOD, and of public instructions in piety, religion and morality." Accordingly, the Constitution authorized the legislature to mandate "the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of GOD, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily."[12]

John Adams, one of the document's chief architects, thought this arrangement appropriately balanced the establishment of one public religion with the maintenance of a protected space for various private religions in which they could worship and enjoy the support of adherents. Every polity, Adams thought, must maintain by law some expression of public religion responsible for disseminating throughout the community the values and civic virtues that promote social order and give citizens the capacity for self-government. A stable civil state and political prosperity could not long endure if it remained neutral or indifferent toward religion.

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[11] "An Act for Establishing Religious Freedom," in Hening, *Statutes at Large*, 12: 84–6.

[12] The Constitution of Massachusetts (1780), in Francis Newton Thorpe, ed., *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies*, 7 vols. (Washington, DC, 1909), 3: 1889–90.

In short, the very survival of the commonwealth depended on a public role for religion.[13]

Legal developments in Virginia and Massachusetts in the decade following independence presented two contrasting visions of the prudential and legal place of religion in public life. Experiences in other states offered additional models of church-state arrangements. These experiences shaped how Americans thought about church-state relationships on the threshold of framing a new national charter.

THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION ON RELIGION AND THE CIVIL STATE

The national constitution that emerged from a constitutional convention that met in Philadelphia in mid-1787, together with the First Amendment to it, set forth principles that defined a place and role for religion in public life. The bases for this distinctively American approach to church-state relations are Article VI, clause 3, and the First Amendment. The first states that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States," and the second provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The former clause is binding on federal officeholders; it did not invalidate religious tests that existed under state laws. Similarly, the latter provision initially had no effect on the arrangements and practices at the state and local levels. It was not until the twentieth century that the U.S. Supreme Court incorporated the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom into the Fourteenth Amendment's due process of law clause, thereby making this freedom applicable to state and local authorities.[14]

The religious test ban evolved from a proposal offered by Charles Pinckney of South Carolina at the Constitutional Convention in May 1787, which stated that "the Legislature of the United States shall pass no Law on the subject of Religion."[15] Pinckney told delegates that "the prevention of

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[13] See John Witte, Jr., "One Public Religion, Many Private Religions: John Adams and the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution," in Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark D. Hall, and Jeffry H. Morrison, eds., *The Founders on God and Government* (Lanham, MD, 2004), 23–52.

[14] The free exercise of religion and nonestablishment provisions were incorporated into the "liberties" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment's due process of law clause in *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296, 303 (1940) and *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1, 15 (1947), respectively.

[15] *The Debates in the Several State Conventions, on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, ed. Jonathan Elliot, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Washington, DC, 1836), 1: 148 [hereinafter Elliot's *Debates*]; *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. Max Farrand (New Haven, 1911), 3: 599 [hereinafter Farrand's *Records*].

Religious Tests, as qualifications to Offices of Trust or Emolument . . . [is] a provision the world will expect from you, in the establishment of a System founded on Republican Principles, and in an age so liberal and enlightened as the present."[16] Three months later, on 20 August, Pinckney raised the subject again, this time proposing the following clause: "No religious test or qualification shall ever be annexed to any oath of office under the authority of the United States."[17] The proposal was referred to a committee without further recorded deliberation or action. On 30 August, during debate on qualifications for federal office and employment, the religious test ban was again placed on the table at Pinckney's insistence. In deference to Quakers and some other sects, the convention discussed adding the words "or affirmation" after the word "oath" in the oath clause. Pinckney then moved to join the test ban with the proposed "oath or affirmation" clause. The convention briefly debated and approved Pinckney's amendment before adopting "the whole Article."[18] The article was forwarded to the Committee on Style, which shaped the final language incorporated into Article VI.

The provision provoked debate among the general public and in the state ratifying conventions. A recurring theme emphasized the role of morality, fostered by the Christian religion, in promoting the civic virtues and social order essential in a system of self-government. The ban on religious tests, opponents said, suggested inattentiveness to the vital task of selecting rulers committed to protecting and nurturing religion and morality. Once it is conceded that not all religions are conducive to good civil government and political order, then there are plausible grounds for excluding adherents of some religions from public office. Proponents of a federal religious test ban framed the debate in terms of religious liberty. Oliver Ellsworth, a Connecticut federalist and delegate at the Constitutional Convention, defended the ban, arguing that "the sole purpose and effect of it is to exclude persecution, and to secure to you the important right of religious liberty. . . . [A] good and peaceable citizen," he continued, should receive "no penalties or incapacities on account of his religious sentiments."[19]

Article VI was a departure from the prevailing practices in Europe as well as in most of the states. For centuries, religious test oaths had been a favored instrument for preserving ecclesiastical establishments. The test ban practically preempted the prospect of a national ecclesiastical

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[16] Farrand's *Records*, 3: 122.

[17] *Ibid.*, 2: 335, 342.

[18] Elliot's *Debates*, 5: 498; Farrand's *Records*, 2: 461, 468.

[19] A Landholder [Oliver Ellsworth], "To the Landholders and Farmers, Number VII," *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 17 Dec. 1787, 1.

establishment by removing a mechanism for a religious denomination to exert control over the political processes. Moreover, the ban opened the door for members of minority sects to become full and equal participants in the political enterprise.

There is reason to doubt, however, that the federal test ban was driven by a general renunciation of religious tests. The inclusion of religious tests in the laws of many states of the era indicates some measure of support for them. Significantly, free exercise and nonestablishment provisions coexisted with religious test oaths in some state constitutions. This suggests that the founding generation did not always or necessarily consider these concepts incompatible. Furthermore, some delegates at the Constitutional Convention who endorsed the Article VI test ban had previously participated in crafting religious tests for their respective state constitutions. How can one reconcile this apparent contradiction? Their support for the federal test ban was, perhaps, rooted in the principle of federalism, which denied the national government all authority over religion, including the authority to administer religious tests. There was a consensus that religion was a matter best left to individual citizens and their respective state governments. Some founders, it would seem, supported a federal test ban because they valued religious tests required under state laws, and they feared a federal test might displace existing state test oaths and religious establishments. Even among proponents of Article VI, few denied the advantage of placing devout Christians in public office. The issue debated was the efficacy of a national religious test for attaining this objective.[20]

For many Americans, the religious test ban was not a sufficient guarantee of religious liberty under the proposed federal regime. Accordingly, a number of states conditioned their endorsement of the new Constitution on the adoption of amendments, including an amendment protecting religious liberty. When the First Congress convened in New York City in 1789, Representative James Madison took the lead in framing amendments.[21] On 8 June, Madison introduced the following proposal: "The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretext,

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[20] See generally Gerard V. Bradley, "The No Religious Test Clause and the Constitution of Religious Liberty: A Machine that Has Gone of Itself," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 37 (1987): 674–747; Daniel L. Dreisbach, "The Constitution's Forgotten Religion Clause: Reflections on the Article VI Religious Test Ban," *Journal of Church and State* 38 (1996): 261–95.

[21] The debates in the first Congress are reported in vol. 1 of *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, ed. Joseph Gales (Washington, DC, 1834) [hereinafter *Annals of Congress*].

infringed."[22] The House took little action on the proposal until 15 August when it passed the following text offered by Samuel Livermore of New Hampshire: "Congress shall make no laws touching religion, or infringing the rights of conscience."[23] Five days later the House revisited the matter, replacing Livermore's amendment with language suggested by Fisher Ames of Massachusetts: "Congress shall make no law establishing religion, or to prevent the free exercise thereof, or to infringe the rights of conscience."[24] The measure was then sent to the Senate, which, after consideration of several proposals, agreed to the following version: "Congress shall make no law establishing articles of faith or a mode of worship, or prohibiting the free exercise of religion."[25] The House declined to accept the Senate's language; thus the matter was sent to a conference committee that drafted the text adopted by the House on 24 September, and by the Senate the following day.[26] This version, following ratification by the states, became the First Amendment.

The precise meaning and application of these sixteen words has sustained a lively debate for over two centuries. There is, however, broad agreement for several conclusions derived from this text and its legislative history. First, the First Amendment prohibited the creation of a national church, like the ecclesiastical establishments in most European countries. The nonestablishment provision did not require civil government to hold all religion in utter indifference or to strip public life of all religious discourse, values, or symbols. Second, the religion clauses implicitly affirmed that Congress was not only prohibited from establishing a national church, but also denied authority to interfere with existing state religious establishments. Third, the religion clauses protected individual citizens from actions by the federal regime inhibiting the free exercise of religion. The precise definition and scope of this liberty are far from clear; however, the text suggests a far-reaching limitation on the national government's power to interfere with voluntary religious practices. At the very least, the free exercise guarantee was meant to prevent Congress from compelling or prohibiting religious worship. It affirmed a right to worship God, or not, according to the dictates of conscience, free from interference, discrimination, coercion, or punishment by the federal government.

Ratification of the First Amendment changed very little, at least initially, in church-state policies and practices in the new nation. It merely

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[22] *Ibid.*, 1: 451.
[23] *Ibid.*, 1: 759.
[24] *Ibid.*, 1: 796.
[25] *Journal of the First Session of the Senate of the United States of America* (Washington, DC, 1820), 77.
[26] *Annals of Congress*, 1: 948 (House); 1: 90 (Senate).

made explicit that which was already implicit in the constitutional arrangement – that is, jurisdiction in matters pertaining to religion was denied to the national government and retained by the individual, religious societies, and the respective states. At least half of the states in 1791, the year the First Amendment was ratified, retained some form of religious establishment, and a handful of states – including Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts – continued to maintain such arrangements well into the nineteenth century. The First Amendment left these church-state arrangements untouched, while explicitly restricting the national government. Moreover, the new national legislature continued to appoint and pay for legislative chaplains and to set aside days for public prayer and thanksgiving, which had been practices in the Continental Congress. These and other arguably religious practices continued under the First Amendment.

TESTING A CONSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

Those who thought ratification of the First Amendment would resolve church-state conflicts in the new nation were disappointed. Religious and church-state themes would figure prominently in some of the most rancorous disputes of the next two generations. At the heart of these conflicts were questions about the prudential and constitutional role of religion in public life. The debates surrounding these disputes two centuries ago were framed in ways that would shape how future generations would approach church-state relationships. By casting light on these conflicts, one gains a better understanding of the church-state disputes that would follow.

RELIGION AND THE ELECTION OF 1800

The first major test of religion's place on the national political stage, following ratification of the Constitution and the First Amendment, was the presidential election of 1800. In perhaps no presidential campaign has religion played a more divisive and decisive role than this one. The unpopular incumbent, Federalist John Adams, faced his longtime rival, Republican Thomas Jefferson. The electorate was deeply divided along regional, partisan, and ideological lines.

Among the critical issues in the campaign was Jefferson's religion or, to be more precise, the alleged lack thereof.[27] His Federalist opponents

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[27] See generally Charles O. Lerche, Jr., "Jefferson and the Election of 1800: A Case Study in the Political Smear," *William and Mary Quarterly* 5 (3rd ser., 1948): 467–91; Charles F. O'Brien, "The Religious Issue in the Presidential Campaign of 1800," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 107:1 (1971): 82.

vilified him as a Jacobin and an atheist. The "grand question" posed by the *Gazette of the United States*, a leading Federalist newspaper, in the days before the election was whether Americans should vote for "GOD – AND A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT [John Adams]; or impiously declare for JEFFERSON – AND NO GOD!!!"[28] Jefferson's Federalist foes did not invent the stinging accusation that he was an infidel. His ardent advocacy for disestablishment in Virginia years before had led many pious Americans to conclude that Jefferson was, if not an enemy of religion, at least indifferent toward organized religion's vital role in civic life. The publication of his *Notes on the State of Virginia* in the mid-1780s exacerbated fears that he was a dangerous, demoralizing infidel. In the *Notes* he opined, "[I]t does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."[29] Opponents said this confirmed that he was an infidel or, worse, an atheist, and they reminded the electorate throughout the 1800 campaign that he had written these lines. His sympathy for the French Revolution, which in the 1790s turned bloody and anti-Christian, reinforced the charge that Jefferson was an infidel.

Political adversaries asserted that Jefferson's infidelity raised doubts about his fitness for high office. In an influential pamphlet published in 1800, the former chaplain to the U.S. House of Representatives, William Linn, denounced candidate Jefferson, charging him with "disbelief of the Holy Scriptures" and "rejection of the Christian Religion and open profession of Deism."[30] A vote for Jefferson, he warned, "must be construed into no less than rebellion against God." He added ominously that the promotion of an infidel to such high office "by the suffrages of a Christian nation" would encourage public immorality and licentious manners and lead to the "destruction of all social order and happiness."[31] The Presbyterian minister John Mitchell Mason similarly warned that it would be "a crime never to be forgiven" for Americans to elect "an open enemy to their religion, their Redeemer, and their hope, [and it] would be mischief to themselves and sin against God." He repudiated the notion gaining currency among Jeffersonians that "{r}eligion has nothing to do with politics."[32]

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[28] *Gazette of the United States*, 11 Sept. 1800, 2. This question was posed repeatedly by the *Gazette* in the course of the election season.

[29] Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII, in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 vols. (Washington, DC, 1903–4), 2: 221.

[30] [William Linn], *Serious Considerations on the Election of a President: Addressed to the Citizens of the United States* (New York, 1800), 4.

[31] *Ibid.*, 28, 20, 26.

[32] [John Mitchell Mason], *The Voice of Warning, to Christians, on the Ensuing Election of a President of the United States* (New York, 1800), 6, 25 (emphasis in original).

Jeffersonian partisans denied that their candidate was an infidel or atheist. "[M]y information is that he is a sincere professor of Christianity – though not a noisy one," Tunis Wortman wrote.[33] Republicans extolled Jefferson as a leader of uncommon liberality and tolerance, an enlightened man who zealously defended constitutional government, civil and religious liberty, and the separation between religion and politics. In response to attacks on Jefferson's religion, the Republicans advanced a separationist policy, which would eventually exert much influence on American politics. "Religion and government are equally necessary," intoned Wortman, "but their interests should be kept separate and distinct. No legitimate connection can ever subsist between them. Upon no plan, no system, can they become united, without endangering the purity and usefulness of both – the church will corrupt the state, and the state pollute the church."[34]

The campaign rhetoric was so vitriolic that, when news of Jefferson's election swept across the country, housewives in Federalist New England buried family Bibles in their gardens or hid them in wells because they expected the new administration to confiscate and burn the scriptures.[35] These fears resonated with pious citizens who had received alarming reports of the French Revolution where de-Christianizing mobs were invading religious sanctuaries and desecrating sacred artifacts. Many Americans imagined, given the new president's sympathy for the Revolution, that Jeffersonian mobs would be unleashed in a similar manner on this side of the Atlantic.

The election commenced a perennial debate regarding the appropriate place of religion in civic life. Religion, one side argued, is an indispensable support for political prosperity, providing a vital moral compass in a regime of self-government. The other side, echoing Jeffersonian partisans, asserted that social cohesion and democratic values are threatened whenever bricks are removed from the wall of separation between religion and politics. The Jeffersonians also made the argument, which is often raised in modern campaigns, that questioning a candidate's fitness for public office because of his or her religion offends constitutional principles banning religious tests and establishments.

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[33] Timoleon [Tunis Wortman], *A Solemn Address, to Christians & Patriots, Upon the Approaching Election of a President of the United States: In Answer to a Pamphlet, Entitled, "Serious Considerations," &c.* (New York, 1800), 16.

[34] *Ibid.*, 7.

[35] See Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, vol. 3, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty* (Boston, 1962), 481; David Saville Muzzey, *Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1918), 207–8; James Parton, *Life of Thomas Jefferson* (Boston, 1874), 574.

BUILDING A "WALL OF SEPARATION"

On New Year's Day 1802, President Jefferson penned a missive to the Danbury (Connecticut) Baptist Association. The New England Baptists, who had supported Jefferson in the election of 1800, were a beleaguered religious and political minority in a region where a Congregationalist-Federalist axis dominated public life. Jefferson endorsed the persecuted Baptists' aspirations for religious liberty. He wrote,

> Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that *their* legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.[36]

Even though the Baptists had not requested a religious proclamation, Jefferson told his attorney general, Levi Lincoln, that his letter to the Connecticut Baptists "furnishes an occasion too, which I have long wished to find, of saying why I do not proclaim fastings & thanksgivings, as my predecessors did."[37] The president stirred political controversy in the early days of his administration when he departed from the practices of his presidential predecessors and refused to issue official proclamations designating days for public prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving. He was eager to explain to the American people his position on this practice.

Jefferson's stance on religious proclamations is often portrayed as an example of his principled commitment to church-state separation.[38] Careful scrutiny of his public record on this practice, however, suggests that his actions were motivated more by politics or his view of federalism than by a commitment to the separation of church and state. His refusal, as president, to set aside days for religious observances contrasted with his actions in Virginia where, in the late 1770s, he framed "A Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving,"[39] and, as governor in 1779,

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[36] Thomas Jefferson to Messrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, and Stephen S. Nelson, a committee of the Danbury Baptist association in the state of Connecticut, 1 Jan. 1802, Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress), Series 1, Box 89, 2 Dec. 1801–1 Jan. 1802.

[37] Jefferson to Levi Lincoln, 1 Jan. 1802, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Series 1, Box 89, 2 Dec. 1801–1 Jan. 1802.

[38] See, for example, *Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783, 807 (1983) (Brennan, J., dissenting); *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577, 622–4 (1992) (Souter, J., concurring).

[39] *Report of the Committee of Revisors Appointed by the General Assembly of Virginia in MDCCLXXVI* (Richmond, 1784), 59–60. This bill was part of Virginia's revised

he designated a day for "publick and solemn thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God."[40] The former not only granted the "Governor, or Chief Magistrate" the authority to appoint "days of public fasting and humiliation, or thanksgiving," but also authorized stiff fines for pastors who failed on days so appointed to "perform divine service and preach a sermon, or discourse, suited to the occasion, in his church."[41]

Can Jefferson's actions in Virginia where he issued religious proclamations be reconciled with his refusal to issue such proclamations as president of the United States? Jefferson maintained that he, as president, could not issue religious proclamations because the national government could exercise only those powers expressly granted to it by the Constitution, and no power to issue religious proclamations had been so granted. There was a "wall of separation" between state governments and the national government on matters pertaining to religion, such as religious proclamations. The powers legitimately exercised by state officials to issue such proclamations, Jefferson opined, were not, as a matter of federalism, extended to the nation's chief executive. Therefore, Jefferson saw no inconsistency in authoring a religious proclamation as a state official and refusing to release a similar proclamation as the federal chief executive. The "wall" metaphor was used to delineate the legitimate constitutional jurisdictions of the federal and state governments on matters pertaining to religion.

In the twentieth century, Jefferson's trope had a profound impact on church-state law and policy. The judiciary embraced this figurative phrase as a virtual rule of constitutional law, even though the metaphor is not found in the U.S. Constitution or elsewhere in the organic laws of the nation. "In the words of Jefferson," the justices famously declared in an influential 1947 ruling, the First Amendment erected "'a wall of separation between church and State.'... That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach."[42] The "wall of separation" had become the *locus classicus* of the notion that the First Amendment separated religion and the civil state, thereby mandating a secular polity.[43]

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code that included Jefferson's "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom" and "Bill for Punishing Disturbers of Religious Worship and Sabbath Breakers." All three bills were apparently framed by Jefferson and sponsored in the Virginia legislature by James Madison. See Daniel L. Dreisbach, "A New Perspective on Jefferson's Views on Church–State Relations: The Virginia Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom in Its Legislative Context," *American Journal of Legal History* 35 (1991): 172–204.

[40] "Proclamation Appointing a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer," 11 Nov. 1779, in Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 35 vols. to date (Princeton, 1950–), 3: 177–9.

[41] *Report of the Committee of Revisors*, 60.

[42] *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1, 16, 18 (1947).

[43] See generally Daniel L. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State* (New York, 2002).

DISESTABLISHMENT IN NEW ENGLAND

Another noteworthy church-state development in the early nineteenth century was the disestablishment of the last state churches. In 1831, the Massachusetts legislature voted in favor of disestablishment,[44] and two years later the public ratified a constitutional amendment embodying the proposal.[45] Massachusetts was the last state, following Connecticut in 1818 and New Hampshire in 1819, to cease official, legal support for favored churches. The widely reported and discussed transition in Massachusetts was an occasion for the nation, once again, to focus on the prudential and constitutional relationship between church and civil state.

Conservative Protestants were divided on the issue of disestablishment. Those affiliated with the favored Congregational churches feared that withdrawal of the sustaining aid of civil government would inevitably lead to religion's demise and destroy its salutary influence in society. Disestablishment was welcomed by evangelical dissenters, such as the Baptists, who denounced legal preference for one form of Christianity over all others. Most religious traditionalists in New England, however, were concerned that discontinuation of legal preference for the formerly established churches might be misinterpreted as a sign of indifference toward the Christian religion and its general claims in shaping all social, civil, and political institutions. The Christian religion in general, most religious traditionalists believed, sustained civil institutions and was essential to social order and good government.

Significantly, with the passage of time, many of the staunchest opponents of disestablishment came to regard it as a development that revitalized the church and strengthened its place in society. This transformation was

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[44] John D. Cushing observed, "The Congregational churches of Massachusetts during the provincial and early constitutional periods formed a system that has often been described as an 'establishment.' The description, while not altogether accurate, is useful if it is understood that the individual congregations were largely autonomous, that they were bound to no articles of faith by the civil authority, and that they formed a system only insofar as they shared a common" theological heritage. John D. Cushing, "Notes on Disestablishment in Massachusetts, 1780–1833," *William and Mary Quarterly* 26 (3rd ser., 1969): 169. In Massachusetts and some surrounding states, the majority of citizens in each town selected the religious denomination that would form the establishment – in almost all cases this was Congregationalism. For examinations of disestablishment in Massachusetts, see William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1971).

[45] See Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, 3 vols. (New York, 1950), 1: 418–27.

illustrated by Lyman Beecher, the lion of the established Congregational Church in Connecticut. His son recalled,

> I remember seeing father, the day after the election [which formally ended legal support for the Congregational Church], sitting on one of the old-fashioned, rush-bottomed kitchen chairs, his head drooping on his breast, and his arms hanging down. "Father" said I, "what are you thinking of?" He answered, solemnly, "THE CHURCH OF GOD."
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> It was a time of great depression and suffering.... It was as dark a day as ever I saw. The odium thrown upon the ministry was inconceivable. The injury done to the cause of Christ, as we then supposed, was irreparable. For several days I suffered what no tongue can tell *for the best thing that ever happened to the State of Connecticut*. It cut the churches loose from dependence on state support. It threw them wholly on their own resources and on God.
>
> They say ministers have lost their influence; the fact is, they have gained. By voluntary efforts, societies, missions, and revivals, they exert a deeper influence than ever they could by queues, and shoe-buckles, and cocked hats, and gold-headed canes.[46]

Beecher belatedly joined an emerging consensus that believed an exclusive ecclesiastical establishment engendered complacency, corruption, and intolerance in the affairs of the church while disestablishment unleashed competition in the religious marketplace of ideas and promoted industry and devotion among religious adherents. Disestablishment, in short, revitalized the church and nurtured a vibrant religious culture, which was good for the church and good for society.

REDEFINING CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE UNITED STATES

The final decade of the eighteenth century and the opening decades of the nineteenth century were a season for defining and testing the emerging constitutional principles governing church-state relationships in the United States. The meaning of "an establishment of religion" disallowed in the First Amendment and in an increasing number of state laws was the focus of special attention. Religious pluralism, democratization, and secularization were among the forces that prompted a reconsideration of constitutional church-state arrangements. An ever-burgeoning sectarian diversity, which had compelled Americans to formulate workable policies of religious toleration and consider disestablishment, and the growing

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[46] Charles Beecher, ed., *Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D.*, 2 vols. (New York, 1864), 1: 344.

confrontation between those who thought of America as a Christian nation and those who thought the national government was a strictly secular polity tested the distinctive American approach to church-state relations set forth in the constitutions and laws of the young nation.

The first two generations of Americans following ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights witnessed significant transitions in American church-state relationships. The Article VI religious test ban and the First Amendment confirmed that there would be no national ecclesiastical establishment. This generated little controversy because there was almost no sentiment for the type of exclusive ecclesiastical establishment at the national level comparable to that which had existed in most of the colonies and in the Old World. At the same time, many of the states began to reconsider and even dismantle formal establishments. Although there was some resistance to disestablishment in the states, especially in New England, waning support among the general public for established churches made this transition perhaps inevitable. Many states, nonetheless, continued to retain features of religious establishment, such as religious test oaths, blasphemy laws, and laws against Sabbath breaking. Moreover, many Americans continued to believe religion was indispensable for civic virtue and social order.

The controversies examined in this essay reveal two distinct and popular views on the appropriate relationship between religion and politics. Believing religion was essential to civic virtue and, by extension, self-government, many religious traditionalists argued that the public, through the auspices of the civil state, must encourage and assist religion and religious institutions. Not all who embraced this view, it should be emphasized, advocated an exclusive ecclesiastical establishment, much less a theocracy. Then there was, in contrast, a separationist perspective, frequently associated with Thomas Jefferson, which held that true religion flourished when it relied on the voluntary support of adherents and rejected all endorsements of the civil authority. Neither religion nor the civil state, it was argued, was dependent on an alliance with the other in order to survive and prosper. Most who held this view denied that they were hostile to religion or thought it unimportant. Rather, they maintained that religion was too important to subject it in any way to governmental control. There were, no doubt, a few who advocated a secular order because they were hostile to traditional, orthodox Christianity and thought it incompatible with a rational, enlightened polity.

These competing visions of the appropriate place and role of religion in the political order were tested in the many church-state controversies in the early republic. President Jefferson's refusal to designate days for national prayer and fasting and the disestablishment of the last state churches in

New England were among the developments that seemingly confirmed an erosion of the traditional, favored place of Christianity in public affairs and signaled the ascendancy of a secular polity. Significantly, the place of religion in a pluralistic society and the impact of secularization on public life continue to animate church-state debate today, just as they stirred controversy in the new nation.

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RELIGION AND LAW IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, 1800–1867

MARGUERITE VAN DIE

In 1836 John Mewburn, a justice of the peace in the Niagara district of Upper Canada, meeting in quarter sessions, fined George Ness, a farm laborer, fifteen shillings and costs for disturbing the worship in St. John's Church "by talking and whistling during the time of divine service."[1] William Johnston and John Ferrin, as well as being fined, spent twenty-four hours in jail in 1840 for shooting their guns close enough to St. Andrews Church to annoy the parishioners during their Sunday service. In extending to the rough settler culture of Upper Canada the enforcement of a Sabbath observance that reflected the religious and moral enthusiasm of late-eighteenth-century England, Upper Canada's magistrates were part of an Anglo-American world whose cultures, though distinct, were also interconnected. As J. G. A. Pocock famously noted over a decade ago, and as many historians have since elaborated, colonial societies were part of "a constellation of cultures constituting the Atlantic region, between which boundaries were so far permeable that we need not pay much attention to their existence."[2]

Central to shaping this transatlantic British identity was religion; it was assumed that the colonies Britain created would be Christian societies. This entailed the challenge of preaching the gospel and establishing churches in new settlements over a vast geographic area, but also implanting English political and legal structures. Religion and law went hand in hand. The observation by Canadian legal historians that "the nature of the law's institutions and officers were the outposts and liegemen of empires, establishing the boundaries of sovereign power as well as symbolizing it" is equally valid for religion.[3] Embedded within English law and transmitted

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[1] David Murray, *Colonial Justice: Justice, Morality, and Crime in the Niagara District, 1791–1849* (Toronto, 2002), 82.

[2] J. G. A. Pocock, "The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary," *American Historical Review* 104 (April 1999): 497.

[3] Tina Loo and Lorna McLean, *Historical Perspectives on Law and Society in Canada* (Toronto, 1994), 4.

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to British North America in the late eighteenth century was a Christian moral order. Reinforced by subsequent laws, it was encapsulated in royal proclamations throughout the empire at the start of a new reign, and read as a reminder at least four times yearly in all churches and chapels, and at the opening of every court of quarter sessions.

Religion and law were, however, "the outposts of empire" in distinct localized settings. British North America during the period under examination, 1800–67, consisted of a loose collection of colonies: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Lower Canada and Upper Canada (these last two by dividing the old province of Quebec in 1791 to meet the demands of Protestant loyalists from the United States for accommodation in education, representative government, and British common rather than French civil law). Beyond these colonies lay the vast western lands controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company, with on the west coast the colony of Vancouver Island, established in 1849, followed in 1858 by mainland British Columbia. Given this diversity and the limits of a short essay, my focus will be primarily on those four that in 1867 were the first to enter into a Canadian Confederation: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Upper and Lower Canada.

Within the constitutional framework provided by Britain, each colony in the preceding decades established a Christian moral order that would have profound implications for the newly formed Canadian state and for its subsequent expansion. Rather than a single Christian moral order, however, the period under examination saw three distinctive forms of a Christian society, shaped by external influences emanating from Britain, the United States, and Roman Catholic Europe, but also indigenized according to the evolving social, political, and economic structures of the colonies. These three forms – Anglican church establishment, followed by evangelical Protestant voluntarism in the three Anglophone colonies, and Roman Catholic ultramontanism in Quebec – differentiated the Canadian experience from the American and British, and together contributed to the remarkable longevity of a Christian Canada until the mid-twentieth century. Of necessity using broad brush strokes, the essay that follows examines some of the ways religion and law helped shape these three distinctive Christian moral orders in British North America, as well as the contradictions and tensions they held for religious and ethnic outsiders, and, eventually, also for the new Canadian state.

ANGLICAN CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT

Although different in their economic and demographic makeup, the British North American colonies had similar political constitutions. All

were under the authority of the Colonial Office whose secretary generally sat in the British cabinet. Each received a lieutenant governor appointed by the Colonial Office, an appointed council (in Upper and Lower Canada, the executive and legislative functions were divided into two councils), and an elected assembly (in Newfoundland only after 1832). In the face of concerns to limit democratic activity in the wake of the American revolt, most of the power was given to the appointed bodies. Except for money bills, any legislation brought forward by the elected assemblies required council ratification, with the British government holding an ultimate veto over all colonial legislation. As advisors to the governor and centers of power and patronage, council members and their networks formed privileged oligarchies labeled by their critics under such names as the "Family Compact" in Upper Canada, "the Château Clique" in Lower Canada, and the "System" in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In their hands lay the task of putting in place a colonial political and moral order that replicated the hierarchical nature of eighteenth-century England.

Much of this was played out in the basic unit of local government, the court of quarter sessions, presided over by the justices of the peace, men of some substance and social stature, whose task it was to enforce a strict Christian moral code on a settler society. Since the time of the British conquest, royal instruction directed them to execute vigorously "all Laws already made against Blasphemy, Profaneness, Adultery, Fornication, Polygamy, Incest, Profanation of the Lord's Day, Swearing and Drunkenness," and to "take due care for the Punishment of these, and every other Vice and Immorality."[4]

Whereas government through its appointed magistrates enforced Christian morality, an established church inculcated its tenets and thereby combated such potential social threats as religious enthusiasm, republicanism, and disloyalty. By 1802 legislation in support of religious establishment was in place in every British North American colony: Nova Scotia (1754), New Brunswick (1786), Upper and Lower Canada (1791), and Prince Edward Island (1802). As the established church, the Church of England (after 1800 the United Church of England and Ireland) was to receive government funding and any privileges necessary to implement, as far as possible, religious homogeneity in the English-speaking colonies. Only its clergy could perform such ecclesiastical acts as marriages and burials in church cemeteries; in New Brunswick the right was extended to duly-licensed dissenting ministers. Tirelessly promoted by colonial bishops such as Charles and John Inglis in Nova Scotia, John Medley in New Brunswick, Jacob Mountain in Quebec, and Archdeacon (after 1839 Bishop) John

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[4] Murray, *Colonial Justice*, 77–8.

Strachan in Upper Canada, religious establishment has been characterized by historian William Westfall as a "religion of order."[5] Establishment discourse, as presented by eighteenth-century writers such as Bishop William Warburton, Edmund Burke, and William Paley, laid out the social utility of church and state in creating a stable, conservative, and hierarchical society. Under this alliance the colonial government appointed all bishops and had the right to establish and present incumbents to rectories. After 1808, beginning with Nova Scotia's first bishop, Charles Inglis, the bishop also received an appointment to the legislative council, accompanied by a generous remuneration.

A seat at the center of colonial government was essential to advance the Anglican cause of religious establishment, but only a well-educated, like-minded colonial leadership could ensure its future. In 1787, just two years after his appointment as Bishop of Nova Scotia, Charles Inglis founded King's College as an exclusive institution for the sons of the Anglican elite and to train a resident clergy. New Brunswick insisted on its own institution, King's College in Fredericton, chartered in 1828. In Upper Canada a year earlier, John Strachan had secured a charter for yet a third King's College, located in Toronto, but it would not be until 1843 that it was able to commence classes.

Its delayed realization points to what constituted the greatest challenge to a religious establishment in a colonial setting. How would such a massive undertaking be funded? An appeal to laity for funds, the practice commonly referred to as voluntarism, was at odds with the establishment ideal of a Christian nation that included everyone, in particular those unlikely to seek out religion – the poor and the unbelievers. Unlike in Britain, the colonial church lacked historic endowments and the legal right to church rates and tithes. While this had the happy result of eliminating such practices as lay patronage that were under attack in England, it also made the church heavily dependent on state aid. In the Maritimes this came in a variety of forms, primarily glebe lands and an annual parliamentary grant to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) for church buildings, educational institutions, and the salaries of clergy and teachers. In Lower and Upper Canada the SPG was also a major source of funding and personnel recruitment, but in addition the 1791 Constitutional Act set one-seventh of the crown lands aside for "the Maintenance and Support of a Protestant Clergy," and provided for the erection of parsonages or rectories in every township or parish "according to the Established Church of England." In an undeveloped colony where land was also set

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[5] William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal, 1989), 82–125.

aside for education and general crown revenue, this made some sense; even the American government, as late as 1787, instructed the Ohio and Scioto companies to set aside land for religious purposes.

However, none of these provisions proved to be sufficient. The fact that the colonial parish, unlike in England, was not an institution of civil government weakened clergy power. Receiving only a modest SPG stipend, clergy found it difficult to maintain the desired social status, aggravated by the fact that by the early 1830s a reform-minded British Parliament in a quest for economy began to reduce its annual SPG grant, a decision that led to a substantial decrease in annual clergy and missionary stipends. Thus in the face of unsatisfactory and unstable government funding, and despite all establishment theorizing, the colonial bishops had no alternative but to begin a slow move to voluntarism.

Lack of funding was only one of several challenges. The efforts to establish a replica of a hierarchical British society in the colonies happened to coincide with the great North Atlantic population migration that followed the end of the Napoleonic wars. Between 1815 and 1839, even before the rate of emigration reached its peak, nearly half a million people left the British Isles for British North America. Their economic, religious, and political concerns quickly became part of a much broader discourse aimed at challenging the colonial constitutions and their attendant oligarchies. For dissenting Protestants, who collectively far outnumbered Anglicans and resented the exclusivist claims and privileges of a religious establishment, the issue became a festering source of discontent and political activism. In 1828 Methodists in Upper Canada, following the election of a "saddle bag parliament" with a reform majority, succeeded in gaining the legal right to hold church property, and in 1831 to perform marriages. By the 1830s the clergy reserves began to generate some revenue, and aggravated by the needs of a commercializing market economy, these tracts of land became a major source of division. The Church of Scotland successfully insisted on coestablishment on the basis of its status in Scotland, but its Secessionist brethren were voluntarists. Free Church Presbyterians, formed in 1844 in Canada, though officially not voluntarist, did have concerns about establishment's potential to undermine the church's spiritual independence. Only the Baptists consistently held to the separation of church and state. Wesleyan Methodist ministers, influenced by their conservative parent agency, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, were supportive of an Anglican establishment. Methodist Episcopals in Upper Canada, on the other hand, led by a gifted young minister, Egerton Ryerson, editor the *Christian Guardian*, were strongly opposed, but found their stance compromised by their earlier American connections and by an aborted union with the Wesleyans from 1833 to 1840 (resumed permanently in 1847).

Their resistance to establishment had already been largely silenced when in 1832, just before union, the Wesleyans accepted government aid for Indian missions. Similar struggles against Anglican exclusivity, but without the complication of the clergy reserves, occurred in the Maritimes where Nova Scotia's Bishop John Inglis fought an unrelenting battle against imperial ratification of colonial legislation giving dissenting clergy the right to perform marriages according to their own rituals.

Anglican claims to exclusive funding for higher education and theological training were another source of discontent and forced denominations to found their own institutions. By 1845 the Anglophone population was supporting ten colleges in three cash-strapped colonies: four in Upper Canada (Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic) and six in the Maritimes (Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, two Anglican, one unofficially Presbyterian). Their existence testifies to the failure of a Christian moral order based exclusively on religious establishment. By the mid-1830s in all the colonies, "reform" factions were contending with the colonial authorities over such critical issues as the power of the purse, the ideology and self-perpetuation of the ruling elites, their lack of responsibility to the elected assemblies, and the competing demands of agrarian and mercantile interests. In 1837 and early 1838, rebellions erupted in Upper and Lower Canada; and though easily suppressed, they raised imperial awareness of the need for reform.

The next few decades were a time of structural reorganization and development, encouraged by the loss of colonial trade preferences, and by Britain's own changing priorities and reforms under a Whig government. Effective in 1841, Upper and Lower Canada were united under a single government, but with each retaining a separate identity as Canada East (later the province of Quebec) and Canada West (later Ontario).[6] By 1855 responsible government was in place in all the colonies, and with middle-class reformers now in charge, much of the old colonial order was dismantled. In the Canadas, a reform coalition in 1849 ended the religious privileges of King's College, replacing it with a publicly funded secular University of Toronto. This bold move to cut all ties between church and state was attenuated, however, by subsequent small annual grants to the denominational colleges, which after 1851 included a new distinctly Anglican institution, Trinity College, founded by John Strachan. Earlier, in 1841, a Clergy Reserves Act had ended the Anglican monopoly of the reserves by allocating the proceeds on a sliding scale to the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Roman Catholics. This came to an end in 1854 when a moderate Conservative

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[6] References in this essay will reflect the name changes of 1841.

administration led by John A. Macdonald, Canada's future prime minister, voted the clergy reserves out of existence, with the proceeds to be applied to municipalities. To the great indignation of voluntarists, state funding was not entirely withdrawn. Provision was made for the vested financial rights of the existing clergy claimants through commensurate allotments to their respective denominations; the 65 percent allotment to the Church of England represented a solid endowment that would support its clergy into the next century.

Although only Nova Scotia passed formal legislation, disestablishment prevailed in all the colonies, and in 1856 the Bishop of Fredericton became the last to resign his seat in the legislative council. Three years later a Liberal government passed legislation secularizing King's College, Fredericton, and transforming it into the University of New Brunswick, thereby completing disestablishment.

THE PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL MORAL ORDER

Well before mid-century, the concept of voluntarism had begun to recast the ideal of a Christian society founded on an established church. Evangelicals, who dominated the Protestant churches and were active participants in the commercializing economy, promoted an alternative ideal of a Christian society, one in keeping with their understanding of true religion as experiential, biblical, and socially activist. As is evident of the financial arrangements that had accompanied disestablishment in the Canadas, this did not, however, assume a complete separation between church and state. Indeed, disestablishment did not result in a radical disjuncture between the old and the new, and historians have noted considerable continuity between the two. Contrary to the fears of supporters of establishment, under the new system of voluntarism, Protestant Christianity did not fragment into individualistic and populist expressions of religion, as seemed to be the case in the American separation of church and state. The Anglican Church, for example, was able to relinquish its privileged position, and to reconstruct itself slowly into a Victorian denomination which, in its practical piety, lay participation, and emphasis on religious continuity through Sunday schools and family worship had much in common with other denominations. As British immigrants poured into British North America, numbering almost a million and a half between 1830 and 1880, their evangelical traditions brought a tempering of the enthusiastic revivalism that primarily under American-trained preachers had flourished in the years prior to the war of 1812. Concentrated in five main groups – Wesleyans and smaller Methodist sects; Presbyterians (Church of Scotland, Secessionist, and Free Church); Baptists; Congregationalists; and "low church" Anglicans – evangelicals

jealously maintained their distinctive traditions, but also entered into such cooperative efforts as Sunday Schools, benevolent work, Sabbatarianism, and temperance movements.

Studies of their benevolent work give insight into the evolving contours of their ideal of an orderly Christian society. Unlike Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had adopted the English and New England system of poor relief whereby each town or district looked after the relief of its own indigent. Financial necessity, combined with humanitarian and religious concern, ensured, however, that public responsibility was largely carried out by private effort. In Halifax, as early as the 1820s, evangelical merchants and their wives, many by this time second- and third-generation natives, were active in volunteer societies providing charity for the poor, the ill, and the unemployed, as well as promoting literacy, Sabbath observance, day schools, and an institution for the care of the mentally ill. Especially important was the Halifax Poor Man's Friend Society, a tightly structured ecumenical group, dominated by long-standing Methodist families. Dividing the city into seventeen "wards" with visitors designating cases of distress, the Society met financial needs such as unemployment through subscriptions, ranging from one shilling a month to six pence for servants and journeymen, who could then draw on the fund in case of unemployment. By carefully gathering and publishing monthly statistics of their work, the Society raised community and government awareness of the needs of the destitute. Much of the care, however, rested with voluntary associations like the Halifax Methodist Female Benevolent Society, whose members tapped parents and husbands for cloth donations and used their sewing skills to help clothe the poor.

Such charitable work by well-to-do members of the middle class had also been part of the practice of Christianity among the colonial elite, and has often been seen as a form of social control. In countering this interpretation, Daniel Walker Howe's analysis of antebellum U.S. society offers a thoughtful understanding of the conservative nature of evangelical benevolence and social reform. Noting the central place of self-control in evangelical piety, he has argued that this new self-discipline played a primary role in shaping the cultural system of the Victorian middle class. Mid-nineteenth-century evangelicals, in his words, were "didactic modernizers and civilizers who embodied their values in such institutional monuments as schools, universities, hospitals, and insane asylums."[7] The brief picture above of the charitable activities of Halifax's leading citizens is such a case

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[7] D. W. Howe, "Religion and Politics in the Antebellum North," in Mark A. Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics: from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New York 2007), 126.

in point. Living in one of British North America's oldest settlements, and a port city where misery reached its peak in winter, they played an active role in putting their evangelical faith into action by pooling their own resources and soliciting aid from the general public in the absence of organized government relief.

How Canadian evangelicals as "didactic modernizers" began to acquire political influence within colonial civil society becomes evident in their work in temperance and Prohibition. The same evangelical zeal that had led to the founding of charitable organizations like the Halifax Poor Man's Society also brought clergy and social elites in the 1820s to form temperance societies in the Maritimes and Montreal. Influenced by American groups like the Sons of Temperance, the movement shifted from promoting abstinence and temperance among middle-class elites into a more popularly based movement that saw Prohibition as a form of communal regeneration to be implemented by legislative action. By the 1840s, transmitted by such influential papers as John Dougall's *Montreal Witness* and the *Canada Temperance Advocate*, and by itinerant speakers funded by the well-connected members of the Montreal Temperance Society, temperance's message of moral improvement had moved well beyond Montreal into Quebec's Eastern Townships and Canada West. Following the prevailing pattern in the United States, it turned from individual moral suasion to demands for state action. In Canada West, local drives to close taverns in small towns were followed by a government committee in 1849 to investigate the effects of intemperance in promoting crime. Its report resulted in more stringent requirements for tavern keepers, penalties for drunkenness, and shifting the licensing from a central authority to town and township councils. Not content with this, the temperance movement presented a Maine Law, or Prohibition bill, to the legislature in 1854, where it was passed the following spring by a large majority but was ruled out of order by the speaker. Thanks to the resulting outrage and to persistent agitation, Prohibition in a limited form finally came to Canada West with the passing of the Dunkin Act in 1864, enabling localities to vote individually to eliminate bars within their area. This in turn, it was hoped, would strengthen the battle for a more comprehensive Prohibition, a struggle that continued unremittingly for the next eighty years.

It would be erroneous to assume that in the years before Confederation evangelical Protestants had simply transferred their hopes for moral regulation from individual regeneration to parliamentary legislation. Nevertheless, as active participants in the commercializing economies and political structures of the colonies, they felt compelled to ensure that this new order also lived up to their standards of a Christian society. In a more complex economy, trains, canals, steamboats, and postal services created

new "public abuses" that could not be addressed simply by church discipline or prosecution by the local magistrate. Public desecration of the Sabbath called for petitions to parliament reminding government to set an example. At the forefront of the Sabbatarian movement was the Free Church with its strong commitment to holding the state up to its divinely appointed duties. In Canada West, a Free Church minister, the Rev. R. F. Burns, in 1852 founded the Sabbath Alliance which, after organizing demonstrations in Toronto and following several defeats in parliament, succeeded in securing the Sunday closing of saloons. The problem of Sunday labor in the Post Office was taken up by another church member, politician and editor of the widely read *Globe* newspaper, George Brown, who regularly presented parliamentary petitions against the practice. Evidence of success came in 1860 when the Post Office voluntarily abolished Sunday labor.

In their moral crusades evangelicals combated every evil considered to undermine the well-being of a God-fearing nation. This included "worldly amusements" such as dancing and the theatre, but also the institution of slavery in the United States. Highly critical of its toleration by their American Presbyterian brethren, Free Church members were especially active in the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, as well as operating the Elgin Settlement for free slaves at Buxton in the western part of the province.

As moral crusaders, evangelicals followed a pattern familiar in the mother country and in the United States. However, unlike in Britain where they were at the periphery of cultural power, in British North America the evangelical movement resembled that of antebellum America, characterized by Daniel Walker Howe as "in many ways the functional equivalent of an established church."[8] T. W. Acheson, making a similar case for New Brunswick, has demonstrated that by 1860 (and thus a generation later than in the United States) evangelicals, organized in individual denominations but working together in moral and social improvement societies, had made their moral and religious beliefs the colony's "dominant civil religion."[9]

While there are no comparable studies for Canada West and Nova Scotia, in all the colonies the timing of evangelical ascendancy in public life was directly related to the dismantling of the earlier colonial state and the move to religious voluntarism and political reform in the 1840s. Although Canadian historians have expressed considerable interest in how these changes laid the groundwork for the "liberal administrative state" of

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[8] *Ibid.*, 130.
[9] T. W. Acheson, "Evangelicals and Public Life in Southern New Brunswick," in Marguerite Van Die, ed., *Religion and Public Life* (Toronto, 2001), 51.

the later period, their work has largely ignored the influence of religion. However, as "didactic modernizers and civilizers," evangelicals contributed directly to administrative reform, from the collection of statistical data to prison reform and education. George Brown, for example, mounted a vigorous campaign in Canada West for a more humane approach to criminal incarceration. As author of an 1849 royal commission report on the penitentiary, he forcefully argued that prisons should be turned into "schools where the ignorant are enlightened and the repentant strengthened – in which expiation for crime is not lost sight of but the permanent moral reform of the convict is the chief aim."[10]

Public education was in many ways the flagship of the new administrative state, but here as in the case of higher education in Canada West, the situation differed from the American separation of church and state. In the colony's failed efforts to replace the wide diversity of local and denominational schools with one public school system, state funding perpetuated religious differences. Egerton Ryerson, the former editor of the Methodist *Christian Guardian*, appointed superintendent of education in 1844, shared the view of American educators such as Horace Mann that education was the responsibility of the state and that the formation of its citizens was to be based on the principles of a nonsectarian Christianity. Attempts to establish one publicly funded common school system foundered, however, on the resistance of Roman Catholics. They considered "nonsectarian Christianity" with its moral lessons and scriptural readings from the King James Bible to be little more than Protestant religion in disguise. With the help of coreligionists in the legislature of the united Canadas, Roman Catholics were able to obtain public funding for separate schools in Canada West from 1841 onward; and in Canada East, the Protestant minority acquired similar rights. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, analogous attempts at educational reform encountered equally strong resistance. Here Roman Catholics lacked the political power to achieve a legal right to minority funding, though compromise ensured that in practice their schools continued to receive some public monies.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MORAL ORDER

The limits to evangelical hegemony in British North America rose from the simple fact that, unlike in the antebellum United States, Roman Catholics were never a marginal group. Thanks to the presence of Roman Catholic Quebec and a large influx of Scottish Highland and Irish Roman

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[10] Cited in J. Bellomo, "Upper Canadian Attitudes towards Crime and Punishment (1832–1851)," *Ontario History* 66:1 (1972): 22.

Catholics after 1800, their sheer numbers ensured religious rights. The 1791 Constitutional Act, building on rights extended in the Quebec Act of 1774, gave Roman Catholic males in Upper and Lower Canada the right to vote for and sit in the Assembly. In the other older English-speaking colonies, anti-Catholicism resulted in more grudging and piecemeal concessions. In Nova Scotia the legal right for Roman Catholics to hold land was given in 1783, followed in 1786 by a law allowing the creation of Catholic schools, and three years later by Catholic enfranchisement. The latter would not be granted in New Brunswick until 1810. A severe limitation to Roman Catholic participation in the Assembly was removed in 1823 when an elected representative from Acadia received permission from the colonial government to take his seat only upon the oath of loyalty, without the accompanying offensive English Test Act oaths against Roman Catholicism. In New Brunswick these were not removed until 1830, when following Catholic emancipation in Britain, the secretary of state ordered all the British North American colonies to implement its provisions.

Surveying the course of anti-Catholic sentiment in Canada, historian J. R. Miller emphasizes that the extension of Roman Catholic rights would become markedly more contentious after Confederation when anti-Catholicism took on a more nationalistic expression.[11] In the decades just before, however, as evangelicals were moving into ascendancy, anti-Catholic sentiment, though widely disseminated in British North America, was largely derivative, originating primarily in Britain and the United States. The anxiety about a resurgent "Popery" came from many sources: the Loyal Orange Order, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the English Tractarian controversy, the influx of Irish immigrants in the 1840s, U. S. nativist movements, and the so-called papal aggression of 1850 when Rome reestablished full episcopal organization in England. To evangelicals, Roman Catholicism represented the antithesis of the moral order they wished to put in place: instead of scripture, self-discipline, and sturdy independence, Roman Catholics were seen to be in thrall to priest and confessional, and to indoctrinate their young in their own schools. Galvanized by such perception, Protestants, with significant financial backing from American sources, sought to proselytize in Quebec through such agencies as the interdenominational French Canadian Missionary Society. Their success is hard to establish, but it would appear that, outside of some areas with more transitory, unstable populations, French Canadian Roman Catholic identity remained strong.

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[11] J. R. Miller, "Anti-Catholicism in Canada: From the British Conquest to the Great War," in T. Murphy and G. Stortz, eds., *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750–1930* (Montreal, 1993), 25–45.

The reality was that in the decades immediately preceding Confederation, Roman Catholics were able to build their own distinctive moral order within their French Canadian Quebec and Acadian base, as well as to strengthen their identity in Protestant Anglophone settings such as Toronto and Saint John, New Brunswick. In analyzing Roman Catholic Quebec during these years, historians have discredited the older Protestant stereotype of a regressive, priest-ridden society. In its place has emerged an understanding of the ways bishops and clergy were able to integrate the Roman Catholic Church into popular culture and to strengthen its public presence in the years before Confederation.

As was the case with Anglican establishment in the other colonies, fears of revolution and republicanism had encouraged collaboration between the Church hierarchy and the colonial state in Lower Canada. In 1818, for example, in recognition of his loyal leadership during the War of 1812, the Bishop of Quebec, Joseph-Octave Plessis, was given a seat on the Legislative Council. Under his conciliatory episcopacy (1801–25), the government further increased the political power of the Church, as in giving church wardens the right to enforce laws against blasphemy and the sale and purchase of alcohol on Sundays and feast days.

Of considerable concern to the hierarchy was the influx of French and American revolutionary thought, which increasingly turned the elected Assembly into a forum for republican and anticlerical ideas. When the growing power struggle between the radical Parti Patriote in the Assembly and the appointed Council erupted into several failed rebellions in 1837–38, the Quebec bishops' firm stance forbidding resistance to legitimate order proved successful. The rebellions and loss of authority by Lower Canada's radical reformers ended any attempt, feared by the Church, to erect a secular state on the model of the American republic. Having won the respect of the British authorities for its conservative leadership during the rebellions, the Church also received a greater freedom to establish new dioceses and bring priests and religious communities from France.

The timing of this institutional expansion coincided with the changes brought by the 1841 union of the two Canadas. Faced with the threat of absorption of French Roman Catholics into the rapidly expanding Protestant population, and in the vacuum left by the discredited revolutionary leaders, the Church under the leadership of its bishops stepped in with a clearly defined goal. Where before the rebellions the elements of a distinct French Canadian identity – language, religion, and law – had been part of the political struggle for sovereignty in the Assembly, these now became the basis of a unique socially conservative Roman Catholic moral order. Its source was the ultramontane piety emanating from Rome to counteract the revolutionary and anticlerical forces threatening Roman

Catholicism in Europe. For some time Bishops Plessis, and Jean-Jacques Lartigue, since 1821 Auxiliary of Quebec for the district of Montreal, had encouraged religious renewal on these principles. Under Lartigue's successor, Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal (1840–76), situated in the Protestant commercial heartland of Quebec, a wide-ranging ultramontane devotional revolution ensued. Catholicism in French Canada now became thoroughly Roman, with lay piety shaped by such disciplines as the rosary, confession, the sacraments, religious retreats, and devotional sodalities and fraternities. Worship was elaborate and sensuous; Sundays and the feast days of the liturgical calendar provided the rhythm of individual and community life; processions, pilgrimages, and lavish architecture turned public venues into sacred space. Symbolic of the ultramontane dominance of public space was Bourget's choice of Montreal's commercial center as the site for a new cathedral, a massive basilica modeled on St. Peter's in Rome.

An increasingly complex institutional network controlled by the Church reinforced the devotional revolution. There had been no attempt to introduce the poor laws of England in Quebec, and welfare and health care continued to be in the hands of the Church. Despite earlier efforts to curb clerical influence in the schools, the Church also dominated education at all levels. To meet the needs caused by migration, industrialization, and urbanization, the Church was able to respond by greatly increasing the number of priests and religious orders. Through schools, churches, and social institutions, distinctive architecture and art, street processions, and clerical dress, Roman Catholicism became a pervasive public religion in Quebec. A similar ultramontane identity was also taking shape among Irish Catholics outside Quebec, but given their minority status, theirs would be more subdued and private.

Though outwardly different, in its emphasis on internal discipline, social welfare, and the public nature of religion, this ultramontane culture had points in common with the Protestant moral order. Voluntarism called for active lay participation in creating a godly society, and Roman Catholics were no less eager than evangelicals in inculcating sound habits such as temperance and frugality. The largely working-class membership of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Quebec City and Montreal, for example, set up savings banks to teach the poor how to save, lobbied for prison reform, provided funds for hospitals and social service agencies, and cared for and educated homeless children. Congregational giving to the local church was generally high, encouraged by enterprising priests, who, no less than Protestant ministers, considered financial matters and information-gathering a major part of parish administration. Roman Catholic clergy had a direct interest in the economic development of their local communities, and they lobbied for railways, bridges, and other public utilities needed

in an industrializing society, as well as participating in municipal councils and school boards. A study of the Sulpicians, historically the seigneurs of the Island of Montreal, has noted their close contacts with the political elite, as well as their handsome compensation when in 1854 the seigniorial system was abolished. Like a number of other religious communities and episcopal corporations, they invested their accumulated capital in railways, speculation, and other commercial ventures.[12]

A significant player in French Canada's economic life, the Church also placed its stamp on its intellectual life. Much attention has been devoted to Bourget's efforts to silence the Institut Canadien, a literary society founded in Montreal in 1844 to promote public learning, but which quickly became a center of secular and liberal thought, thereby running afoul of Pope Pius IX's 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*. Yet, although Protestant clergy could not, as did Bourget, invoke the threat of excommunication, they too were convinced that there could be no toleration of ideas deemed harmful to the faith.

While both groups supported economic change and technological innovation, they were equally socially conservative. As did the other colonies, Canada East in the 1840s and 1850s underwent a process of administrative reform that would mark its transition from a preindustrial agrarian society to one in time dominated by capitalist relations. This included the dismantling in 1854 of its system of landholding by seigneurial tenure, as well as the codification of its vast corpus of civil law, some of which went back to the sixteenth-century Custom of Paris. Enacted in 1866, the *Civil Code of Lower Canada* affected such church-related matters as the family, marriage, inheritance, and the legal position of women, as well as potentially infringing on canonical jurisdiction. Except among a few of the more conservative bishops, it encountered little resistance; and three years after it came into effect, a papal delegate concluded that it was "a good code for a Catholic nation."[13]

Certainly one reason for this commendation can be attributed to the code's patriarchal view of the family, which rested on the sanctity of the marriage sacrament and male authority. This attitude was not the prerogative only of Roman Catholics, but was shared by Protestants; the reform of property law in the other colonies also subordinated the interests of women and children to those of the family as an economic unit. Living in a society whose economy rested largely in small-scale enterprise, Protestants and Roman Catholics shared a religious and moral economy that saw the family

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[12] Brian Young, *In Its Corporate Capacity: The Seminary of Montreal as a Business Institution, 1816–1876* (Montreal, 1986).
[13] Brian Young, *The Politics of Codification* (Montreal, 1994), 120.

as a sacred institution whose welfare was of eternal import. This fueled their respective efforts to create a Christian order, but because of the high stakes it also ensured that in matters of ultimate value there could be no middle ground. What remains to be examined is how religious and ethnic outsiders fared in a society whose laws reflected the aspirations of two parallel but uncompromising moral orders.

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC OUTSIDERS: JEWS, BLACKS, AND NATIVE PEOPLES

Located primarily in Montreal, British North America's small Jewish population traced its origins to 1760 when a group of British and American Jewish traders and officers accompanied the British army to Quebec and Montreal. By 1778 their numbers were sufficient in Montreal to erect a small synagogue, followed by the purchase of a cemetery; and in 1840 after a considerable period of dependency on New York, they appointed their own religious functionary in the Sephardic tradition. From the start, as British subjects, they did not encounter statutory limits on their freedom of movement, occupation, and the right to own real estate. Able to avail themselves of the economic opportunities that opened up with British settlement, they played a valuable role as philanthropists, creditors, and financiers, as in their help to Britain in the War of 1812. Essentially middle-class cultured urbanites, they shared the economic and political interests of the Anglo-Saxon elites who governed the colony and dominated its commerce.

Nevertheless, as British subjects, Jews did not have the civil rights many had enjoyed in the United States, a matter made evident when one of their number, Ezekiel Hart, was elected to the Assembly in 1807, and again in 1809, and each time prevented from being sworn in and taking his seat. As a result of the Assembly's secularizing reform agenda, and the persistent efforts of Ezekiel's younger relatives to eliminate from the oath of office the offensive "on the true faith of a Christian," the situation changed in 1831. Legislation supported by both English and French Canadian members was passed giving Jews full civil status, including the right to keep registers of births, marriages, and burials, and to accept and hold any political office in Lower Canada. Given royal assent in 1832, the legislation introduced Jewish political emancipation well before it was accorded in Britain in 1858. Yet despite their political emancipation and easy economic integration, when it came to religion Jews remained outsiders. Religious observance was undermined in a society that conducted business on the Jewish Sabbath and holy days, and that effectively classified their children as Protestant in the school system.

British North America's black population encountered a quite different ambiguity in their status as colonists under British rule. For them the struggle for civil rights began with legislation against slavery. The first and only colony to undertake this before slavery was abolished in all the British colonies in 1834 was Upper Canada in 1793. Here by 1860, thanks to a rapid influx following the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act in the United States, the number of people of African descent numbered some twenty-one thousand. Generally establishing their own churches in order to meet their social needs, they were not readily integrated into white society. As early as 1832, a Quaker abolitionist examining the condition of resettled fugitive slaves had drawn attention to the racial prejudices that were part of everyday black experience.

The administrative reforms of the 1840s and 1850s by middle-class white Protestants unintentionally opened new areas for prejudice, most notably in elementary education. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the education of black children in Nova Scotia had been largely taken on by the Church of England working through the SPG and a number of small philanthropic organizations, with modest provincial help. With the move to a system of publicly funded common schools in both the Maritimes and central Canada, blacks encountered regular resistance by local white populations to racially integrated schools. Despite the fact that the majority of blacks paid taxes to the common schools and shared a Protestant identity with white children, the intensity of prejudice forced them to apply for separate institutions. In Canada West, the Separate School Act of 1850 permitted any group of five black families to ask local public school trustees to establish such a school for them. Its effect was to give whites a weapon by which they excluded black children from the common schools and forced them to apply for separate institutions. Egerton Ryerson, the superintendent of education, who considered himself a true friend of blacks and favored integrated schools, believed that "Good sense, and Christian and British feeling" should be sufficient to prevent discrimination. However, when reluctantly he had submitted legislation establishing separate schools for colored children, he also acknowledged that in the moral order of the mid-nineteenth century, "the prejudices and feelings of the people are stronger than law."[14]

Such tensions and contradictions also had profound implications for Canada's native peoples in the years preceding Confederation. In the Maritimes, where Euro-American settlement went back to the seventeenth century, by 1812 Indians had lost most of their land through encroachment and subsequent dispossession. In Upper Canada, on the other hand,

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[14] Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Montreal, 1997), 369.

as valued military allies, they and their lands had long received the protection of the colonial government. This changed with the cessation of war and the cordial U.S.-British relations established in 1817 by the Rush-Bagot Convention. No longer needed militarily, and swamped by waves of British immigrants in the 1820s to 1840s, Indians were now seen as a social and economic problem. Through a system of treaties and small compensatory annuities, vast areas of their lands were transferred in the next fifteen years to the new settlers. Secondly, in 1830, abandoning its earlier approach of diplomacy with the Indian peoples for one of gradual "civilization" and assimilation, the colonial government shifted responsibility for Indian affairs in Upper and Lower Canada from military officers to civilian administration. The change took place within a context of humanitarian concern as reformers in Britain and the United States tried to shape public policy to redress social ills. Rather than relying on annual gifts, Upper Canada's demoralized and dwindling Indian peoples were to be persuaded to concentrate in settled areas or reserves, where they could be exposed to Christianization, schooling, and instruction in agriculture.

Much of the groundwork had already been laid by the missionary efforts of the various churches, and their assistance now became invaluable. Among the first to enter into such collaboration were the Methodist Episcopals, whose revivalist ministry had resulted in 1823 in the conversion of Peter Jones, a young Mississauga leader of mixed ancestry, who subsequently as a Methodist preacher had succeeded in converting the majority of his people. Impressed by his work, the lieutenant governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, in 1825 built a model village of twenty houses on the west bank of the Credit River for the Mississauga converts. This Credit Mission, in turn, became the model for an even more impressive showpiece under Jones' strict leadership, Grape Island, in the Bay of Quinte.

Surveying missionary efforts in the period before Confederation, historian John Grant has concluded that it was only during a brief period, the 1820s and 1830s, that missionaries, native leaders, and government were able to work together cooperatively in any form of real partnership.[15] By the 1840s the recruitment among evangelical Protestants of charismatic native leaders had ceased. Native ministers, such as Peter Jones, who in the 1820s and 1830s had worked to include their people as partners in the evangelization process, came to realize the limitations of their role and prospects for advancement in denominations becoming more bureaucratized and middle class. A similar mentality prevailed in government, and among the administrative reforms of the 1840s was a commission of

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[15] John W. Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto, 1984), 91–95.

inquiry into the Indian situation. Known as the Bagot Commission, its report in 1844 gave a bleak picture of Indian life, and offered recommendations that would govern colonial policy on Indian affairs up to and beyond Confederation. Recommending the establishment of boarding schools for native children, to be funded by the government and operated by the various Christian denominations, the report further strengthened the alliance between the churches and the state. Intended to give a practical education and be financially self-sufficient, the schools followed the American model of equal time for study and manual work, initiated early in the century by Gideon Blackburn, Presbyterian missionary among the Cherokees. The decision to turn the hopes on children rather than on their parents as the chief agents of acculturation furthered the marginalization of the Indian in the missionary enterprise. While the state's concern to bring about the assimilation of native children differed from the evangelistic intent of the churches, the two had come to share a paternalism whereby they decided the future of native peoples with good intentions but with little consultation or representation. The system of residential schooling would persist in Canada West after Confederation and would be transferred to the Hudson's Bay Company lands in the Northwest upon their acquisition in 1869 by the newly formed federal government.

CONCLUSION

Two years earlier, on 1 July 1867, the colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick had been united by an act of the British Parliament – the British North America Act – to form a federal state named Canada. Conceived and carried through by Canadian and British politicians in response to political and economic concerns, the union outwardly had little of the religious fervor that had accompanied American independence. Yet although religious considerations had not played a major role in its formation, there was little doubt that Canada already was, and as it expanded, would continue to be, a Christian nation, a sentiment succinctly captured in the country's motto, taken from Psalm 72:8, "And He shall have Dominion from sea to sea." This hope would be executed in less than two decades through the combined blessings of a government-subsidized transcontinental railway and the missionary zeal of Roman Catholics and Protestants, the latter in the interim through internal denominational unions having acquired their own national presence.

Observers would be struck by the country's high rate of church attendance and religious involvement well into the next century, contrasting it favorably to Britain and the United States. Unlike the new railway, however, religion never became a unifying force. The timing of Confederation

ensured that the newly created state would be divided between two religiously dominant groups, each of which expressed a different understanding of what constituted a Christian society. The British North America Act consolidated this division. To meet the concerns of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Quebec, it gave the provinces and not the federal government jurisdiction over health, education, and social services, thereby effectively setting ultramontane Quebec apart from the rest of the country. Secondly, in response to the anxieties of the Protestant and Roman Catholic minorities of the two Canadas, section 93 provided a constitutional guarantee to protect legal rights won in earlier decades for the separate schools of Ontario and Quebec. This was the only explicit reference to religion, but the fact that it proved to be one of the most litigated sections of the act also bears witness to the way church and state, as in the earlier period, remained interrelated in Canada.

Thanks to the need to mediate minority rights in education and to vestiges of earlier religious establishment, the state would continue to play a distinctive role in defining Christian national identity after Confederation. In time, mindful of the concerns of religious and ethnic outsiders, it would also redefine that identity.

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MEXICAN AMERICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTHWEST

GILBERTO M. HINOJOSA

The faith of Mexican Americans in the American Southwest in the nineteenth century had the inward convictions and outward Christian stamp of the generations of Spanish and mestizo (mixed-blood) missionaries and laity who brought Christianity to North America. But Mexican Americans were also heirs of a variety of Native American beliefs and practices that were as ancient and as deeply rooted as those introduced by the Europeans. These newcomers had not simply offered the gift of Christian salvation to *los naturales* (the indigenous peoples); they arrived on these shores as political and economic, as well as spiritual, conquerors with the expressed intention of ruling over the Indians, taking their lands and their labor, and replacing their faith traditions. But try as they might, the newcomers were unable to extirpate all the native traditions, and some settled on "baptizing" Indian religious expressions or simply learning to live with them. While not all the missionaries agreed on what indigenous rituals they could tolerate or accommodate, conversion of the native peoples involved an extensive process of give-and-take; and in the end, Spanish European Christianity was transformed in the New World. Still, the Catholic faith gradually became the core faith of the indigenous peoples of Central Mexico, facilitated by traditions amenable to Indian religiosity such as the efficacy of grace through sacramental symbols and rituals, the intercession of the saints, a communal salvation (the communion of saints), and an incarnational theology that saw the presence of God in a truly human and cultural context.[1]

In the preconquest era and after it, faith was an integral part of public and private lives for both native and Hispanic peoples. In the public arena, expressions of community self-affirmation – local, provincial, or imperial/colonial – often seemed as much civic as religious. In the private sphere, Indians revered household gods painted on walls or placed on what were

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[1] Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson, AZ, 1989), 15–45, 184–93.

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described to be something like miniature pyramids located in niches; and the family made food and drink offerings to these protectors and venerated them with incense as they did the local, regional, or imperial deities in public. Petitions to these gods included requests for healings for the sick and for good fortune at life's critical points – childbirth, weddings, and burials. In colonial days, images of favorite saints replaced the deities of former times, but many of the sentiments and practices of Indian traditions remained the same. The spirit world thus influenced public and domestic affairs; and the divinity, which had done so much for humankind, expected and received acknowledgment and worship in the realms of the home and the state.[2]

With the passage of time and the increase in *criollos* (New World–born Spaniards), mestizos, and mulattos, Christianity was unavoidably "Mexicanized." Accordingly, in New Spain traditional saints were attired in criollo and mestizo garments and were painted or sculpted in Mexican settings and furnishings. The Indian-mestiza *Virgen de Guadalupe* is, perhaps, the best example of the cultural, racial, and spiritual mixture, but New World–born saints and saintly men and women gained prominence in cult devotions as they, like Our Lady of Guadalupe, successfully interceded with the Almighty because they understood the specific needs of the faithful in New Spain. Civic society likewise sought the blessings of these New World saints and the Divinity, inaugurating new terms of office with attendance at Eucharist celebration and incorporating into the criollo identity the Aztec divinely sent eagle perched on a cactus.[3]

THE FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTH

In New Spain the Church was an essential component and an agent of expansion to the northern frontier. As miners discovered new silver deposits beyond the settled central region in the late 1500s, warlike nomads posed a new obstacle to the colonial government, and missionaries were pressed into service or volunteered to establish towns for them. The missionaries were accompanied mostly by mestizo soldiers who settled in *presidios*,

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[2] Antonio Rubial García, "Icons of Devotion: The Appropriation and Use of Saints in New Spain," in Martin Austin Nesvig, ed., *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque, 2006), 37–61; Louise M. Burkhart, "Mexica Women on the Home Front: Housework and Religion in Aztec Mexico," in Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett, eds., *Indian Women in Early Mexico* (Norman, OK, 1997), 25–54.

[3] Fernando Cervantes, "Mexico's 'Ritual Constant': Religion and Liberty from Colony to Post-Revolution," in Matthew Butler, ed., *Faith and Impiety in Revolutionary Mexico* (New York, 2007), 57–73; Solange Alberro, *El águila y la cruz: orígenes de la conciencia criolla: México, siglos XVI–XVII* (México, D.F., 1991), 59–76, 120–78.

garrison towns; eventually other settlers followed and founded *villas*, civilian (nonreligious, nonmilitary) communities. Franciscan friars and, in some areas, Jesuit priests ministered to all these settlers until the regional bishop could send diocesan priests to serve the faithful in these towns or until a homegrown clergy emerged. This process of forming missionary-led Indian communities and establishing soldier-settler and civilian towns extended from the *Bajío* (the Low Country), the first region beyond the central *Altiplano* (the highlands), north to Arizona, Texas, and California. Missionaries also accompanied the settlers who had leaped across the semi-arid lands to Monterrey in Nuevo León and Santa Fe in Nuevo México. On the upper reaches of the Río Grande, colonizers found sizeable Indian communities (the Pueblos), which the friars set out to convert while serving Hispanic settlers. Across the North, then, the Church's presence was as evident, if not as strong, as in the center.[4]

Though the missionary-led Indian communities in the North resembled the native towns of the Altiplano, the missionaries saw themselves as facing a very different challenge in the evangelization of the nomads and the Pueblos. Much like the Aztecs before them, the European settlers of New Spain viewed the Indians of the North as "barbarians," and the missionaries set out to eradicate or replace their traditions. In time, however, the great effort to settle the nomadic Indians, acculturate them, and Christianize them met the daunting challenge of the spread of diseases for which the natives lacked immunities. Deaths greatly outnumbered births and new recruits, and the missionary-led towns for the nomads were "secularized" or dis-incorporated. Nevertheless, the imprint of the Church on the northern frontier was substantial among indigenous peoples as well as in the Hispanic settlements.[5]

Therefore, the Church functioned as a vital mainstay in both the Altiplano and the North, providing continuity in the midst of change and commanding the loyalty and allegiance in varying degrees of almost everyone, rich or poor, Spaniard or Indian or mixed blood, urban or rural, at various levels – local, regional, and colonywide. The numerous Catholic *templos* in the cities of New Spain's central region, as well as the imposing churches in the towns in the Indian countryside, attest to the Church's essential role

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[4] David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, 1992), 92–121; Bárbara O. Reyes, *Private Women, Public Lives: Gender and the Missions of California* (Austin, 2000), 122–4.

[5] David J. Weber, *"Bárbaros": Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, 2005), 93–102; James A. Sandos, "Social Control with Missionary Frontier Society: Alta California, 1769–1821," in Jesus F. de la Teja and Frank Ross, eds., *Choice Persuasion, and Coercion: Social Control on Spain's North American Frontier* (Albuquerque, 2005), 253–75.

in colonial society. On the frontier also, churches were usually the most prominent structures in mission, civilian, and soldier-settler towns. The Church, it seemed, was the vital center of New Spain, both structurally and in the public square. This was the case even when the Church seemed seriously divided within itself, as happened during the wars for independence that began in 1810. In the end, separation from Spain came only when the continued role of the Church in the new nation was guaranteed.[6]

Still, just like there were "many Mexicos" – *la república de indios*, i.e., the Indian countryside; the Spanish cities; the center and the provinces; Mexico City, the regional capitals, and the hinterlands; the divisions of race and social status; and the many regional economies and cultures – so, too, there were "many Churches." In New Spain's Center-West, clerical control and European traditions were very much in evidence. In the South, with many autonomous indigenous communities, faith expressions were more culturally mixed. In the North, where the institutional Church was not strong either financially or politically, faith practices seemed more subdued and ordinary.[7] While these regions can be categorized in these broad terms, elements of all three classifications could be found within each region or even in the same city or, at times, in the same parish. For example, in the northern frontier, which would become part of the United States in the early and mid-nineteenth century, faith expressions in many civilian and presidial parishes seemed to spring up from locally evolved Hispanic and Indian community identities. At the same time, in areas with large sedentary native populations, such as in New Mexico, some traditions were as Indian as those of the Mexican South.[8]

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIERS IN THE CLOSING DECADES OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD

New Mexico

Because the far northern frontier would become the American Southwest, the region is often described in single-color broad strokes as a "Borderlands" where settlers on the edge of the Spanish empire needed royal troops to defend them from foreign threats or from Indian attacks and raids. There

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[6] Alan Knight, *Mexico: The Colonial Era* (Cambridge, UK, 2002), 321–31; Nancy M. Farriss, *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico, 1759–1821* (New York, 1968), 197–253.

[7] Allan Knight, "The Mentality and Modus Operandi of Revolutionary Anticlericalism," in Matthew Butler, ed., *Faith and Impiety in Revolutionary Mexico* (New York, 2007), 22–5.

[8] Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 120–1.

were, to be sure, common threads in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and
California, including the presence of missionaries and military contingen-
cies, the challenges created by nomadic Indians and the associated defense
strategy of the crown, and the relatively sparse population of the area. But
the Spanish settlements in New Mexico were established much earlier
than those in Texas, Arizona, and California and had considerably larger
settled Indian populations and Hispanic communities than did the other
regions. Then, too, California had many more nomadic Indians than Texas
and Arizona. Additionally, all four area settlements were linked to separate
economic regions, attracted civilian (nonreligious, nonmilitary) settlers in
varying numbers, and developed in different ways. Not surprisingly, the
various frontiers exhibited distinctive faith communities.

Because their initial discovery of gold and silver and settled Indians in
the Altiplano was unexpected, the Spaniards launched several expeditions
that spanned across a good part of North America in the early to mid-1500s,
searching for more of the same. After encountering only nomads in the vast
northern lands, they came across Indians settled in towns on the far reaches
of the Río Grande whom they appropriately called *Pueblos*. Led by Juan de
Oñate, the Spaniards eventually returned in 1598 in the role of conquerors.
Following their experience in the Altiplano, they attempted to establish
two societies in the northern region of the New Mexican province, one
Spanish and the other Indian, with missionaries living in the Indian com-
munities carrying out the conversion of the natives. Within a generation,
by the 1630s, one report counted 86,000 Pueblo converts. Like in the
center of the colony, the conquerors in Nuevo México became *encomenderos*
who acquired some land and were granted Indian labor assignments. The
friars also had rights to Indian labor, and they proceeded to build churches
and other structures. The exploitation of the Indians by missionaries and
other Spaniards and the attempts to stamp out the native religion were
severe enough to cause a major rebellion in 1680. The rebels struck against
all Hispanics – missionaries, officials, and settlers. The rebellion, led by
Popé, a messianic figure, was as much religious as cultural and economic,
and twenty-two friars were among those who died in the fighting.[9]

The missionaries who went to New Mexico were from the generation
of friars who had favored uprooting indigenous traditions instead of the
mixing and blending that had occurred in the early and subsequent years
in Central Mexico. They saw themselves as replacing the native priests,

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[9] Andrew L. Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth Century
New Mexico* (Norman, 1995), 122–35, 152–70; Ross Frank, "Demographic, Social and
Economic Change in New Mexico," in Robert H. Jackson, *New Views of Borderlands
History* (Albuquerque, 1998), 41–65.

quashing all Indian religious practices, particularly the dances, without allowing any indigenous practices to infiltrate the Catholic worship and prayer services. Although the rebellion was not just against the Church but also against the whole of the Spanish imposition, it is clear that the missionaries may have been the most aggressive intruders into Indian society; and when the Spaniards retook their lost province in 1692, some Pueblo communities did not allow the friars into their towns.[10]

After the revolt, the Pueblos renovated their kivas, revived their rituals, and revitalized other cultural traditions. But Indian society would be transformed by the Spaniards of the "Reconquest" period, nonetheless, and perhaps even to a greater degree than before. The Pueblos were not as well organized as before in part because the older social structures had been under assault for close to a century and could not be instantly restored after the rebellion. Additionally, the Pueblos had come to rely on Spanish arms for protection against their nomadic neighbors, who resumed their raiding once the Spaniards fled south. When they returned, the new conquistadores restored security, establishing outposts that served as buffer zones that warded off attacks while incorporating some nomadic groups into an increasingly mestizo society. Security provided the environment for economic growth which, in turn, created the circumstances for greater interaction between Spaniards and Pueblos that would change their world.[11]

In an environment where the lines that separated Pueblo and Spanish society were not as well defined as before, Indians had greater contact with more Spaniards, that is, with more agents of change, than in prerebellion days. While the cultural give-and-take at work and in Spanish homes was vastly more relaxed than the explicit change required by the missionaries, it involved cultural adjustment, nonetheless, particularly because the Spanish economic, political, and social structures held sway in New Mexican society. The Reconquest was by no means bloodless, and the post-Reconquest society included forced demands for Indian labor. Still, Spanish order brought stability; and the new order provided more freedom for the Indians than before, and, ironically, greater change in many ways.[12]

Franciscan friars continued their work among the Indians in the post-Reconquest period, and secular clergy would eventually serve in the larger Hispanic towns. Across the province, Nuevo Mexicanos rebuilt churches and celebrated Easter, Christmas, and other feast days with ceremonies that

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[10] Knaut, 88–121; Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *"When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away": Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, 1991), 39–94.
[11] Frank, "Demographic and Social Change," 52–3.
[12] Gutiérrez, *"When Jesus Came,"* 306–15.

spilled into the public square and into the homes. In their churches, in the plazas, and in homes they venerated an army of saints with a fervor that, at first sight, seems very medieval, yet is actually very New Mexican. Salvation came from God the Father and Jesus Christ; everyone understood that, but the *santos* (the saints) were charged with remedying particular aspects of the human condition and all the predicaments unique to New Mexico. Parish patron saints received special attention on their feast days and became the protectors of the community; and other saints were called upon daily or seasonally, depending on specific needs. Some revered images of Jesus and Mary were connected with certain towns and churches, and pilgrims went to those sites from afar to ask for special favors; other images were taken in processions to the fields, through the community, or through the province. Statues and paintings of Jesus, Mary, and the saints were found not only in churches and in special shrines, but also in almost every home. Health, security, the basic necessities, and human relations all appear to have been tenuous for Nuevo Mexicanos, who prayed for their needs often, or simply felt more confident about life with these reminders of the sacred in their midst.[13]

New Mexicans must have sensed the presence of divine power among them, since the locally produced images had characteristics of the people and places of the area. After the initial Spanish conquest, Christian paintings and statues in New Mexico were introduced from Spain or central Mexico, but these "outsiders" eventually took root in that northern region, including Our Lady of the Rosary, who kept the special designation of *La Conquistadora*, seemingly more with the meaning of "foundress" or, ironically, "unifier" of the new Hispanic or mixed-culture society than with the connotation of conqueror that her name literally represents.[14] Most of the locally produced images were at onset painted on animal skins rather than on canvases, or were carved as statues or on tablets made from area trees. Franciscan friars understandably were the first religious artists, but as the Christian faith came to be accepted by the Indians and as the population grew, local painters and sculptors emerged to meet the growing demand for the santos, and these quickly took on New Mexican characteristics in facial types, clothing, background settings, furnishings, articles they wore or carried, and even colors they exhibited. Thus these otherworldly personages who guided New Mexicans through life and improved their

[13] Thomas J. Steele, "Forward," in Larry Frank and Skip Keith Miller, *A Land So Remote: Religious Art of New Mexico, 1780–1907* (Santa Fe, 2001), I, vii–xiii.

[14] Pedro Ribera-Ortega, "La Guadalupana and La Conquistadora in the Catholic History of New Mexico," in Thomas J. Steele, Paul Rhetts, and Barbe Awalt, eds., *Seeds of Struggle/Harvest of Faith: The Papers of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Catholic Cuatro Centennial Conference on the History of the Catholic Church in New Mexico* (Albuquerque, 1998), 263–78.

circumstances were transformed into regional actors and became their *Cristos* and their saints.[15]

Devotional expressions clearly were not limited to the churches or directed only by priests. Heads of households and mothers took it upon themselves to lead prayers at home and to impart their own blessings. Indeed, many aspects of family life were celebrated with festivities that appeared to be extensions of church rituals and ceremonies. Family and neighbors gathered on their own at home or at village shrines, and associations met in their own assembly halls/chapels, called *moradas*, to pray and ask for divine intercession in times of crisis. One association closely identified with New Mexico is the *Penitente* tradition that would flourish in the post-Independence period. As Penitentes, men came together to pray on behalf of the community, to enact the passion of Christ, and to bear Christ's suffering on behalf of others through ritual flagellation. The spread of Penitente groups is often attributed to the absence of priests in the more remote areas of the province, but, placed in the context of the region and the colony, Penitente observances can also be seen as a continuation of craft guilds or confraternity traditions, as extensions of the Franciscan spirituality that identifies with Christ's suffering, and as another expression of the ubiquitous lay devotions in the homes and villages attested to by the prevalence of santos.[16]

Texas, Arizona, and California

After the revolt of 1680, Franciscans renewed their efforts to Christianize the Indians on the southern edge of the province of Nuevo Mexico around the El Paso del Norte, where they had previously established, or attempted to establish, missionary-led Indian towns. With the New Mexican exiles now in the area, these missions received more attention, and new ones were founded. From El Paso, on the west bank of the Rio Grande, the friars renewed their efforts to missionize the Jumanos who lived in the region

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[15] Frank and Miller, *A Land So Remote*, 9–38; Barbe Awalt and Paul Rhetts, *Our Saints among Us, "Nuestros Santos Entre Nosotros": 400 Years of New Mexican Devotional Art* (Albuquerque, 1998), 13–21; Thomas J. Steele, in *Santos and Saints: The Religious Folk Art of New Mexico* (Santa Fe, 1994), 68–9, alludes to the general acceptance of Hispanic culture in the region, specifically in terms of religion, from which I derive my interpretation of the popularity of "La Conquistadora."

[16] Steele, "Family Spirituality in Traditional Hispanic New Mexico," in Awalt and Rhetts, *Our Saints Among Us,* 23–9; William Wroth, *Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Southwestern Santos in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Norman, OK, 1991), 42–6; Francisco A. Lomelí and Clark A. Colohan, eds. and trans., *Defying the Inquisition: Miguel Quintero's Life and Writings* (Albuquerque, 2006), 29–33.

that would later become West Texas. The envisioned Indian towns failed to materialize; it took more than fervent praying to create flourishing settled communities among these nomads. Still, the Franciscans maintained some presence in the area through the colonial period.[17]

The first and obvious condition for success in establishing missionary-led Indian towns was simply whether or not the area was the home for large numbers of nomads. Arid regions that could not sustain significant numbers of hunter-gatherers were not good prospects for the friars since there were few Indians to recruit, and creating a sustainable agricultural base for the town presented formidable challenges. Accordingly, a region such as California with large numbers of natives would prove a more fertile ground for the missionaries' efforts than Texas. Secondly, the potential benefits from joining these farming communities had to be evident to the nomads, and therefore Indians who were faring well on their own could not be lured, coaxed, or pressured to congregate into missionary-led towns and change their ways of life. Thus Caddos in East Texas, who were settled in villages or towns with gardens or on their own farms and were trading with the French in nearby Louisiana, refused to relocate into missions; and no matter how attractive their numbers were to friars who sought their conversion and how important the region was for the defense of the empire, the Franciscans could not convince them to move into mission towns. Additionally, nomads who had acquired horses – or even those who had not – and had supplemented their hunting and gathering activities with very profitable trading would not respond to the friars' invitation to join their settlements. The Apaches and Comanches, as well as the other *norteños* (northern Indians), fall into this category. Some of the Yaqui tribes who had learned how to survive in desert conditions in Sonora and Arizona also refused to join the padres or would abandon the mission towns during droughts or when their interests could be met without their surrendering their freedom.[18]

On the San Antonio River in Texas and in California, the missionaries succeeded in drawing the required numbers to make the mission communities viable with a sustainable or even profitable agricultural base and

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[17] Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 137; Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1549–1795* (College Station, TX, 1975), 174–81; Donald S. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519–1821* (Austin, 1992), 68–70; Robert E. Wright, "Franciscan Missions a La Junta de los Ríos," in Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., ed., *They Came to El Llano Estancado* (Amarillo, 2006), 223–35.

[18] Robert H. Jackson, "The Formation of Frontier Indigenous Communities: Missions in California and Texas," in Jackson, ed., *New Views of Borderlands History* (Albuquerque, 1998), 131–56; and Jackson, *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America* (Scottsdale, AZ, 2005), 275–376.

income-generating ranches; and the native residents constructed impos-ing structures such as dams, irrigation canal systems, granaries, churches, and walled towns. Mission communities in Arizona were also impressive, though understandably smaller because there were fewer "recruitable" Indians in the region. But even where there was successful organization and development of these mission towns, the spread of European diseases lim-ited growth and long-range stability in California or brought about their demise in Texas. Years with epidemics were particularly harmful to Indian town populations, but even in good times deaths outnumbered births, and the mission communities needed a constant inflow of new members. There was not much friars could do about the demographic crises beyond recruit-ing, and so long as their communities (in California, mission residents numbered in the thousands) thrived and town dwellers appeared to become "civilized" and accepting of Christianity, they never questioned the basic premise that conversion could not happen among the nomads without first settling them in towns with comprehensive control and supervision.[19]

Those Indians who were drawn into Hispanic towns, it was presumed, would become Christians through the assimilation process, and they did not get special attention. Captives who were brought into Spanish homes as servants would at some point get baptized, and they were given Christian names, as happened in the San Fernando de Béxar (San Antonio, in Texas) community. *Genízaros* (mestizos) who were sent to, or went to live in, defense colonies on the edges of settlement in New Mexico were ministered to by visiting missionaries, just like other Nuevo Mexicanos. In Nuevo Santander, colonizer José de Escandón upset the Franciscans by using royal funds earmarked for the foundation of missionary-led Indian towns to pay the friars to minister to settlers he brought into the new province and to *indios agregados*, Indians settled adjacent to Hispanic towns. These indigenous communities did not have separate institutional structures and administrators, as the mission system did, who produced reports and wrote letters to their superiors, their royal backers, or their rivals. Consequently, it is unclear just how they were incorporated into the Hispanic society and the role faith played among those Indians. At some point, they were bap-tized and took Christian names, and the presumption is that they became part of the Hispanic society. After Mexican independence, racial designa-tions were not included in government and church records; and while in central Mexico Indian towns continued to enjoy corporate rights, in the North they did not.[20]

[19] Weber, "*Bárbaros*," 125.
[20] Gilberto M. Hinojosa and Anne A. Fox, "Indians and Their Culture in San Fernando de Béxar," in Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, eds., *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-*

The Escandón settlement is part of the Borderlands story because Nuevo Santander spanned from the Pánuco River near Veracruz in a wide crescent toward the northeast beyond the Rio Grande to the Nueces River, the southern boundary of the Texas province. Like Oñate, the conquistador of New Mexico, Escandón invested a considerable personal fortune in colonizing the new province to which he brought settlers from nearby northern settlements. In Nuevo Santander, as elsewhere in the North, the Church was well established structurally. The *diezmo* (tithe) was collected in the region in the late colonial period, but the Church did not have the economic presence and the political alliance with government that the Church had in central Mexico; and the Indian faith communities in the North exhibited less of the syncretic religiosity of the Mexican South. All the Río Grande *villas* except for Laredo were on the south bank, but their lands and jurisdictions extended above the river, and residents erected town churches that were served first by friars and later by diocesan priests. Still the Franciscan influence in the North continued strong. The Diocese of Linares (Monterrey), which supervised the Río Grande settlements, was headed by bishops who were from that order up until 1839, suggesting that the friars continued their ministry to the Indian communities and occasionally to Hispanic parishes. Beyond that, however, Church and state appeared to operate in separate realms, achieving the ideal of the reforms proposed by the new Bourbon dynasty of the mid-1700s, of a Church limited to spiritual needs.[21]

The Bourbon goal of secularizing the missions, which involved disincorporating the mission towns, thereby opening up mission lands for use by Indians operating as individuals or by Hispanics from nearby villas, and turning the spiritual care of the Indians to the secular clergy, was seen as a way to foster economic development and attract civilian settlers to the edges of the empire, as well as a strategy to increase tribute to the crown and solidify its control. Yet without actual settlers on the frontier (as there were in Nuevo Santander), this reform could not be implemented uniformly across the North; and where it was attempted, such as in Arizona, with the expulsion of the Jesuits whom the crown could not control, Spanish governmental and societal presence disintegrated, and the indigenous peoples reverted to tribal ways, only outside of colonial jurisdiction, pursuing their own interests, which could possibly threaten Hispanic establishments. The Bourbon hope that once the friars had proven that the region could be made productive, settlers would flock to the frontier and

Century San Antonio (Austin, 1991), 108–20; Gutiérrez, *"When Jesus Came,"* 305–6; and Weber, *"Bárbaros,"* 105–7.

[21] http://www.catholic-hierchary.org/diocese/dmonn.html.

secure it by their presence, and that once introduced to Christianity and Hispanic culture, the Indians would quickly begin acting as enlightened individuals, proved illusory. The crown resigned itself to implementing this policy only where the mission ideal was no longer possible, such as in Texas where the missionary-led Indian towns could no longer sustain themselves demographically and thus economically. Elsewhere in the North, in Arizona and in California, the crown returned to subsidizing the Franciscans in their missionary efforts. In California, where there were substantial numbers of nomads who could be enticed or otherwise brought into the mission towns, the crown allowed those Franciscan enterprises to flourish and provide the presidial troops with relatively inexpensive food, clothing, and other supplies needed to protect the frontier. In the process, it was hoped that the natives would be minimally Hispanicized and thus "civilized."[22]

California had only a few official civilian settlements composed mostly of retired presidial settlers, and Arizona had none. Nuevo Santander had five villas along the Río Grande (only Laredo was on the left bank); Texas had San Fernando de Béxar (San Antonio) and Nacogdoches. In 1731, the year the villa was founded, a canonical parish was established to serve the Canary Islanders, whom the crown had sent as *primeros pobladores* (first settlers), and the presidial community. The church, which was built two decades later, was dedicated to San Fernando. It and the town were also placed under the protection of the patroness of the *Isleños*, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria (Our Lady of Candlemas), and the presumed favorite of the mestizo soldier-settlers, Our Lady of Guadalupe. The latter's feast day, 12 December, signaled the beginning of the annual festivities, while the day of La Candelaria, 2 February, concluded them. These observances also seem to have been the occasion for the villa and the presidio settlement to celebrate their coming together as a community. The Isleños and the soldier-settlers all farmed, engaged in ranching, and shared the same fears of Indian attacks. In time, the mestiza Virgen de Guadalupe eclipsed La Candelaria and also St. Ferdinand, for whom the villa had been named; and neither of their feast days received special mention toward the end of the century. Interestingly, this occurred as more and more mestizos achieved a modicum of economic security in this frontier town and "passed" as *españoles* – "Spaniards," a class as well as racial classification. The Christmas celebrations and 12 December coincided with the local agricultural calendar, which may account for the attention these received in the parish records entered by priests, who at the end of the century began to emerge from local families, itself a development reflecting the importance of the institutional Church and the faith among the Béxar community.

[22] Weber, "*Bárbaros*," 132–7.

When the Isleños measured the town's boundaries, they drew lines from what would be the church's front doors. The church bells, according to tradition, marked important events in the community, including deaths, the arrival of dignitaries, immanent Indian attacks, and *cabildo* (city council) meetings. At the beginning of new terms on the *cabildo*, members marched to the church for a solemn Eucharist celebration. Families, of course, observed the arrival of newborns with baptism and expansion of familial ties through matrimony at the parish church, and they brought the remains of their loved ones there for a funeral ritual and burial. Other rites of passage, such as Confirmation, also brought the faithful together on occasions other than Sundays for Eucharist. Béxareños paid the tithes and contributed their time to constructing their parish church, although apparently not everyone did so as willingly or as fully as they were expected. Nevertheless, the faith seems to have been very much a part of the social fabric, and their parish church was at the center of their community and their lives.[23]

FAITH COMMUNITIES IN THE MEXICAN AND AMERICAN PERIODS

Life in the faith communities of the northern frontier would be interrupted by developments related to the movement for Mexican independence that began in 1810. This was particularly the case for San Fernando de Béxar (San Antonio), which was not too distant from the Louisiana border where a vanguard of farmers, adventurers, and filibusters advanced the American westward movement. One local insurrection in 1811 was quickly put down by fellow townsmen loyal to the crown, but another involving a regional rebel assisted by Americans required a sizeable royal force, and this one resulted in the execution of Béxareño supporters of the revolt. More serious disruptions in Texas and across the northern frontier would follow independence (1821) and the subsequent banishment of Spaniards, including bishops, friars, and many priests. Additionally, while initially the new Mexican nation guaranteed Church rights, government support on the frontier for the collection of tithes was uneven, and salaries for missionaries and military chaplains ceased altogether. In these circumstances,

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[23] Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, 1995), 146–52; Gerald E. Poyo, "The Canary Islands Immigrant to San Antonio: From Ethnic Exclusivity to Community in Eighteenth-Century Béxar," in Poyo and Hinojosa, eds., *Tejano Origins*, 41–60; and Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, 2005), 46–58.

priests had to rely on offerings for church rituals and on their own personal or family holdings and income.

Still, the record demonstrates that the faithful continued to have access to the sacraments and religious instruction throughout these turbulent times. In Texas, San Antonio, Goliad, Nacogdoches, the new Mexican and Irish town of San Patricio, and the villas on the Rio Grande were staffed almost continually by diocesan priests and some Franciscan friars. In 1838, the number of clergy in Nuevo Mexico briefly dipped to eleven priests, but the Mexican period also saw peaks of twenty-three and nineteen that resembled the high points of the late colonial period. But the priests in the Mexican period worked with a population that had grown and was more dispersed. Californians were served by sixteen priests in 1848, whereas before there had been nineteen missions, most of which had been staffed by more than one friar. As the missions closed, the priests lived in the Mexican towns, and some of the mission structures suffered deterioration; but the faithful were by no means "abandoned," as the European and American newcomers claimed.[24]

The movement of Americans into the Mexican states of Tejas, Nuevo México, and California would change the region and the Church in more significant ways. The transformation occurred first and very dramatically in Texas, where American farmers settled in the eastern half of that state. According to some estimates, by 1835 when problems with the national government resulted in an armed revolt, the newcomers outnumbered Mexican Texans 30,000 to 5,000. There were no Americans south and west of San Antonio or along the Río Grande, where an additional 6,000 Mexicans lived. Fewer Americans ventured into Nuevo México, which had a population of 70,000 in 1848, almost 60,000 of whom were Hispanics, the rest mostly settled Indians. But the impact of the newcomers was important because they established very profitable businesses trading American goods. Even fewer Americans were in California, which before the Gold Rush of 1849 had an estimated 7,000 Hispanics and 10,000–15,000 baptized Indians. Americans arrived there on clipper ships as part of the American effort to establish a world trade network. With California and the far Mexican North ceded to the United States after the U.S. War with

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[24] Robert E. Wright, "Father Refugio de la Garza, Controverted Religious Leader," in Jesús F. de la Teja, *Tejano Leadership in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas* (College Station, TX, 2010), 77–101; Wright, "How Many Are 'A Few'? Catholic Clergy in Central and Northern New Mexico, 1780–1851," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awalt, *Seeds of Struggle*, 219–61; Wright, "The Reverse Tide: Hispanic Catholics in the United States," *Offerings: Journal of Oblate School of Theology* (2003): 5–26; "El Gran Capitan and the California Church, April 18, 1848," in Francis J. Weber, ed., *Documents in California Catholic History* (Los Angeles, 1965), 59.

Mexico (1846–48) and the Gold Rush, the numbers in the region would skyrocket. In California alone, by 1854 there were 75,000 Catholics.[25]

Long before these changes, some of the first American settlers in Mexican California converted to Catholicism. Two of these new Catholics married into landed Mexican families; a third married the daughter of an American merchant from a mixed marriage. Whether intermarriage played into accepting Catholicism is uncertain, but the only legally recognized marriage within Mexico was that performed by the Church. In Texas, all settlers were required to assume Mexican citizenship, which involved accepting the established Catholic religion. This did not appear to be a stumbling block of any sort, as the large numbers of Anglo-Americans indicate, probably because most may have arrived in Texas after several moves on the frontier, a process that weakened formal ties to their Protestant faith communities or because they viewed their conversion to Catholicism as a formality. There is no evidence of any coercive measures compelling them to practice the Catholic faith. In fact, some grumbled that visits of the priests were too few, but these complaints very likely stemmed not from piety but from their need to secure the legality of marriage bonds and offspring, factors related to property rights and inheritances. In any case, most Americans in Mexican Texas lived on isolated farms, and there are few records of Catholic public religious ceremonies in the American settlements other than in Nacogdoches.[26] Additionally, state laws in the 1830s tolerated the immigration of believers of other denominations.[27]

Still, Texans must have viewed the requirement that only the established Church could bestow legality to marriage and offspring as obnoxious, and they countered with anticlerical tenets in their Declaration of Independence against Mexico. The establishment of religion, they claimed, was the design of clergymen who stood to profit from this spiritual monopoly and blackmail, and thus in the constitutions of the republic and of the state in 1846 and 1866 they forbade all ministers of religion from holding public office. Such cynicism directed at all men of the cloth reflects a distrust of all organized religion – and not just anti-Catholic sentiments – that may have been shared with others on the westward movement.

[25] Wright, "Reverse Tide," 10–15; Gilberto M. Hinojosa, "Mexican-American Faith Communities in Texas and the Southwest," in Jay P. Dolan and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, eds., *Mexican Americans and the Catholic Church 1900–1965* (Notre Dame, 1994), 27; Weber, *Documents in California Catholic History*, 58–9; and Francis J. Weber, *Century of Fulfillment: The Roman Catholic Church in Southern California, 1840–1947* (Mission Hills, CA, 1990), 91.

[26] Francis J. Weber, *Catholic Footprints in California* (Newhall, CA, 1970), 59–62, 64–5.

[27] James Talmadge Moore, *Through Fire and Blood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836–1900* (College Station, TX, 1992), 4.

These anticlerical remarks notwithstanding, officials and legislators of the Republic of Texas supported the return of church buildings on former mission grounds to the Catholic Church. Mission properties had become public lands in Spanish times after the missionary-led Indian towns were disincorporated, although the churches continued to serve as worship centers for what remained of those Indian communities and for other settlers. In colonial days, land had been routinely set aside on the frontier for churches without concern for documentation and delineation of property lines, and this arrangement between church and state continued in the early Mexican era. Once jurisdictional lines within the Catholic Church were settled and authority was transferred to the American bishops in the post-1836 period, Jean Marie Odin, the Church's top official in Texas, requested, lobbied for, and finally secured legal ownership of those church buildings, including the church of the Alamo town-fortress, which had not yet become "the shrine of Texas liberty" of popular culture. When that happened almost a half century later, the Church sold it back to the state of Texas.[28]

The Church faced similar challenges in California where the legal title to mission properties was settled by a land commission, and payments from a Mexican endowment, called the Pious Fund, were secured by the Church after half a century of U.S.-Mexico negotiations. But the population explosion and the spiritual needs it created presented a much bigger crisis, particularly in the northern "gold boom" region, where the disorderly society of fortune seekers threatened the state "with utter ruin – the forgetfulness of the old principles and practices, the insatiable thirst for gold, and a most profligate unchastity." In this group were Catholics from the United States and from Mexico and Latin America who outnumbered the Spanish-Mexican and former Indian residents in the southern part of the state. Additionally, on the margins of California society were numerous Indians whom the missionaries had not reached.[29]

The bishops sent to these new fields in the Southwest were men who endured long ocean voyages and arduous horseback and stagecoach travels across their expansive diocesan territories; they were also tough administrators with an overview of the needs of the faithful and a commitment to put the Church on a firm institutional foundation. In the Lone Star State, Odin selected Galveston as the diocesan see or center. Galveston, with its port, was Texas' largest city and the link to the United States and Europe, from which Odin would secure funds and priests and women

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[28] *Ibid.*, 48–57.
[29] http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12106a.htm; Francis J. Weber, *California's Reluctant Prelate: The Life and Times of Right Reverend Thaddeus Amat, C.M., 1811–1878* (Los Angeles, 1964), 73–84.

religious for the ministry. Galveston would also be the major point of entry for many Americans and most Europeans who would eventually settle in Texas. The fact that most Catholics under his care were Mexican Americans and resided in San Antonio and the western and southern reaches of this diocese, far away from Galveston, did not prevent him from making this strategic selection. Half a century later, the eastern section of the Texas diocese, where American and European Catholics resided, would boast of more churches, clergy, and schools than the Mexican American–dominant regions of the state, which had two or three times as many faithful.[30]

In California, economic and population growth in the northern sector resulted in the rather quick division of the state into two districts. The San Francisco see was elevated to an archdiocese, with some supervisory role over the poorer diocese of Monterey in southern California where the Mexican population was dispersed in the ranches. And there, too, Bishop Thaddeus Amat preferred the boom town of Santa Barbara to the old Mexican capital; only later, at the end of the 1850s, did he move the episcopal residence to Los Angeles, not because he wanted to be closer to the Mexican faithful, but because Los Angeles was seen as destined to be the center of southern California. Both Amat and California's first bishop under the American Church's jurisdiction, Joseph Sadoc Alemany, later Archbishop of San Francisco, were Spanish-born priests who had worked in the United States. They were selected to serve in California, in part, because of the need for the Church to serve both the Mexican American and the Anglo-American populations. Alemany appears to have been more receptive than Amat to local religious traditions, allowing parishioners to request a Mexican priest to officiate at certain ceremonies.[31]

Change and growth would sometimes spur conflict, which would be met with varying degrees of sensitivity on the part of the new Church leaders and parish priests. When the old church in the small New Mexican community of Belén collapsed due to flooding, Bishop Lamy decided to rebuild, not in the old plaza, but in the new part of town which had been growing, even before 1848, with the arrival of the American economy in the area. The old settlers protested, refusing to release the santos, vestments, and holy vessels, an action that brought outright excommunication from Lamy. Eventually, the new pastor negotiated the impasse, and the faithful were brought back into the fold.[32]

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[30] Hinojosa, "Mexican-American Faith Communities," 21–3.

[31] Weber, *Reluctant Prelate*, 32–3, 38, 42, 50; John B. McGloin, *California's First Archbishop, The Life of Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., 1848–1888* (New York, 1966), 127; Weber, *Catholic Footprints in California*, 32–4; Jeffrey M. Burns, "The Mexican Catholic Community in California," in Dolan and Hinojosa, *Mexican Americans*, 133–7.

[32] Margaret Espinoza McDonald, "The Community Influence and Cultural Power of Nuestra Señora de Belén," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awali, *Seeds of the Struggle*, 199.

Lamy, Alemany, Odin, and other bishops, or their representatives across the Southwest were careful to inform their Mexican counterparts that Church authority in the regions ceded to the United States had been transferred to them. In Texas, Odin traveled downriver along the state's southern border, stopping in all towns along the Rio Grande, some of which were on the southern bank of the river. The faithful received him warmly everywhere, at times with great ceremony, but they must have been puzzled when the bishop refused to administer the sacraments on the Mexican side of the river until he obtained permission from his counterpart in Monterrey. Jurisdictional problems arose in Isleta, Socorro, and San Elizario across from El Paso del Norte on the Mexican bank, possibly because the bishop of the Diocese of Durango never considered these settlements as part of New Mexico, and they did not come under the complete control of the American bishop until 1873. The first priest under the new U.S. jurisdiction to celebrate the Eucharist in Santa Fe preached in English, leaving the faithful wondering if he was really Catholic since he was not speaking "as other Christians do" (the only English speakers they knew were "heretics"), until one parishioner observed that this newcomer knew how to make the sign of the cross and had recited the prayers in Latin.[33] Besides language, there were also new Church rules to which Mexicanos were apparently unaccustomed, such as abstinence from eating meat on Fridays, since the Spanish colonies had been excused from this regulation, except for the Fridays in Lent. One California priest could not understand the widespread disregard for this rule, since it did not seem to involve much sacrifice, given that in California there was an abundance of the best salmon.[34]

More serious cultural clashes accompanied the transition to the American church. Bishops Lamy in New Mexico and Odin in Texas removed Mexican priests they judged lax either in their priestly duties or in their moral behavior, sometimes without thoroughly investigating accusations that were at times made by political enemies. In San Antonio, for example, the resident pastor, Father Refugio de la Garza, had supported a pro-Mexico faction during Texas' struggle with Mexico, and Bishop Odin too readily believed the accusations of inattention to, and abuse of, pastoral duties made by Juan Seguín and others. Odin made only a casual investigation of de la Garza's household to conclude that he was not observing his celibacy

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[33] Moore, *Through Fire and Blood*, 91; Lois Stanford, "Local Devotion of St. Michael: Examining Expressions of Popular Catholicism in Socorro, Texas," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awali, *Seeds of Struggle,* 120–2; J. B. Salpointe, *Soldiers of the Cross: Notes on the Ecclesiastical History of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado* (Banning, CA, 1898; repr., Salisbury, NC, 1977), 197.

[34] Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 97.

vows. His observation was correct in this regard, but the accusations related to his ministerial responsibilities were clearly based on partisan reports that Odin too readily took at face value. In New Mexico, Lamy dismissed some very popular pastors, among them Father Antonio José Martínez. In California, Bishop Amat tried to remove the Franciscan friars from the Santa Barbara parish, but he lost that fight. These decisions may or may not reflect anti-Mexican prejudices, but they are very clearly indicative of an attitude that assumed that just like the Anglo-Americans were the new lords of the land, the bishops and clergy with the American Church were the new spiritual conquerors.[35]

While insisting on their authority, the new bishops nevertheless left the majority of the Mexican-era priests in place in the southwestern church. Bishop Lamy even ordained several new Nuevo Mexicanos. But in the ensuing decades, the Mexican-descent clergy gradually disappeared from the region, some because of personal reasons, and they were not replaced. This happened as the old elite Spanish-Mexican families lost status and economic security, and the new American and European clergy did not encourage vocations among Mexican Americans, whom they may not have deemed worthy of the priesthood. This gave the Church a certain "foreign" tint even as some very dedicated and sensitive pastors preserved and promoted Mexicano religious traditions among the faithful.[36]

These pastors of the Spirit also faced serious economic challenges. The first synod (priests' council) in California acknowledged that the Church could not enforce the previous order to tithing, which had not been effective, and it admonished the faithful to support the Church with contributions amounting to one-fifth of the taxes they paid. This resolution, too, may have fallen on deaf ears. Fortunately, through constant pleading and frequent trips to the eastern states and to Europe, they were able to secure funding and recruit priests and women religious from European countries where a spiritual revival inspired a new evangelization zeal among the dozens of dedicated men and women who were willing to leave their homeland for the new mission field in the United States. Upon their arrival in their new assignments, these missionaries often saw themselves as starting from scratch – and in some places they were. Certainly that was the case in the sense of building rectories and convents, refurbishing churches in disrepair or erecting new ones, and constructing schools.[37]

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[35] Wright, "Father Refugio de la Garza": Juan Romero, "Begetting the Mexican American: Padre Martínez and the 1847 Rebellion," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awalt, *Seeds of the Struggle*, 345–72; and Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 133–5.

[36] Wright, "Catholicism," in Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States* (New York, 2005), 1: 283.

[37] Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 78.

The need for new structures often led them at times to talk of their ministry as if in this, too, they were setting the foundation, which seems contradictory to their own observations that the faithful had received them warmly and demonstrated sincere and profound devotion to spiritual things in their daily lives. Bishop Amat was greeted by a delegation of faithful and town leaders in Los Angeles, and he walked in procession with them to the church. The churches were reportedly full for the worship services. Prayers and catechism doctrine were taught to the children, one bishop remarked about the people he visited in various towns, and parents and elders blessed the small children at night and adult offspring when parting. God and the patron saints helped communities survive droughts and social and economic disruption that came with the change of sovereignties in the turbulent 1800s. Even the ordinary morning greetings, *Buenos días le de Dios*, was faith imbued – "May God grant you a good day."[38]

To their credit, the new bishops were able to bring more priests to the field, and they were able to make the rounds to the villages and ranches more often than their predecessors, sometimes traveling in dangerous and difficult country. In South Texas, for example, *el santo padre Pedrito*, the saintly Father Peter, addressed affectionately in the diminutive, rode on horseback through high brush country to reach those who could not travel to the few and distant towns for worship. He died as he ministered, possibly bitten by a snake as he rested under a mesquite tree, where his remains were discovered by cowhands a decade after his disappearance. Women religious also responded to the call and came to the Southwest for the first time. They opened schools, orphanages, and clinics in the growing towns across the region. Dozens of these men and women dedicated their lives to nourish the faith among Mexican Americans, whom they found appreciative of their work. Some of the new pastors had long extended terms and were loved by the faithful.

The new Church leaders did not just attend to the immediate needs; they also sought to guarantee the Church's presence and influence for decades to come. To ensure this, they served not only the poor, but the new lords of the land and the Hispanic elites, upon whom they relied not only for the initial foundation, but also for continued development. A controversy among the members of one religious group in South Texas reflects the conflicting goals and needs the Church faced across the Southwest. Circuit-riding missionaries of the ilk of el santo Padre Pedrito complained that their superiors were allocating disproportionate

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[38] *Ibid.*, 128–31; Kay Alexander, *California Catholicism* (Santa Barbara, 1999), 51; and Salpointe, *Soldiers of the Cross,* 191–201.

resources, staff, and funding to a school that served mostly the well-to-do English-speaking at the expense of the majority of the faithful, the Mexican American poor in the cities and in the far-flung ranches, who did not get the support they needed. The age-old conflict between building institutions and educating the leaders, on the one hand, and serving the poor, on the other, was complicated in the Southwest by the ethnic divide between the Anglo-American and European elites and the Mexican lower classes.[39]

The Church's work among the Indians of California did not appear to be the focus of the new bishops; if it was, it has not been well documented. The disincorporation of the mission towns, which had begun in 1834, left Native Americans vulnerable to exploitation under peonage in the large ranches that took over mission lands in the Mexican period and later under legal indenture in the American society, leaving the Indians in abject poverty.[40] Bishop Alemany in northern California made a passing reference in an appeal for funding to "the grand work of doing something direct towards Christianizing the savage Indians, whose number is immense," but his efforts were actually focused on the vast wave of newcomers in California.[41] Bishop Amat also considered a suggestion from an Indian Affairs agent to take charge of Native Americans residing in the San Luis Rey vicinity, possibly to assist in, or direct, the creation of a reservation, but the Franciscans whom he asked declined, claiming they were already understaffed. In any case, Amat's main concern was getting priests to serve the Indians in the various settlements created from the mission towns and attending to the remainder of the population with churches and schools, and he was not ready to assume any other major responsibility. After a century of wooing the Indians, or forcing them, to abandon their way of the life in the wilds and congregating them in Indian towns, these Native Americans ended completely marginalized in both the Mexican and American societies, without the attention of the Church that had engineered their initial transformation. A generation later, after the Civil War, some individual priests dedicated themselves to working with the Indians,

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[39] Hinojosa, "Mexican-American Faith Communities," 21–8.

[40] Lisbeth Hass, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769–1936* (Berkeley, 1995), 38–44; Robert F. Heizer and Alan F. Almquist, *The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination under Spain, Mexico, and the United States to 1920* (Berkeley, 1971), 39–58; Douglass Monroy, *Thrown among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley, 1990), 132–4, 165–9, 183–205; Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 168–71.

[41] Alemany to the "President of the Council, Society for the Propagation of the Faith" (in Paris), Monterey, 2 Dec. 1852, cited in McGloin, *California's First Archbishop*, 137–8.

and still later, the new Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions would begin to attend to this human crisis.[42]

The new bishops and priests rarely saw themselves as having any public role in the conflict between the Anglo-American newcomers and Mexican American longtime residents of the region who were losing their lands or the Mexican and Latin American newcomers who were exploited in the mining camps of northern California or the new booming cities. But many Latinos used their faith communities and religious traditions as sources of strength in these difficult times. In San Antonio, for example, public devotions in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe were undertaken with a certain air of ethnic pride; and in the El Paso region, tradition has it, St. Michael came to the rescue when the Socorro settlement was attacked by state troops. At issue in El Paso were the appropriation of the communal salt beds by a newcomer and an armed revolt of the Mexicano townspeople. When the troops arrived to put down the revolt, the story goes, the people of Socorro gathered in the sturdiest building, the church, and prayed to their patron saint, whose protection saved them from a cannon shot which flew over the church. Then, "suddenly, a troop of pure white horses appeared from inside the church, led by a gleaming sword of a captain who was out in front," and the frightened Americanos turned around and fled. This incident has escaped the many chroniclers of the famous El Paso Salt War and may even be mythical, but its retelling affirms the convictions of this community. In any case, in the end, St. Michael could not redirect wider historical currents, and the railroad went to the new Anglo-American town of El Paso, not the older settlement of Socorro, and so did the county seat and economic development.[43]

In New Mexico, the Penitentes brotherhood became one of the various vehicles of resisting the new order. This organization of laymen continued its secret religious rituals, observances that rooted them in a past unaffected by the changing economy, the European and American clergy, or the accompanying cultural and religious transformation. The Penitentes, along with *mutualistas*, self-help associations, were among the few societies made up exclusively of Nuevo Mexicanos and controlled by them. Quite naturally, Penitente cells did more than gather for prayers and sometimes blended religion with politics, engineering bloc voting for candidates and interests favorable to their ethnic group. The Church frowned on these

[42] Weber, *Century of Fulfillment*, 168–71.
[43] Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful,* 74–82; Lois Stanford, "Local Devotion to St. Michael: Examining Expression of Popular Catholicism in Socorro, Texas," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awalt, *Seeds of Struggle*, 121–8.

autonomous religious bodies, and some of the faithful may have also disapproved of Penitente political tactics; but their practices, spiritual and temporal, reflect faith expression and a faith community that transcended the reach of the institutional Church.[44]

Mexicanos also asserted their culture and their presence in the newly reorganized Church in the American Southwest in traditional ways. They continued religious traditions and devotions, often encouraged by their new pastors; they volunteered as *mayordomos*, or stewards, to clean and repair the church building; and they contributed from their often meager earnings for major refurbishing or new structures. Tradition has it that when the well-to-do failed to provide for essential repairs of the Old Plaza church in Los Angeles, the pastor appealed to all the faithful, who gave generously from their want, and he dedicated the new façade *a los pobres de esta parroquia* ("to the poor of this parish"), an inscription that was changed only later to *a los fieles* ("to the faithful"). True or not, the story reflects a self-affirmation by Mexicano parishioners that it was their Church.[45]

Through all kinds of political and social changes, Mexican Americans in the nineteenth century forged communities across the Southwest shaped by faith in an essential way. The Catholic Church provided an anchor for that faith, and a small army of priests and women religious nourished it with rituals and devotions and supported it with schools and hospitals. Mexican Americans took that faith beyond the church door into their homes and social lives, making it part of the glue that held *el pueblo* (the people) together. In those faith communities, Mexican Americans survived major transitions in sovereignty and in Church leadership and staffing, and they withstood economic, political, and cultural transformation.

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[44] Robert J. Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest: "The Sacred Right of Self-Preservation"* (Austin, 1981), 145–6; Mario T. García, *"Católicos": Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History* (Austin, 2008), 99–104.

[45] Patty Guggino, "Continuity of Commitment and Customs in La Capilla de San Antonio at Los Lentes, New Mexico," in Steele, Rhetts, and Awalt, *Seeds of Struggle,* 181; and Francis J. Weber, ed., *The Old Plaza Church: A Documentary History* (n.p., 1980), 47.

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Section II

RELIGIONS IN THE NEW NATION, 1790–1865

5

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION IN
THE NEW NATION

RUSSELL E. RICHEY

The new nation would not feature one legally established religion. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution settled that. Neither the Congregational legal establishments in New England, nor the Anglican ones in New York and in the South would be extended nationally. However, as the Constitution could not anticipate the evolution of a robust, ever more populist democracy, institutionalized by two-party politics and governance,[1] neither could Constitution drafters or the new nation's religious leadership foresee that religious freedom would foster

- the emergence and evolution of multiple national, purposive, entrepreneurial, missionary denominations;
- competing for adherents across the expanding U.S. landscape and to some extent across racial, language, and ethnic lines;
- generating single-purpose voluntary societies to underwrite infrastructural and socially transformative measures;
- constituting collectively in this denominational order, a religious counterpart to party government and with a similar pattern of major and minor (or marginal) parties;
- providing through membership, methodology, and message an American religious citizenship in a commonwealth defined with evocative Protestant images, myths, and concepts (for instance, new Israel, election, covenant, providence, millennium);
- tending thereby to tie religious purpose to America as land, nation, society, and people;
- and creating as agenda and aspiration an informal Christian establishment with its own political-religious convictions about insiders and

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[1] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (Oxford, 2009).

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outsiders, its expectations for and from elected officials, and its evolving ways of participating in the political process.[2]

THE DENOMINATION

The denomination was an Anglo-American contribution to religious organizational taxonomy and within Christianity the most important institutional development since the Emperor Constantine. It came to characterize American religion and define ways of being religious, as the party came to characterize American government and define ways of participating politically and as the corporation came to characterize American enterprise and define ways of doing business.[3] And like its political and economic counterparts, the denomination emerged gradually, without blueprint, assembled from various existing social patterns, and evolved as American society changed.[4]

In the early national period, the word "denomination" came increasingly to acquire sociological significance, supplanting an earlier, conventional usage simply to identify distinguishable religious opinions or theological postures. Writing in 1811, Thomas Branagan continued to employ the word in that older pattern. (In this earliest comparative assessment of American religion, Branagan sought to acquaint Christian denominations "with the authentic tenets of each other" so as to encourage mutual affirmation and tolerance.) Under "General Sects" he treated Calvinism, Antinomianism, Arianism, Arminianism, and Socinianism. And even his listing of "Particular Sects" included Sublapsarians, Supralapsarians, Quietists, Pietists, Trinitarians, and Hutchinsonians as well as religious organizations proper – among them, Baptists, Unitarians, Congregationalists, Mennonites, Lutherans, Moravians, Presbyterians, Shakers, Universalists, Methodists, and Quakers.[5] Increasingly, the latter, more specifically organizational usage of "denomination," replaced the mere naming of sentiments. It applied to religious bodies with identifiable leadership, which gathered multiple congregations

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[2] Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, 1993); R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, 1986).

[3] Compare five principles in Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 41.

[4] See Richey, "Denominations and Denominationalism: An American Morphology," in Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey, eds., *Reimagining Denominationalism* (New York, 1994); "Institutional Forms of Religion," in Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, 3 vols. (New York, 1988) 1: 31–50; and various headers to the essays in Richey, ed., *Denominationalism* (Nashville, 1977).

[5] Thomas Branagan, *A Concise View of the Principal Religious Denominations in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1811), iii–vi, 281–7.

into translocal associations, on some regularized basis, under written bylaws or constitutions. And these bodies increasingly undertook the organizational maintenance and development operations (catechizing, training, ordaining, publishing, funding) that in British or European established churches were distributed between and among crowns, parliaments, universities, and the national churches proper.

Collectively, the denominations came to have a role comparable to that of established churches as well insofar as they sought to provide a moral/ religious stamp to American society and to collaborate in that enterprise. Branagan caught that insight early, dedicating his survey to building a sense of common endeavor among Protestants. My "primary object," he asserted, "is by the most scriptural, philosophical, and reasonable argumentation to demonstrate the fatal consequences, which will most assuredly result to our young republic, 'the world's last hope,' by nurturing a spirit of intolerance."[6] The denominational project of a religious America, indeed of a Christian America, began with modest collaboration among the more upstanding churches – Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Reformed, Episcopalians. By the 1840s, Robert Baird, writing to explain American religion to skeptical Europeans and updating Branagan's survey, would recognize a much broader alliance and commonality among evangelical (Protestant) denominations and a sharp line to be drawn between their place in American society and that of the unevangelical denominations.[7] In the latter he numbered Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Christians, Universalists, Hicksite Quakers, Swedenborgians, Dunkers, Jews, Shakers, Rappists, Mormons, as well as various anti-Christian ideologies (Deism, Socialism, Fourierism, and Atheism).[8]

Prior to distinguishing evangelical and unevangelical denominations, Baird devoted two hundred pages to showing that despite the separation of church and state, federal and state governments fostered Christianity, that religion prospered under the voluntary principle, that this principle rested on the character and habits of the citizens, and that locally and nationally Americans had created institutions and machinery to establish the faith in the hearts, minds, and practices of both citizen and magistrate. In town and country this voluntary establishing of Christianity was achieved through the Bible-reading religious home and the building and supporting of churches. Those efforts were supported nationally by educational institutions (colleges and theological seminaries), voluntary societies

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[6] *Ibid.*, v.

[7] Robert Baird, *Religion in America, or, An Account of the Origin, Progress, Relation to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States: With Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations* (New York, 1845, 1856), the 1856 edition much extended.

[8] *Ibid.*, 269–87.

(Bible, Sunday school, and mission), reform and benevolent associations, and the denominations. The latter, geared into this complex voluntary machinery for spreading Christianity and "establishing" it as foundational for social and political order, sustained and translated received religious principles (Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist) into a distinctive American form of the church. Turning limited colonial religious pluralism and Middle Colony toleration into a national pattern of denominationalism was one of the enduring religious accomplishments of the first half of the nineteenth century.

THE COLONIAL DENOMINATION: FROM LABEL TO POLITY

Denominationalism in the British Isles and British North America represented failure – schism, the dividing of the church, the emergence of religious parties, de facto pluralism, the inability of crown and Parliament to achieve religious uniformity, a resultant limited comprehension. A limited de facto pluralism emerged in the religious fracturing during the long Puritan testing of the Anglican Reformation (Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers, plus various radical groups). However, not until the Glorious Revolution and the Toleration Act of 1689 was some acceptance of this religious pluralism countenanced and then with quite significant limitations. In this context, the word "denomination" named the reality of a diversity of religious opinions, loyalties, commitments – the yield of partisan Puritanism.

In addition to splintering English religion, Puritanism contributed a second vital dimension to denominationalism by emphasizing church organization as a divine imperative. Order was not adiaphora, not a theological nonessential, but instead revealed in scripture. Getting polity right – congregational or presbyterian, separating or nonseparating – was among the motivations for migration to Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. Third, the eschatological but society-transformative orientation of the Presbyterians and Non-Separatist Congregationalists and the array of theological metaphors with which they envisioned a society so transformed would be of long-term significance in the agenda setting of North American denominationalism. Finally, the reaction to religious warfare and turmoil on the continent and in the British Isles stimulated aspirations for and theory about how church and society might be divided and yet united or at least peaceful. Quakers and others sought respect for and protection of the individual conscience. Irenic thinkers proposed theological schemes for a "catholic" unity transcending differences. Pietism insisted that conversion and a renewed heart took precedence over rigidities that produced

divisive confessionalism. And John Locke and others elaborated political theories of toleration. In William Penn's experiment, these several forms of religious freedom interlaced.

In consequence of Penn's and other Middle Colony settlement policies, that region produced perhaps that world's most extensive institutionalizing of religious pluralism. Jostling one another were Dutch Reformed, Quaker, Scottish, Scots-Irish and Irish Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, English Baptist, Jewish, Anglican, transplanted New England Congregationalist, various German-speaking peoples (Dunker, Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, Schwenckfelder, Mennonite), and several communitarian groups (e.g., Ephrata). Of particular importance in stimulating identity with, cohesion within, and organizational development of these groups was the leaven of Pietism. Pietism and kindred expressions of British evangelicalism produced in the colonies a set of recruiting and community-forming practices to which the word "revivalism" came to be applied.

Religious community formation typically began in early stages of a group's immigration and settlement but took off with the itinerant, revivalistic, conversionist, Pietist practices that surfaced in Dutch settlements under Theodore J. Frelinghuysen in the 1720s, continued among Presbyterians under William and Gilbert Tennent in the 1730s, appeared in quite diverse confessional forms thereafter, and spread across the colonies tracking the several decades of itinerations by George Whitefield.

Formative but controversial were Pietism's emotional invitational preaching, expectations of conversion and a morally regenerate life thereafter, allowance for lay testimony, encouragement of prayer, Bible-reading and disciplining small groups (conventicles), itinerant preaching (beyond a community to which the minister might be called), focus in sermon and witness on sin and salvation, blunt criticisms of worldliness in other laity and of unfruitful and unconverted ministers, and willingness to experiment with new ways of training and credentialing leadership. From the 1720s to the eve of the Revolution, revivalism washed over community after (Protestant) community. Conversion yielded a new identity, encouraged bonding among the converted, and credentialed leadership. New congregations and associations of the revived emerged, in some instances thereby dividing the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, or Mennonite community, forming an alternative vis-à-vis the existing alliance but typically still honoring linguistic, national origin, and ethnic lines.[9]

In fact, Pietism's tactics proved highly effective in stimulating two forms of religious identity and community, both revival-generated new

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[9] Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), and *Religion in Colonial America* (New York, 2000).

alliances and angry reactive responses from existing, revivalist-critiqued, and more confessionally oriented leaders. The more orthodox leaders in the various groups and the congregations formed on the then-normative Protestant-confessional model naturally took great exception to the fracturing of "t'heir'" community and to revivalist censorious criticism, emotionalism (enthusiasm), lax theology, irregular lay activity, and untrained/ unauthorized ministries. The confessional communities filed disciplinary charges at headquarters (Edinburgh, Amsterdam), read the enthusiast Pietists out of synod or assembly, shored up these organizations, and so countered with measures of denominational formation that also followed lines of kinship, language, national origin, tradition, and race. These reactions actually strengthened the confessional or orthodox bodies. Religious energy and division then yielded two forms of ethnic identity, rudimentary organization on voluntary basis, and colonial cohesion. So among Presbyterians, both the Awakening New Side and the more confessional Old Side offered versions of Celtic-American ethnicity, each organizing along received polity lines.

AMERICAN DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY

The enterprise of transforming the colonial Middle Colonies' "Perfect Babel of Confusion"[10] and its quasi-ethnic pluralism into the principled national denominationalism that Baird celebrated fell to the Reformed (Presbyterians and Congregationalists), Baptists, and Methodists. The Reformed contributed the theory, Baptists a democratic principle, and Methodists the model of nationally purposive competitive, missionary structure. Theirs was hardly a collaborative project. Indeed, at times these groups genuinely despised and avoided one another. Congregationalists and Presbyterians viewed revivalistic Baptists and camp meeting Methodists as enthusiasts and threats to good order. Baptists and Methodists competed for constituents and mocked and pilloried one another. Methodists reviled the Calvinists as pathetic predestinarians and fatalists. But each movement oriented itself to propagation and mission across the expanding nation, and each contributed a distinctive and important dimension to the creation of a new form of denominationalism. However, with each at best wary of one another, they played their parts independently with little sense of how their own particular self-understanding, way of operating, or charism would contribute long term to refabricated denominationalism. Their distinctive pattern of organizational maturation, then, rather

[10] Randall H. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York, 1989).

accidentally gave to the new nation an institutionalized pluralism and to religious freedom its organizational contours and character. Voluntarism might have been a principle by the time that Baird wrote, but it was at best aspiration and more accurately, indeed, a babel of confusion as the Revolution ended.

The accidental character of American denominational pluralism – of national, missionary, voluntaristic religious bodies – can perhaps be best illustrated with the Methodists who grew from insignificance to become the largest Protestant denomination. In 1780, they numbered 8,500. By 1865 and after multiple divisions, the northern body, the Methodist Episcopal Church, alone claimed over 900,000 and almost the same number in its Sunday schools.[11] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark estimate total Methodist adherents at 2.7 million in 1850 and 3.793 in 1860, and they judge that by the first date 34.2 percent of all those religiously affiliated were Methodists of one kind or another.[12]

When Methodists organized as a church at a conference in late 1784, they gave themselves an apparently ambitious, expansive, purposive continental or national mandate. Their mission statement posed the question, "What may we reasonably believe to be God's Design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?" The answer: "To reform the Continent, and to spread scriptural Holiness over these Lands."[13] Methodists would eventually achieve this remarkable ambition. And they were already adapting to the American scene an evangelistic system of small groups, a welcoming ethic, an aggressive itinerant missionary deployment of preachers, modes of popular address, a societally transformative discipline, and an apprenticeship training program that John Wesley had constructed for penetration of the British Isles. The apparently national or continental mission statement with which the American church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, launched itself, however, was less vision and more wordplay. It represented simply an editing of Wesley's language. His answer to the above query had been, "Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."[14] The American Methodists stumbled into a grandiose and expansive purposive missionary

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[11] Abel Stevens, *The Centenary of American Methodism: A Sketch of Its History, Theology, Practical System, and Success* (New York, 1865), 284.

[12] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, 2005), 55, 113.

[13] *Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., the Rev. Francis Asbury and others at a Conference ... 1784* (Philadelphia, 1785), 4, excerpted in Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, eds., *The Methodist Experience in America: A Sourcebook* (Nashville, 2000), 82–6.

[14] "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others," in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London, 1872; 1958), VIII: 299.

vision not with the ambition to be the largest Protestant church, but merely
to find suitable American substitution for British terminology.

   Just as haphazardly, American Methodists threw together the Wesleyan
conference pattern of governance with Anglican ministerial orders into a
polity for the new church. Retaining Wesley's curious titling for a gov-
erning document, "Minutes of Several Conversations," the Americans
inserted rubrics for deacons, elders, and superintendents (soon retitled
bishops), purged passages not relevant to the American scene, added others
(including long, detailed instructions for eliminating slaveholding), but
otherwise retained most of Wesley's text and its strange ordering. Unlike
Episcopalians and Presbyterians who would in several general conventions
or synods debate, adjust, and adapt already refined governmental forms
into carefully thought-out "constitutions" suitable for new churches in a
new nation, Methodists turned Wesley's "Large Minutes" into a *Discipline*
over a few days in a hastily called "Christmas Conference." The modesty
of the attendees' parliamentary self-awareness is indicated in the fact that
they kept no minutes of the proceedings, the new *Discipline* itself and scat-
tered entries in preachers' journals being the only records of the event.
Nor had they thought through how best to adjust the single conference
with which Wesley oversaw English Methodism to their scattered pres-
ence across the seaboard from Georgia to New England. Already Methodist
preachers had established a pattern of gathering in three separate confer-
ences annually for purposes of their deployment to widespread circuits. It
took them another eight years, until 1792, to realize that they needed a
quadrennial general conference to legislate for the annual conferences that
would continue to increase in number as the movement spread. And it
took almost a quarter of a century, until 1808, for them to realize that they
needed a delegated general conference to ensure participation and parity
across a movement that advanced with new settlements. Even then, they
kept governance entirely in the preachers' hands, lay participation in con-
ference not achieved in episcopal Methodism until the Civil War era, one
of several grievances that led to the 1830s exit of Methodist Protestants. So
Methodists jerry-built the organization or polity with which they would,
in fact, spread the continent with scriptural holiness.

   Methodist willingness to adapt and adopt in part explains their remark-
able success. They embraced, regularized, and promoted camp meetings,
for instance, no invention of theirs, but similar in important respects to
the quarterly conference, a circuit-level part of their governance struc-
ture. So also they put to effective use missionary societies, newspapers
(*Christian Advocates*), other publications of various sorts, Sunday schools,
and eventually colleges, creating remarkable machinery for communicat-
ing the Methodist message. No small measure of Methodist success owed
to the leadership to, modeling for, and symbolizing of Methodism by

Bishop Francis Asbury. His artisan English upbringing, familiarity with Wesley's system, and willingness to weather the Revolution when other British preachers fled earned him the respect and affirmation of American Methodists. That several-fold credentialing equipped him to translate British Wesleyanism into American practices and idiom. Asbury traveled relentlessly across the length and breadth of the Methodist work (or circuit system), logging some 130,000 horseback miles and crossing the Alleghenies some sixty times.[15] Roaming from conference to conference, personally appointing the preachers in each to their circuits, staying in modest homes along his route (sometimes of adherents, sometimes where night landed him), and preaching and praying his way into the hearts of Americans, Asbury modeled the itinerancy that deployed preachers to unchurched people in old settlements and new. He lived the Wesleyan mandate that drove the Methodist machine and which the Americans carried over into their *Discipline*. "You have nothing to do but to save Souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this Work."[16] The human cost of this system was incredible, and Methodists had a phrase for what it did to those who lived the regimens – "worn-out preachers." So Methodists patterned the national, entrepreneurial, purposive, missionary denomination.

This template would be followed as Methodists divided, which they did virtually every decade in the nineteenth century – AMEs, AMEZs, Methodist Protestants, Wesleyans, MEC/MECS, Free Methodists, CMEs, Nazarenes. All these and their German kindred, the United Brethren and Evangelical Association, evidenced the evangelical zeal, perfectionism, small group discipline, populist style, and itinerant leadership deployment of the Wesleyan charism. (African American Methodist and Baptist churches developed fully as national, missionary denominations after the Civil War as they moved south and west to evangelize and educate and to compete with one another and with white-dominated compatriots. Treatment of black denominationalism, therefore, belongs to later sections of the *Cambridge* volumes. So also do Christian missions to Native Americans, Hispanics, and the several immigrant groups whose conversion to Christianity or Protestant Christianity did not yield separate denominations.)

BAPTISTS

Baptist contributions to denominationalism included principled congregationalism, experientially grounded voluntarism, persecution-driven commitment to religious freedom, and institutionalized tension between

[15] John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford, 2009), 3.
[16] "Minutes of Several Conversations" (1785), 13.

individual believers and congregations on the one side and associations
and conventions on the other. If Methodists exhibited missionary denomi-
national formation built down, as it were, from conferences whose preacher-
members the bishops appointed to circuits, Baptists, equally revivalistic,
patterned a denominationalism built up from individual believers and
fiercely independent congregations. Their principled localism did not
inhibit Baptists from transcongregational organization. Indeed, beginning
with the coalescence of the Philadelphia Association in 1707, Baptists
north and south had by 1780 created a dozen additional associations. The
Philadelphia Association modeled the pattern of regional cooperation for
fellowship, mutual support, collaboration in ordinations, and doctrinal
convergence, reflected in the 1742 Philadelphia Confession, drawn from
the Calvinist or Reformed 1689 Second London Confession. Similarly,
aspirations for national cooperation, motivated by the missionary spirit of
the times, led to the formation of the General Missionary Convention in
1814. But the associational principle was held in tension with and did not
compromise the integrity and independence of congregations nor of their
populist localism.

The tension derived in no small measure from Baptist adoption and
adaptation of the Puritan aspiration for congregations formed by visible
saints and the expectation that each and all would have a conversion experi-
ence. Baptists added to these extraordinary ideals a Pietist or revivalistic
requirement that individuals be conscious of and able to confirm that they
had experienced conversion. This quest for and expectation of assurance, as
already noted, derived from the wave of revivals that swept over the colo-
nies from the 1720s onward and has sometimes been termed the Great
Awakening. Revivals appeared in various communities (Dutch Reformed,
Moravian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist) and featured the new leader-
ship style of revival-oriented itinerant preaching (modeled by Theodorus
Frelinghuysen, Gilbert and William Tennent, Jonathan Edwards, and pre-
eminently George Whitefield). Especially important in Baptist appropria-
tion of this common Pietist or revivalistic expectation were the Separates,
the New England Congregationalists, whose conversionist convictions led
to demands that congregations be made up of believers and to insistence
on believers' baptism. Separations from the Congregationalist establish-
ment followed – hence their name. Migration and successes in the South
leavened Baptist movements across the eastern landscape with this expe-
rientially grounded and conversionist voluntarism. Other bases of Baptist
or Anabaptist belief continued to persist, and new ones emerged to some
degree defining themselves vis-à-vis the revivalistic Calvinism derived from
the Separates. Free Will Baptists created regional and national associations
in the early nineteenth century. The Universalist movement owed some

of its generating impulse to Elhanan Winchester, Hosea Ballou, and other Baptists. Baptists contributed to and adhered to the primitivist or restorationist impulse that generated the antidenominational denomination, the Christians (Campbellites or Disciples). Antimission and Primitive Baptist movements organized in the 1820s and 1830s. African American Baptist congregations, on the other hand, owed their existence to the inclusive and antislavery witness of Baptist revivalism. Although often white-led in the early nineteenth century, black Baptists began to develop their own leadership and formed associations in the 1840s, beginning with the Providence Antislavery Missionary Baptist Association in 1834.[17] Fracturing seemed to only increase the competitive spirit with which Baptists worked the land.

Baptists also contributed to denominationalism a fervid commitment to religious freedom and to the separation of church and state. Forced to contend with repressive measures from the Congregationalist establishments in New England and the Anglican hegemony in the South (and especially in Virginia), Baptists led by Isaac Backus, John Leland, and others fought for their own and others' right to organize and worship as they pleased.[18] In this long struggle, for a time allied with Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, Baptists developed strong notions of soul liberty, the individual conscience, religious liberty, and separation of church and state.[19] In construals of Baptist principles like that of David Benedict's 1813 *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World*, the whole Christian history of dissent and persecution and various peoples of Baptist-like practice was woven into a single denominational history. So defenders of religious liberty like Roger Williams became Baptist icons, and religious freedom became the Baptist saga. Such notions and the strong affirmation of the individual congregation that went with them helped mediate into Protestant religious practice expectations that governance would accord with the democratic principles of the new nation, that leaders would be chosen and leadership exercised with some degree of consent on the part of the laity, that due process and parliamentary procedure would be followed in decision making, that societally respected juridical canons would guide disciplinary trials, and that in some measure a collective denominational will would guide policy, social concerns, and doctrine.

[17] William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA, 2006), 24–43, 70–3, 175–98; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), 112–38.
[18] William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1973).
[19] Brackney, *Baptists*, 39–42; Leonard, *New England*, 129–33.

Baptists negotiated their own way toward national, entrepreneurial, competitive, missionary denominationalism from their principled congregationalism. If the signature of Methodism mission was the itinerant preacher deployed by bishop and sent out from conference, the signature for Baptists was the farmer preacher whose conversion and call impelled him to frontiers as well, where he could gather souls in and form a congregation. That strong missionary spirit also led American Baptists to emulate their British counterparts and form regional missionary associations to support pioneering efforts both domestically and abroad. And when missionary heroes emerged – Luther Rice, Adoniram and Ann Judson, and Lott Carey – Baptists established the aforementioned General Baptist Missionary Convention in the United States for Foreign Missions (1814). Terming it the Triennial Convention for its periodic meeting scheme, Baptists created what would eventually become a denominational structure, but in the first instance a voluntary society. It was a cooperative, purposive endeavor not connectionally accountable through representation to the regional associations, but instead the creature of any and all congregations whose annual dues permitted them to send delegates. So they borrowed a scheme perfected in Britain and already adapted for American use by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, but for whom similar issues in accountability and in congruence with received polity to those raised by antimission Baptists would eventually surface.[20]

THE REFORMED

The Congregationalist contribution to the fabrication of the denominational system proved to be the most complicated. Blessed (or cursed) with their legal establishment in New England, Congregationalist leadership spent the decade before and after the turn of the nineteenth century in its defense. That mood, however, proved constructive as it equipped Congregational leaders, preeminent of which was Yale President Timothy Dwight, to translate Puritan doctrines, symbols, and mythology of a covenanted people into a national political theology. Drawn into defensive politics on behalf of the Federalists, concerned with the spread of Deism, upset over the apparent capitulation of Harvard to Unitarianism, alarmed at what Thomas Jefferson might mean for true religion and morals, hysterical over Bavarian Illuminati and possible French-Revolution-like conspiracies in the United States, disturbed over the successes of upstart Methodists and Baptists, Dwight and others imagined conspiratorial designs against Christianity and order. More constructively, Dwight made Yale into a

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[20] Brackney, *Baptists*, 44–54; Leonard, *New England*, 158–71.

national institution concerned with the moral order of the new nation, resourced the powerful mythology of Puritanism with Scottish common-sense epistemology, modeled and fostered a revivalism comfortable with education and culture, and oriented Congregationalism toward explaining and defending the received orthodoxy.[21]

Congregationalists, especially the Edwardseans (Dwight included) who came to prominence in the decade before and after the Revolution, worried over their compatriots, offspring, and neighbors who moved north and west into new territories and who wrote back to New England requesting pastors. The Edwardseans experimented with various methods of extending ministries into these new communities, founded missionary societies, chief of which was the Connecticut Missionary Society (1798), and in 1801 covenanted with the Presbyterians in the Plan of Union to undertake cooperative arrangements by which congregations could call ministers of either denomination and associations of either would provide oversight. Thus began collaboration between the two Reformed bodies – Congregationalists and Presbyterians – out of which would emerge the array of voluntary societies whose interlocking boards, dominated by those two communions, would increasingly construe their efforts to minister to, order, and reform America in covenantal or Puritan terms. Congregationalism did not enjoy the largest harvest from their collaborative and societally transformative ventures. Baptists and Methodists proved to be far more successful in getting their message to frontier areas. Congregationalists had expectations and standards that militated against unregulated revivalism – for a college-educated clergy, sacraments as the responsibility of the ordained, the church as a community and a community of the converted, towns as more conducive to such ordered covenantal bodies than sparsely settled frontiers, and their first duty to be to their own kindred.[22] Such revival-transformed Puritan convictions and ideals, however, would through their mediation and that of the Presbyterians become essential ideological and mythological resources for the several denominations that would join the Reformed in the crusade for a Christian America and for the denominationalism that oriented itself toward that campaign.

Presbyterians had patched up their revival-induced division into Old and New Sides in 1758, affirming commitments important to each – for the former, the Westminster Standards and Directories for church government;

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[21] John R. Fitzmier, *New England's Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817* (Bloomington, 1998), 53–78, 89–104.
[22] James R. Rohrer, *Keepers of the Covenant: Frontier Missions and the Decline of Congregationalism, 1774–1818* (New York, 1995), 143–52; J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York, 1990), 121–31.

and for the latter, revivalistic expectations that candidates for ministry would have had a conversion experience. They had also begun collaboration with the Congregationalists, as just noted. Fresh waves of Scottish and Scots-Irish immigrants led to expansion south and west and to the formation of presbyteries beyond its New Jersey, New York stronghold. Also from Scotland and on the eve of the Revolution (1768), John Witherspoon came as president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and provided vision for the church and its place in American society and politics, especially as colonists enumerated their grievances with England, among them the mooted proposal for a colonial Anglican bishop.

Presbyterians met with Congregationalists in a series of conventions from 1766 to the Revolution, one outcome of which was the 1801 Plan of Union by which the two churches coordinated expansion and organization in the West.[23] These conventions, in focusing on colonial liberties vis-à-vis Britain, gave religious and theological warrant to the American cause. The denominational embrace of a transcolonial American identity and of the critical place of Presbyterianism therein came through especially forcefully in two public statements from John Witherspoon. The first, a quite short "Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia … on … the Day of the General Fast," pled for support for the Continental Congress and for maintenance of "the union which subsists through all the colonies."[24]

The second, "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men," insisted that "the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature." Here as in other public utterances Witherspoon spoke of the nation as an entity, counseled "union, firmness, and patience," and insisted that the only secure bases for political integrity and stability were pure manners, virtuous lives, and "true and undefiled religion." The friend of liberty would promote true religion. An "avowed enemy to God" was "an enemy to his country." So he envisioned a transdenominational civic agenda (for Presbyterians and others), indeed a national agenda to be shared among the Protestant denominations. There are, he posited, "few surer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himself more joined in spirit to a truly holy person of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own." He concluded with the exhortation, "God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty

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[23] D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 2007), 67–8, 71, 73.
[24] "A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, to the Congregations under Their Care: To be Read from the Pulpits on Thursday, June 29, 1775, Being the Day of the General Fast" (New York, 1775), 6. Evans no. 14410. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

may be inseparable."[25] Conveying such convictions in a variety of public ways, Witherspoon was twice elected to the Continental Congress and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. By such public engagement, widely emulated among other Presbyterian laity and clergy, Witherspoon helped the Presbyterians claim oversight responsibility for the moral fiber and civic virtue of the new nation and to do so through and because of the conditions of religious pluralism and toleration within which they had prospered for roughly a century. Indeed, Samuel Davies, who gave leadership to the Presbyterian cause in Virginia, had also provided support for Thomas Jefferson's campaign for religious freedom.

By 1789 when Presbyterians convened in the first General Assembly, its four synods and sixteen presbyteries extended the church from New York to the Carolinas, and its collaboration with the Congregationalists made the Reformed truly embracive of the new nation. As important as its national orientation were the lessons that Presbyterians had learned from their flourishing in the Middle Colonies' pluralistic and tolerant atmosphere and their less-than-happy experience when constrained by Anglican establishments in the South. It was they who would, over the course of the nineteenth century, articulate the theory and espouse the agenda of a Christian (Protestant Christian) America achieved by voluntary means and founded on the bedrocks of the several denominations, collaborative voluntary societies, and the Christian home.[26]

DENOMINATIONALISM: A DYNAMIC AND EVOLVING RELIGIOUS ECONOMY

Purposive missionary denominationalism gradually combined the evangelical style of the popular movements with the Reformed institutional and covenantal self-understandings. In orienting denominations toward the creation of a Christian America, the mission-covenant combination stimulated incredible institution-building efforts, much of which went into transforming the denominations from modest associational structures into engines for national ministerial deployment and governance, making them powerful democratizing and creative forces. The missionary impulse established new, expansive, outwardly oriented denominational

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[25] John Witherspoon, "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men: A Sermon Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May, 1776. Being the General Fast Appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. To Which Is Added an Address to the Natives of Scotland Residing in America" (Philadelphia, 1776), 40, 47, 50, 51, 52, 60. Evans no. 15224. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

[26] Randall Balmer and John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians* (Westport, 1993), 34–41; Hart and Muether, *Better Country*, 87–8.

presumptions. Old boundaries, of parish, of ethnicity, of confession, of prior Christianization, of existing loyalty, and to a lesser extent of race, no longer pertained. The whole nation, indeed the whole world, needed evangelization. The religion business would thereafter be expansive, aggressive, competitive, entrepreneurial, expressive, boosteristic. Missionary self-understanding elicited new skills of leadership and new patterns of organization characterized by initiative, risk taking, mobility, openness, experimentation, vernacular idioms, and popular expression.

The Reformed, the Baptists, and the Methodists made perhaps the most noteworthy contributions toward the construction of what would be later recognized and acclaimed as the signature American pattern of national, voluntaristic, missionary denominations. As noted already, however, they were far from being real collaborators, each doing its part quite separately. Nor did a blueprint, master plan, or common battle strategy guide their separate endeavors. Each found a distinctive way of indigenizing authority, orienting itself to American society as a whole, and conceiving of its purposes in missionary terms. And they were not the only fabricators of the denomination.

From preliminary stages in Puritanism and in eighteenth-century revivalism through to the twenty-first century, various groups beyond these three contributed materially to the shaping of denominationalism as they interacted with, resisted, appropriated, and reshaped the emergent or existing pattern. Contributions came, in particular, from groups that by transatlantic connections, doctrine, ethnicity, language, polity, mission, history, politics, understanding of scripture, or ecumenical outlook resisted reduction to denominational status, identification with denominationalism, or classification as merely an American religious body.

The various restorationist groups that coalesced into the Disciples of Christ represent one variant of important antidenominationalism that eventually yielded several vibrant denominations. With Presbyterian and Baptist roots, origins in Cane Ridge and the ecumenical cauldron of camp meetings, the restorationists (Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott) rejected creeds as constitutive of the church, denounced denominational divisiveness, and summoned Christians to unite on the basis of scripture alone. Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* urged believers to restore the faith of the New Testament and to unite under the name of Christians only.[27] Colleague restorationists embraced other names, each of which sought unity by the reclamation of early Christian identity, belief, and practice (Christian, Disciples, Disciples

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[27] William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (Saint Louis, 1975), 15–28.

of Christ). That this movement evolved into yet another denomination may seem ironic. However, aspirations to unite the divided have animated many reform movements, and in the American context the restorationist ideal both epitomized and furthered important aspects of denominationalism. Denominationalism featured efforts to unite that yielded yet another religious organization and, on the other hand, particular identities that saw beyond the competitiveness to a larger unity. Denominationalism frequently predicated unity on the restorationist platform of scripture alone. And denominationalism oriented religious movements toward the whole, the whole nation (to be influenced), the whole of Christianity (as particularly grasped), and in the twentieth century to Judeo-Christian, and even more diverse commonalities, the whole of the world (as mission territory).

So denominations, as they planted themselves or emerged in North America, perforce had to deal with the cacophony of religious bodies, the way in which competition had set religious game rules, and the effect American denominations collectively and individually had had in shaping the place of religion socially, politically, and jurisprudentially. That competitive voluntaristic environment produced various responses, from reactive definition vis-à-vis to full engagement, and sometimes from the one to the other. American Judaism, for instance, as numbers increased and the Jewish population spread into various locales, gradually went from being synagogue communities to communities of synagogues, and eventually to well-defined denominations (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox).[28]

Roman Catholics, less than 2 percent of religious adherents and numbering around twenty-five thousand after the Revolution but 14 percent and over a million by 1850, represent far more complex interactions with the existing religious culture and dominant organizational style.[29] The complexity resulted from both intrinsic and societal factors – the authority of Rome, parallel structures of orders and dioceses, strong anti-Catholic sentiments among many Protestants, predominance of Irish within the Catholic community, American courts' struggles to understand and sometimes unwillingness to respect Catholic systems of parochial and diocesan authority. Nevertheless under the leadership of the Carrolls of Maryland, particularly of Bishop John Carroll, and reflective of the "established" character of Maryland Catholicism, the church lived relatively successfully between the Revolution and 1820 in the tension between faith commitments and practices and the democratic ethos of the new country. Symbolic of Catholic comfort with the American denominational pattern

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[28] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 52–61.
[29] Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 55, 109–15; Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York, 2002), 14.

was widespread organization of parishes with and vesting authority in lay
trustees, chosen by election. Similarly, the Irish-born bishop of Charleston,
John England, endorsed in the 1820s a scheme of lay and clergy conventions
regularized under a written constitution, a plan that partook of important
aspects of the denominational style. This "republican Catholicism" gave
way after 1820 to more conventional Romanized or Tridentine order-
ing of the church as the Catholic immigration surged, the majority of
the church became foreign born, new bishops were sent by Rome, "reli-
gious" leadership on the parish level was strengthened in the orders and
among priests, the backwash from the French Revolution shaped attitudes
toward democracy, "nativist" hostility increased, Catholics reacted to the
Protestant character of public schools, and in various ways the American
Church oriented itself to more traditional forms of Catholic piety and to the
authority of Rome. Trusteeism became a flash point, and a siege mentality
developed – both negative ways of distancing Catholicism from American
denominationalism. Constructively, the Catholic Church showed that it
was not merely one among American denominations by establishing its
own school system, fostering new and old devotional practices, develop-
ing with parish missions ways of reaching underprovided Catholic popu-
lations, undertaking a massive building program, and thereby countering
the entire Protestant denominational voluntaristic project with a Roman
subculture.[30]

Protestant European churchly traditions too (Anglicans, Lutherans),
as well as American originals (Christians, Mormons), and smaller bodies
(Jews, Moravians, Mennonites, and others), in holding onto their "larger"
identities were challenged by but also affected the voluntaristic patterns.
The seductive allure of the denominational evangelical pattern and exter-
nal pressures to Americanize at times produced reactive or avoidance pat-
terns, but even defensiveness had its transformative effect on American
denominationalism.[31] In proclaiming the importance of their transatlantic
connections, doctrine, ethnicity, language, polity, mission, history, poli-
tics, or ecumenical outlook, these movements laid stronger foundations
under denominational identities.

Especially important was the strong confessionalism that swept across
American religion in the 1830s and 1840s and stamped American denom-
inationalism with much more pronounced churchly, doctrinal, polity,
apologetic, and sacramental dispositions. New waves of Lutheran immi-
grants, the influence of the Anglican Oxford Movement, the leaven of
Romanticism, divisions within churches, and new antislavery movements

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[30] Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 29–70.
[31] Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*.

produced confessionalisms of various sorts. Indeed, quite varied were these impulses. Old School Presbyterians, Landmark and Anti-mission Baptists, high church Episcopalians, Mercersburg-influenced German Reformed, Restorationists, Missouri-Synod Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox Jews came to their orientations from quite distinct motivations. Yet they shared a commitment to recover, return to, reclaim, or reinvigorate what they represented as foundational. And that meant resisting aspects of the then vibrant denominational, voluntaristic American patterns. Confessionalism showed its "reactiveness," for instance, in critiques of the "new measures" associated with Charles Grandison Finney, of voluntary societies, of camp meetings, of temperance, and of other "methodistic" practices. More constructively, confessional spokespersons called their co-religionists back to first principles. So the Mercersburg theologians, Philip Schaff and John W. Nevin, in criticizing methodistic and Finneyite revivalism, summoned the German Reformed to the "superior" nurturing Calvinist system of catechisms, confessions, sacraments, creeds, traditions, and kindred churchly practices. Similarly, Charles Hodge and other Old School theologians pled for Westminster standards, Charles Philip Krauth spoke for confessional Lutheranism, John Henry Hobart and Calvin Colton for proper Anglicanism, and James R. Graves for Landmark Baptists.

Reversion to first principles, to founders' practices, to heightened accent on one's own polity derived as well from other divisive dynamics, including especially the immediate abolitionism and other ultraistic reforms of the 1830s. Antislavery figured at some level in the Old School–New School Presbyterian division of 1837–38 and more decisively in the Methodist and Baptist separations of 1843–45. Actually pro- and antislavery convictions led to formation of four separate Methodisms – Wesleyans (1843), Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal South (1844–45), and Free Methodists (1860). So the prototypical missionary-covenantal denominations – Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists – all split, and religious warfare between the divided coreligionists broke out. The animosities that continued intensely for the 1840s and 1850s had some role in preparing the nation for civil war.[32] Divided Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians fought over the allegiances of congregations and of judicatories poised regionally, programmatically, or doctrinally between the coreligionists. To legitimate their stance on slavery, on voluntary societies, and on other dividing issues, the coreligionists resorted to apologetics, to biblical appeals, and to confessional touchstones. In the vituperative exchanges, southern Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians insisted that abolition, other

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[32] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, GA, 1985).

ultraistic campaigns, and the voluntary societies that pursued such did not respect the churchly authority more properly vested in assembly, synod, and presbytery, or in bishops or in congregations. Northern churches' intrusion into civil and legislative matters like slavery, the southerners argued, did not accord with the literal word of scripture, nor recognize that the church's influence was spiritual not temporal. The doctrine of the spirituality of the church and the recognition that the church was itself a missionary society led Old School Presbyterians to bring trustee-managed voluntary societies for missions, Bible production, tract distribution, and Sunday school promotion under General Assembly, synodical, and presbyterial control. Southern Methodists and Baptists came somewhat later to such Presbyterian convictions. And after the Civil War, northern churches also brought voluntary societies under denominational control, creating thereby a corporate infrastructure, but they did so on very different grounds. They had learned by the effective centralized, professionally led, nationally managed wartime mobilization that accountable organization worked and worked well.[33]

A CASE STUDY

To this integration of confessional principle, of polity or governance, of national mission, and of American identity, other religious bodies came by various routes. Lutherans charted a path illustrative of the complexities, linguistic-ethnic dynamics, and interesting turns in the processes of national denominational organization. By the end of the eighteenth century, Lutherans of Swedish, Dutch, and German extraction established ministeriums in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, worked through the Pietist-Orthodox tensions that the revivalism of the eighteenth century produced, retained strong ties with their European mother churches, and also developed fellowship arrangements with bodies of similar polities (Anglicans), of the same language (Reformed), and of common pieties (Moravians). The oldest, the Philadelphia Ministerium, established in 1748 as "the Ministerium of North America," like the later Methodists, functioned informally, developed procedure as needed, borrowed from other denominations, finally adopted a constitution in 1781, and approved a revised one in 1792. That of 1781 later provided for conferences to be organized to support and oversee congregations scattered over the colonies (South Carolina 1787, North Carolina 1791, New York 1792, Virginia 1793), leaving the relation of these to Philadelphia somewhat ambiguous. New York and South Carolina decided, in the spirit of the Revolution, to

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[33] Richey, "Institutional Forms of Religion," I: 31–50.

include laity, and others followed. The general trajectory was toward use of English and cooperative endeavor with the denominations viewed as closely affiliated.[34] In Philadelphia, however, Justus Henry Christian Helmuth led in a conservative or restorative effort to keep German as the language of worship and of instruction. Making common cause with Reformed and Moravians, a German magazine was launched (the *Evangelisches Magazin*, 1811–17); a hymnal, catechisms, and other materials for nurture were produced. However, elsewhere adoption of English and continued acculturation proceeded as Lutherans scattered south and west. Missionary societies, itinerating ministers, and other proven methods for revival and nurture worked for Lutherans as they did Methodists. Outlying conferences used English in their meetings. And irenic synods, like that of New York, pressed toward greater acclimatization. Pennsylvania, the "mother" ministerium, also encouraged its western and southern conferences to move from delegated to independent and full synodical status.

The emergence of the new synods – Ohio, Maryland-Virginia, North Carolina – posed relational, decision-making, and structural-organizational issues as matters of ministry and mission did as well. A plan for a General Synod, mooted in several places, was drafted in 1820 by the secretary of the North Carolina Synod, Gottlieb Shober, a former Moravian. Ratification of the *Plan Entwurf*, "Proposed Plan," called for approval by three-fourths of the synods. Objections to the General Synod surfaced immediately, and the campaigns for and against it elicited various procedural, substantive, representational, confessional, and authority issues. The contest produced strategic organization of new synods and several reversals of action by individual synods. New "national" leadership emerged against and for the proposed General Synod; among the latter was Samuel Schmucker, son of the then president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. The critics contended that the plans vested too much authority centrally, it (or its proponents) did not sufficiently safeguard Luther's theology, it favored the East over the West and South, and it undercut the productive cooperative relations enjoyed with the Reformed. Even when revised to preserve greater authority and power to the several synods and ratified in 1823 by the minimum number of existing synods, the plan continued to generate controversy for several decades as Generalists and Anti-Generalists campaigned within synods and for the support of newly organized synods.

What really sealed the doom for a single, nationally organized American denomination was not the continued posturing among older populations of largely acculturated Lutherans, but the explosive immigration in the late

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[34] J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church. The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722–1957* (Bethlehem, PA, 1967), 88, 94, 132–3, 138–9.

1830s and afterward of Germans, Swedes, and Norwegians. With these more urbanized trades folk, shopkeepers, and workers came their own clergy, and with both came the new European confessional, anti-Enlightenment currents. Normed on a theology of repristination, a conservative reaction to biblical criticism, a strain of Neo-Lutheranism, and a heightened appreciation of the confessions, the doctrinally conservative new immigrants and their leadership found the commitments of existing Lutheranism too lax and accommodating. The result was the formation of numbers of new synods, notably, that of the trend-setting Missouri Synod (1847). Theological, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences would thereafter checkerboard Lutheran denominationalism and extend into twentieth-century Lutheranism's interaction with culturally dominant styles of religious practice and organization.[35] So whether stimulated by immigration, by theological movements, or by slavery, American denominationalism as a whole reverberated with confessional, ethnic, and cultural overtones; and denominations sharpened their sense of their distinctiveness.

DENOMINATIONAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

The integration of polity, practice, and precept that yielded the denominational system emerged, as we have noted, accidentally and gradually and with various reversions and introductions of fresh stimuli. So also fully developed denominational consciousness took various routes as groups moved, at whatever pace, toward insider status in the project to Christianize America. Even the Methodists who operationalized the national, entrepreneurial, missionary, competitive, evangelistic denominational style were slow to conceptualize their purposes in Christian American terms and to negotiate their way into full acceptance by the more established denominations. Their gradual apprehension and adoption of the Reformed vision for a covenanted nation can be seen in the successive telling of the Methodist story. Methodism's first historian, Jesse Lee, writing in 1810, treated America as stage and made revival and conversions the central drama. Methodist successes were owed to John Wesley's organization and distinctive patterns for ministry – rules for holiness, class meetings, extempore preaching, societies, itinerating preachers, expanding conferences – and their use by inspired leadership. America was but context, landscape.

Writing in the late 1830s, Nathan Bangs, architect of Methodist accommodation to society, began his narrative not with Wesley but with Columbus. He told a story of Methodist discovery of American liberties

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[35] E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia, 1975), 49–56, 81–127, 151–2, 175.

and American discovery of Methodist proper "church" institutions that would protect those liberties – church buildings, stable pastorates, parsonages, educational institutions, print media, organizations for mission – in short, infrastructure. Bangs portrayed Methodism's discovery of its ecclesial self and its building itself structurally into American life. America was society.

Abel Stevens, crafting various histories in the 1850s, edged further toward American exceptionalism and Methodist place therein. He wrote of conquest, not discovery, and imagined a chanced meeting in Glasgow of John Wesley, "inventor" of Methodism, and James Watt, inventor of the steam engine. "Watts and Wesley," he wrote, "might well then have struck hands and bid each other godspeed at Glasgow in 1757: they were co-workers for the destinies of the new world."[36] From Wesley, Methodism gifted America with the machinery to conquer the world morally.

It was Bishop Matthew Simpson who wedded Methodism to the American state, forcefully evoked Puritan covenantal notions, and gave Methodism a civil religious mission. The Union conquest over Southern rebellion, the patriotic fervor of the Civil War, and centennial civic pieties inspired Bishop Matthew Simpson who enjoyed close association with President Lincoln. Simpson began his history with a survey of national accomplishments, the contributions of America to the world. Then he flashed back to Wesley and British Methodism. It was American influences, however, not these "foreign" ones that stamped American Methodism. "The rise of Methodism," he insisted, "was coeval with the Revolutionary spirit." Methodism succeeded, he argued, by overcoming its British origins and embracing distinctively dynamic, democratic American ways.[37]

By this point, having proved its mettle on the battlefield (on both sides), tamed some of its camp meeting excesses, littered the nation with colleges, embraced the Puritan errand to stamp the new world with Christian morality, and built infrastructure for missionizing "freedmen" in the South and the benighted across the globe, Methodism had become the model denomination, northern Methodism especially. Having muscled its way into the Protestant establishment and being joined there in the following decades by Baptists and Disciples, Methodism would commit itself to the

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[36] Abel Stevens, *A Compendious History of American Methodism* (New York, n.d. [1868–67]), 19.

[37] The historians and historical works in order of citation and publication are Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists* (Baltimore, 1810; facsimile ed., Rutland, 1974); Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols., 6th ed. (1st ed. New York, 1860; 1838–41); Abel Stevens, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols. (New York, 1864–67) and *A Compendious History*; Matthew Simpson, *A Hundred Years of Methodism* (New York, 1876).

agenda of a Christian America. In 1866 American Methodism celebrated its one hundredth birthday. Chapters in a volume produced for the occasion in describing Methodism also epitomize denominationalism: "Its Special Adaptation and Usefulness to the Country," "Its Labor in the Diffusion of Literature," "Its Educational Labors," "Its Sunday-school Enterprise," "Its Missionary Labors," "Its Loyalty and Patriotic Services."[38] A prescient reader of this volume might have grasped that in the decades after the Civil War, American denominations would think missionally on a global scale, come increasingly to be big businesses, and look structurally like corporations. Denominations? Once mere names, then polities, then competing missional orders, finally a complex of corporations whose free enterprise ambition was a Christian America, even a Christian world.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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[38] Abel Stevens, *The Centenary of American Methodism* (New York, 1865).

Section II

RELIGIONS IN THE NEW NATION, 1790–1865

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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION IN THE NEW NATION

RUSSELL E. RICHEY

The new nation would not feature one legally established religion. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution settled that. Neither the Congregational legal establishments in New England, nor the Anglican ones in New York and in the South would be extended nationally. However, as the Constitution could not anticipate the evolution of a robust, ever more populist democracy, institutionalized by two-party politics and governance,[1] neither could Constitution drafters or the new nation's religious leadership foresee that religious freedom would foster

- the emergence and evolution of multiple national, purposive, entrepreneurial, missionary denominations;
- competing for adherents across the expanding U.S. landscape and to some extent across racial, language, and ethnic lines;
- generating single-purpose voluntary societies to underwrite infrastructural and socially transformative measures;
- constituting collectively in this denominational order, a religious counterpart to party government and with a similar pattern of major and minor (or marginal) parties;
- providing through membership, methodology, and message an American religious citizenship in a commonwealth defined with evocative Protestant images, myths, and concepts (for instance, new Israel, election, covenant, providence, millennium);
- tending thereby to tie religious purpose to America as land, nation, society, and people;
- and creating as agenda and aspiration an informal Christian establishment with its own political-religious convictions about insiders and

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[1] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (Oxford, 2009).

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outsiders, its expectations for and from elected officials, and its evolving ways of participating in the political process.[2]

THE DENOMINATION

The denomination was an Anglo-American contribution to religious organizational taxonomy and within Christianity the most important institutional development since the Emperor Constantine. It came to characterize American religion and define ways of being religious, as the party came to characterize American government and define ways of participating politically and as the corporation came to characterize American enterprise and define ways of doing business.[3] And like its political and economic counterparts, the denomination emerged gradually, without blueprint, assembled from various existing social patterns, and evolved as American society changed.[4]

In the early national period, the word "denomination" came increasingly to acquire sociological significance, supplanting an earlier, conventional usage simply to identify distinguishable religious opinions or theological postures. Writing in 1811, Thomas Branagan continued to employ the word in that older pattern. (In this earliest comparative assessment of American religion, Branagan sought to acquaint Christian denominations "with the authentic tenets of each other" so as to encourage mutual affirmation and tolerance.) Under "General Sects" he treated Calvinism, Antinomianism, Arianism, Arminianism, and Socinianism. And even his listing of "Particular Sects" included Sublapsarians, Supralapsarians, Quietists, Pietists, Trinitarians, and Hutchinsonians as well as religious organizations proper – among them, Baptists, Unitarians, Congregationalists, Mennonites, Lutherans, Moravians, Presbyterians, Shakers, Universalists, Methodists, and Quakers.[5] Increasingly, the latter, more specifically organizational usage of "denomination," replaced the mere naming of sentiments. It applied to religious bodies with identifiable leadership, which gathered multiple congregations

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[2] Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, 1993); R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, 1986).

[3] Compare five principles in Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 41.

[4] See Richey, "Denominations and Denominationalism: An American Morphology," in Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey, eds., *Reimagining Denominationalism* (New York, 1994); "Institutional Forms of Religion," in Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of Religion in America*, 3 vols. (New York, 1988) 1: 31–50; and various headers to the essays in Richey, ed., *Denominationalism* (Nashville, 1977).

[5] Thomas Branagan, *A Concise View of the Principal Religious Denominations in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1811), iii–vi, 281–7.

into translocal associations, on some regularized basis, under written bylaws or constitutions. And these bodies increasingly undertook the organizational maintenance and development operations (catechizing, training, ordaining, publishing, funding) that in British or European established churches were distributed between and among crowns, parliaments, universities, and the national churches proper.

Collectively, the denominations came to have a role comparable to that of established churches as well insofar as they sought to provide a moral/religious stamp to American society and to collaborate in that enterprise. Branagan caught that insight early, dedicating his survey to building a sense of common endeavor among Protestants. My "primary object," he asserted, "is by the most scriptural, philosophical, and reasonable argumentation to demonstrate the fatal consequences, which will most assuredly result to our young republic, 'the world's last hope,' by nurturing a spirit of intolerance."[6] The denominational project of a religious America, indeed of a Christian America, began with modest collaboration among the more upstanding churches – Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Reformed, Episcopalians. By the 1840s, Robert Baird, writing to explain American religion to skeptical Europeans and updating Branagan's survey, would recognize a much broader alliance and commonality among evangelical (Protestant) denominations and a sharp line to be drawn between their place in American society and that of the unevangelical denominations.[7] In the latter he numbered Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Christians, Universalists, Hicksite Quakers, Swedenborgians, Dunkers, Jews, Shakers, Rappists, Mormons, as well as various anti-Christian ideologies (Deism, Socialism, Fourierism, and Atheism).[8]

Prior to distinguishing evangelical and unevangelical denominations, Baird devoted two hundred pages to showing that despite the separation of church and state, federal and state governments fostered Christianity, that religion prospered under the voluntary principle, that this principle rested on the character and habits of the citizens, and that locally and nationally Americans had created institutions and machinery to establish the faith in the hearts, minds, and practices of both citizen and magistrate. In town and country this voluntary establishing of Christianity was achieved through the Bible-reading religious home and the building and supporting of churches. Those efforts were supported nationally by educational institutions (colleges and theological seminaries), voluntary societies

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[6] *Ibid.*, v.

[7] Robert Baird, *Religion in America, or, An Account of the Origin, Progress, Relation to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States: With Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations* (New York, 1845, 1856), the 1856 edition much extended.

[8] *Ibid.*, 269–87.

(Bible, Sunday school, and mission), reform and benevolent associations, and the denominations. The latter, geared into this complex voluntary machinery for spreading Christianity and "establishing" it as foundational for social and political order, sustained and translated received religious principles (Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist) into a distinctive American form of the church. Turning limited colonial religious pluralism and Middle Colony toleration into a national pattern of denominationalism was one of the enduring religious accomplishments of the first half of the nineteenth century.

THE COLONIAL DENOMINATION: FROM LABEL TO POLITY

Denominationalism in the British Isles and British North America represented failure – schism, the dividing of the church, the emergence of religious parties, de facto pluralism, the inability of crown and Parliament to achieve religious uniformity, a resultant limited comprehension. A limited de facto pluralism emerged in the religious fracturing during the long Puritan testing of the Anglican Reformation (Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers, plus various radical groups). However, not until the Glorious Revolution and the Toleration Act of 1689 was some acceptance of this religious pluralism countenanced and then with quite significant limitations. In this context, the word "denomination" named the reality of a diversity of religious opinions, loyalties, commitments – the yield of partisan Puritanism.

In addition to splintering English religion, Puritanism contributed a second vital dimension to denominationalism by emphasizing church organization as a divine imperative. Order was not adiaphora, not a theological nonessential, but instead revealed in scripture. Getting polity right – congregational or presbyterian, separating or nonseparating – was among the motivations for migration to Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. Third, the eschatological but society-transformative orientation of the Presbyterians and Non-Separatist Congregationalists and the array of theological metaphors with which they envisioned a society so transformed would be of long-term significance in the agenda setting of North American denominationalism. Finally, the reaction to religious warfare and turmoil on the continent and in the British Isles stimulated aspirations for and theory about how church and society might be divided and yet united or at least peaceful. Quakers and others sought respect for and protection of the individual conscience. Irenic thinkers proposed theological schemes for a "catholic" unity transcending differences. Pietism insisted that conversion and a renewed heart took precedence over rigidities that produced

divisive confessionalism. And John Locke and others elaborated political theories of toleration. In William Penn's experiment, these several forms of religious freedom interlaced.

In consequence of Penn's and other Middle Colony settlement policies, that region produced perhaps that world's most extensive institutionalizing of religious pluralism. Jostling one another were Dutch Reformed, Quaker, Scottish, Scots-Irish and Irish Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, English Baptist, Jewish, Anglican, transplanted New England Congregationalist, various German-speaking peoples (Dunker, Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, Schwenckfelder, Mennonite), and several communitarian groups (e.g., Ephrata). Of particular importance in stimulating identity with, cohesion within, and organizational development of these groups was the leaven of Pietism. Pietism and kindred expressions of British evangelicalism produced in the colonies a set of recruiting and community-forming practices to which the word "revivalism" came to be applied.

Religious community formation typically began in early stages of a group's immigration and settlement but took off with the itinerant, revivalistic, conversionist, Pietist practices that surfaced in Dutch settlements under Theodore J. Frelinghuysen in the 1720s, continued among Presbyterians under William and Gilbert Tennent in the 1730s, appeared in quite diverse confessional forms thereafter, and spread across the colonies tracking the several decades of itinerations by George Whitefield.

Formative but controversial were Pietism's emotional invitational preaching, expectations of conversion and a morally regenerate life thereafter, allowance for lay testimony, encouragement of prayer, Bible-reading and disciplining small groups (conventicles), itinerant preaching (beyond a community to which the minister might be called), focus in sermon and witness on sin and salvation, blunt criticisms of worldliness in other laity and of unfruitful and unconverted ministers, and willingness to experiment with new ways of training and credentialing leadership. From the 1720s to the eve of the Revolution, revivalism washed over community after (Protestant) community. Conversion yielded a new identity, encouraged bonding among the converted, and credentialed leadership. New congregations and associations of the revived emerged, in some instances thereby dividing the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, or Mennonite community, forming an alternative vis-à-vis the existing alliance but typically still honoring linguistic, national origin, and ethnic lines.[9]

In fact, Pietism's tactics proved highly effective in stimulating two forms of religious identity and community, both revival-generated new

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[9] Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), and *Religion in Colonial America* (New York, 2000).

alliances and angry reactive responses from existing, revivalist-critiqued, and more confessionally oriented leaders. The more orthodox leaders in the various groups and the congregations formed on the then-normative Protestant-confessional model naturally took great exception to the fracturing of "t'heir"' community and to revivalist censorious criticism, emotionalism (enthusiasm), lax theology, irregular lay activity, and untrained/ unauthorized ministries. The confessional communities filed disciplinary charges at headquarters (Edinburgh, Amsterdam), read the enthusiast Pietists out of synod or assembly, shored up these organizations, and so countered with measures of denominational formation that also followed lines of kinship, language, national origin, tradition, and race. These reactions actually strengthened the confessional or orthodox bodies. Religious energy and division then yielded two forms of ethnic identity, rudimentary organization on voluntary basis, and colonial cohesion. So among Presbyterians, both the Awakening New Side and the more confessional Old Side offered versions of Celtic-American ethnicity, each organizing along received polity lines.

AMERICAN DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY

The enterprise of transforming the colonial Middle Colonies' "Perfect Babel of Confusion"[10] and its quasi-ethnic pluralism into the principled national denominationalism that Baird celebrated fell to the Reformed (Presbyterians and Congregationalists), Baptists, and Methodists. The Reformed contributed the theory, Baptists a democratic principle, and Methodists the model of nationally purposive competitive, missionary structure. Theirs was hardly a collaborative project. Indeed, at times these groups genuinely despised and avoided one another. Congregationalists and Presbyterians viewed revivalistic Baptists and camp meeting Methodists as enthusiasts and threats to good order. Baptists and Methodists competed for constituents and mocked and pilloried one another. Methodists reviled the Calvinists as pathetic predestinarians and fatalists. But each movement oriented itself to propagation and mission across the expanding nation, and each contributed a distinctive and important dimension to the creation of a new form of denominationalism. However, with each at best wary of one another, they played their parts independently with little sense of how their own particular self-understanding, way of operating, or charism would contribute long term to refabricated denominationalism. Their distinctive pattern of organizational maturation, then, rather

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[10] Randall H. Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York, 1989).

accidentally gave to the new nation an institutionalized pluralism and to religious freedom its organizational contours and character. Voluntarism might have been a principle by the time that Baird wrote, but it was at best aspiration and more accurately, indeed, a babel of confusion as the Revolution ended.

The accidental character of American denominational pluralism – of national, missionary, voluntaristic religious bodies – can perhaps be best illustrated with the Methodists who grew from insignificance to become the largest Protestant denomination. In 1780, they numbered 8,500. By 1865 and after multiple divisions, the northern body, the Methodist Episcopal Church, alone claimed over 900,000 and almost the same number in its Sunday schools.[11] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark estimate total Methodist adherents at 2.7 million in 1850 and 3.793 in 1860, and they judge that by the first date 34.2 percent of all those religiously affiliated were Methodists of one kind or another.[12]

When Methodists organized as a church at a conference in late 1784, they gave themselves an apparently ambitious, expansive, purposive continental or national mandate. Their mission statement posed the question, "What may we reasonably believe to be God's Design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?" The answer: "To reform the Continent, and to spread scriptural Holiness over these Lands."[13] Methodists would eventually achieve this remarkable ambition. And they were already adapting to the American scene an evangelistic system of small groups, a welcoming ethic, an aggressive itinerant missionary deployment of preachers, modes of popular address, a societally transformative discipline, and an apprenticeship training program that John Wesley had constructed for penetration of the British Isles. The apparently national or continental mission statement with which the American church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, launched itself, however, was less vision and more wordplay. It represented simply an editing of Wesley's language. His answer to the above query had been, "Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."[14] The American Methodists stumbled into a grandiose and expansive purposive missionary

[11] Abel Stevens, *The Centenary of American Methodism: A Sketch of Its History, Theology, Practical System, and Success* (New York, 1865), 284.

[12] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, 2005), 55, 113.

[13] *Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., the Rev. Francis Asbury and others at a Conference . . . 1784* (Philadelphia, 1785), 4, excerpted in Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, eds., *The Methodist Experience in America: A Sourcebook* (Nashville, 2000), 82–6.

[14] "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others," in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London, 1872; 1958), VIII: 299.

vision not with the ambition to be the largest Protestant church, but merely
to find suitable American substitution for British terminology.

Just as haphazardly, American Methodists threw together the Wesleyan
conference pattern of governance with Anglican ministerial orders into a
polity for the new church. Retaining Wesley's curious titling for a gov-
erning document, "Minutes of Several Conversations," the Americans
inserted rubrics for deacons, elders, and superintendents (soon retitled
bishops), purged passages not relevant to the American scene, added others
(including long, detailed instructions for eliminating slaveholding), but
otherwise retained most of Wesley's text and its strange ordering. Unlike
Episcopalians and Presbyterians who would in several general conventions
or synods debate, adjust, and adapt already refined governmental forms
into carefully thought-out "constitutions" suitable for new churches in a
new nation, Methodists turned Wesley's "Large Minutes" into a *Discipline*
over a few days in a hastily called "Christmas Conference." The modesty
of the attendees' parliamentary self-awareness is indicated in the fact that
they kept no minutes of the proceedings, the new *Discipline* itself and scat-
tered entries in preachers' journals being the only records of the event.
Nor had they thought through how best to adjust the single conference
with which Wesley oversaw English Methodism to their scattered pres-
ence across the seaboard from Georgia to New England. Already Methodist
preachers had established a pattern of gathering in three separate confer-
ences annually for purposes of their deployment to widespread circuits. It
took them another eight years, until 1792, to realize that they needed a
quadrennial general conference to legislate for the annual conferences that
would continue to increase in number as the movement spread. And it
took almost a quarter of a century, until 1808, for them to realize that they
needed a delegated general conference to ensure participation and parity
across a movement that advanced with new settlements. Even then, they
kept governance entirely in the preachers' hands, lay participation in con-
ference not achieved in episcopal Methodism until the Civil War era, one
of several grievances that led to the 1830s exit of Methodist Protestants. So
Methodists jerry-built the organization or polity with which they would,
in fact, spread the continent with scriptural holiness.

Methodist willingness to adapt and adopt in part explains their remark-
able success. They embraced, regularized, and promoted camp meetings,
for instance, no invention of theirs, but similar in important respects to
the quarterly conference, a circuit-level part of their governance struc-
ture. So also they put to effective use missionary societies, newspapers
(*Christian Advocates*), other publications of various sorts, Sunday schools,
and eventually colleges, creating remarkable machinery for communicat-
ing the Methodist message. No small measure of Methodist success owed
to the leadership to, modeling for, and symbolizing of Methodism by

Bishop Francis Asbury. His artisan English upbringing, familiarity with Wesley's system, and willingness to weather the Revolution when other British preachers fled earned him the respect and affirmation of American Methodists. That several-fold credentialing equipped him to translate British Wesleyanism into American practices and idiom. Asbury traveled relentlessly across the length and breadth of the Methodist work (or circuit system), logging some 130,000 horseback miles and crossing the Alleghenies some sixty times.[15] Roaming from conference to conference, personally appointing the preachers in each to their circuits, staying in modest homes along his route (sometimes of adherents, sometimes where night landed him), and preaching and praying his way into the hearts of Americans, Asbury modeled the itinerancy that deployed preachers to unchurched people in old settlements and new. He lived the Wesleyan mandate that drove the Methodist machine and which the Americans carried over into their *Discipline*. "You have nothing to do but to save Souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this Work."[16] The human cost of this system was incredible, and Methodists had a phrase for what it did to those who lived the regimens – "worn-out preachers." So Methodists patterned the national, entrepreneurial, purposive, missionary denomination.

This template would be followed as Methodists divided, which they did virtually every decade in the nineteenth century – AMEs, AMEZs, Methodist Protestants, Wesleyans, MEC/MECS, Free Methodists, CMEs, Nazarenes. All these and their German kindred, the United Brethren and Evangelical Association, evidenced the evangelical zeal, perfectionism, small group discipline, populist style, and itinerant leadership deployment of the Wesleyan charism. (African American Methodist and Baptist churches developed fully as national, missionary denominations after the Civil War as they moved south and west to evangelize and educate and to compete with one another and with white-dominated compatriots. Treatment of black denominationalism, therefore, belongs to later sections of the *Cambridge* volumes. So also do Christian missions to Native Americans, Hispanics, and the several immigrant groups whose conversion to Christianity or Protestant Christianity did not yield separate denominations.)

BAPTISTS

Baptist contributions to denominationalism included principled congregationalism, experientially grounded voluntarism, persecution-driven commitment to religious freedom, and institutionalized tension between

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[15] John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford, 2009), 3.
[16] "Minutes of Several Conversations" (1785), 13.

individual believers and congregations on the one side and associations and conventions on the other. If Methodists exhibited missionary denominational formation built down, as it were, from conferences whose preacher-members the bishops appointed to circuits, Baptists, equally revivalistic, patterned a denominationalism built up from individual believers and fiercely independent congregations. Their principled localism did not inhibit Baptists from transcongregational organization. Indeed, beginning with the coalescence of the Philadelphia Association in 1707, Baptists north and south had by 1780 created a dozen additional associations. The Philadelphia Association modeled the pattern of regional cooperation for fellowship, mutual support, collaboration in ordinations, and doctrinal convergence, reflected in the 1742 Philadelphia Confession, drawn from the Calvinist or Reformed 1689 Second London Confession. Similarly, aspirations for national cooperation, motivated by the missionary spirit of the times, led to the formation of the General Missionary Convention in 1814. But the associational principle was held in tension with and did not compromise the integrity and independence of congregations nor of their populist localism.

The tension derived in no small measure from Baptist adoption and adaptation of the Puritan aspiration for congregations formed by visible saints and the expectation that each and all would have a conversion experience. Baptists added to these extraordinary ideals a Pietist or revivalistic requirement that individuals be conscious of and able to confirm that they had experienced conversion. This quest for and expectation of assurance, as already noted, derived from the wave of revivals that swept over the colonies from the 1720s onward and has sometimes been termed the Great Awakening. Revivals appeared in various communities (Dutch Reformed, Moravian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist) and featured the new leadership style of revival-oriented itinerant preaching (modeled by Theodorus Frelinghuysen, Gilbert and William Tennent, Jonathan Edwards, and preeminently George Whitefield). Especially important in Baptist appropriation of this common Pietist or revivalistic expectation were the Separates, the New England Congregationalists, whose conversionist convictions led to demands that congregations be made up of believers and to insistence on believers' baptism. Separations from the Congregationalist establishment followed – hence their name. Migration and successes in the South leavened Baptist movements across the eastern landscape with this experientially grounded and conversionist voluntarism. Other bases of Baptist or Anabaptist belief continued to persist, and new ones emerged to some degree defining themselves vis-à-vis the revivalistic Calvinism derived from the Separates. Free Will Baptists created regional and national associations in the early nineteenth century. The Universalist movement owed some

of its generating impulse to Elhanan Winchester, Hosea Ballou, and other Baptists. Baptists contributed to and adhered to the primitivist or resto-rationist impulse that generated the antidenominational denomination, the Christians (Campbellites or Disciples). Antimission and Primitive Baptist movements organized in the 1820s and 1830s. African American Baptist congregations, on the other hand, owed their existence to the inclusive and antislavery witness of Baptist revivalism. Although often white-led in the early nineteenth century, black Baptists began to develop their own leader-ship and formed associations in the 1840s, beginning with the Providence Antislavery Missionary Baptist Association in 1834.[17] Fracturing seemed to only increase the competitive spirit with which Baptists worked the land.

Baptists also contributed to denominationalism a fervid commitment to religious freedom and to the separation of church and state. Forced to con-tend with repressive measures from the Congregationalist establishments in New England and the Anglican hegemony in the South (and especially in Virginia), Baptists led by Isaac Backus, John Leland, and others fought for their own and others' right to organize and worship as they pleased.[18] In this long struggle, for a time allied with Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, Baptists developed strong notions of soul liberty, the individual conscience, religious liberty, and separation of church and state.[19] In construals of Baptist principles like that of David Benedict's 1813 *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World*, the whole Christian history of dissent and persecution and various peoples of Baptist-like practice was woven into a single denomina-tional history. So defenders of religious liberty like Roger Williams became Baptist icons, and religious freedom became the Baptist saga. Such notions and the strong affirmation of the individual congregation that went with them helped mediate into Protestant religious practice expectations that governance would accord with the democratic principles of the new nation, that leaders would be chosen and leadership exercised with some degree of consent on the part of the laity, that due process and parliamentary pro-cedure would be followed in decision making, that societally respected juridical canons would guide disciplinary trials, and that in some measure a collective denominational will would guide policy, social concerns, and doctrine.

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[17] William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA, 2006), 24–43, 70–3, 175–98; Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), 112–38.

[18] William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1973).

[19] Brackney, *Baptists*, 39–42; Leonard, *New England*, 129–33.

Baptists negotiated their own way toward national, entrepreneurial, competitive, missionary denominationalism from their principled congregationalism. If the signature of Methodism mission was the itinerant preacher deployed by bishop and sent out from conference, the signature for Baptists was the farmer preacher whose conversion and call impelled him to frontiers as well, where he could gather souls in and form a congregation. That strong missionary spirit also led American Baptists to emulate their British counterparts and form regional missionary associations to support pioneering efforts both domestically and abroad. And when missionary heroes emerged – Luther Rice, Adoniram and Ann Judson, and Lott Carey – Baptists established the aforementioned General Baptist Missionary Convention in the United States for Foreign Missions (1814). Terming it the Triennial Convention for its periodic meeting scheme, Baptists created what would eventually become a denominational structure, but in the first instance a voluntary society. It was a cooperative, purposive endeavor not connectionally accountable through representation to the regional associations, but instead the creature of any and all congregations whose annual dues permitted them to send delegates. So they borrowed a scheme perfected in Britain and already adapted for American use by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, but for whom similar issues in accountability and in congruence with received polity to those raised by antimission Baptists would eventually surface.[20]

THE REFORMED

The Congregationalist contribution to the fabrication of the denominational system proved to be the most complicated. Blessed (or cursed) with their legal establishment in New England, Congregationalist leadership spent the decade before and after the turn of the nineteenth century in its defense. That mood, however, proved constructive as it equipped Congregational leaders, preeminent of which was Yale President Timothy Dwight, to translate Puritan doctrines, symbols, and mythology of a covenanted people into a national political theology. Drawn into defensive politics on behalf of the Federalists, concerned with the spread of Deism, upset over the apparent capitulation of Harvard to Unitarianism, alarmed at what Thomas Jefferson might mean for true religion and morals, hysterical over Bavarian Illuminati and possible French-Revolution-like conspiracies in the United States, disturbed over the successes of upstart Methodists and Baptists, Dwight and others imagined conspiratorial designs against Christianity and order. More constructively, Dwight made Yale into a

[20] Brackney, *Baptists*, 44–54; Leonard, *New England*, 158–71.

national institution concerned with the moral order of the new nation, resourced the powerful mythology of Puritanism with Scottish common-sense epistemology, modeled and fostered a revivalism comfortable with education and culture, and oriented Congregationalism toward explaining and defending the received orthodoxy.[21]

Congregationalists, especially the Edwardseans (Dwight included) who came to prominence in the decade before and after the Revolution, worried over their compatriots, offspring, and neighbors who moved north and west into new territories and who wrote back to New England requesting pastors. The Edwardseans experimented with various methods of extending ministries into these new communities, founded missionary societies, chief of which was the Connecticut Missionary Society (1798), and in 1801 covenanted with the Presbyterians in the Plan of Union to undertake cooperative arrangements by which congregations could call ministers of either denomination and associations of either would provide oversight. Thus began collaboration between the two Reformed bodies – Congregationalists and Presbyterians – out of which would emerge the array of voluntary societies whose interlocking boards, dominated by those two communions, would increasingly construe their efforts to minister to, order, and reform America in covenantal or Puritan terms. Congregationalism did not enjoy the largest harvest from their collaborative and societally transformative ventures. Baptists and Methodists proved to be far more successful in getting their message to frontier areas. Congregationalists had expectations and standards that militated against unregulated revivalism – for a college-educated clergy, sacraments as the responsibility of the ordained, the church as a community and a community of the converted, towns as more conducive to such ordered covenantal bodies than sparsely settled frontiers, and their first duty to be to their own kindred.[22] Such revival-transformed Puritan convictions and ideals, however, would through their mediation and that of the Presbyterians become essential ideological and mythological resources for the several denominations that would join the Reformed in the crusade for a Christian America and for the denominationalism that oriented itself toward that campaign.

Presbyterians had patched up their revival-induced division into Old and New Sides in 1758, affirming commitments important to each – for the former, the Westminster Standards and Directories for church government;

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[21] John R. Fitzmier, *New England's Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817* (Bloomington, 1998), 53–78, 89–104.
[22] James R. Rohrer, *Keepers of the Covenant: Frontier Missions and the Decline of Congregationalism, 1774–1818* (New York, 1995), 143–52; J. William T. Youngs, *The Congregationalists* (New York, 1990), 121–31.

and for the latter, revivalistic expectations that candidates for ministry would have had a conversion experience. They had also begun collaboration with the Congregationalists, as just noted. Fresh waves of Scottish and Scots-Irish immigrants led to expansion south and west and to the formation of presbyteries beyond its New Jersey, New York stronghold. Also from Scotland and on the eve of the Revolution (1768), John Witherspoon came as president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and provided vision for the church and its place in American society and politics, especially as colonists enumerated their grievances with England, among them the mooted proposal for a colonial Anglican bishop.

Presbyterians met with Congregationalists in a series of conventions from 1766 to the Revolution, one outcome of which was the 1801 Plan of Union by which the two churches coordinated expansion and organization in the West.[23] These conventions, in focusing on colonial liberties vis-à-vis Britain, gave religious and theological warrant to the American cause. The denominational embrace of a transcolonial American identity and of the critical place of Presbyterianism therein came through especially forcefully in two public statements from John Witherspoon. The first, a quite short "Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia … on … the Day of the General Fast," pled for support for the Continental Congress and for maintenance of "the union which subsists through all the colonies."[24]

The second, "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men," insisted that "the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature." Here as in other public utterances Witherspoon spoke of the nation as an entity, counseled "union, firmness, and patience," and insisted that the only secure bases for political integrity and stability were pure manners, virtuous lives, and "true and undefiled religion." The friend of liberty would promote true religion. An "avowed enemy to God" was "an enemy to his country." So he envisioned a transdenominational civic agenda (for Presbyterians and others), indeed a national agenda to be shared among the Protestant denominations. There are, he posited, "few surer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himself more joined in spirit to a truly holy person of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own." He concluded with the exhortation, "God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty

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[23] D. G. Hart and John R. Muether, *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 2007), 67–8, 71, 73.

[24] "A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, to the Congregations under Their Care: To be Read from the Pulpits on Thursday, June 29, 1775, Being the Day of the General Fast" (New York, 1775), 6. Evans no. 14410. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

may be inseparable."[25] Conveying such convictions in a variety of public ways, Witherspoon was twice elected to the Continental Congress and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. By such public engagement, widely emulated among other Presbyterian laity and clergy, Witherspoon helped the Presbyterians claim oversight responsibility for the moral fiber and civic virtue of the new nation and to do so through and because of the conditions of religious pluralism and toleration within which they had prospered for roughly a century. Indeed, Samuel Davies, who gave leadership to the Presbyterian cause in Virginia, had also provided support for Thomas Jefferson's campaign for religious freedom.

By 1789 when Presbyterians convened in the first General Assembly, its four synods and sixteen presbyteries extended the church from New York to the Carolinas, and its collaboration with the Congregationalists made the Reformed truly embracive of the new nation. As important as its national orientation were the lessons that Presbyterians had learned from their flourishing in the Middle Colonies' pluralistic and tolerant atmosphere and their less-than-happy experience when constrained by Anglican establishments in the South. It was they who would, over the course of the nineteenth century, articulate the theory and espouse the agenda of a Christian (Protestant Christian) America achieved by voluntary means and founded on the bedrocks of the several denominations, collaborative voluntary societies, and the Christian home.[26]

DENOMINATIONALISM: A DYNAMIC AND EVOLVING RELIGIOUS ECONOMY

Purposive missionary denominationalism gradually combined the evangelical style of the popular movements with the Reformed institutional and covenantal self-understandings. In orienting denominations toward the creation of a Christian America, the mission-covenant combination stimulated incredible institution-building efforts, much of which went into transforming the denominations from modest associational structures into engines for national ministerial deployment and governance, making them powerful democratizing and creative forces. The missionary impulse established new, expansive, outwardly oriented denominational

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[25] John Witherspoon, "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men: A Sermon Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May, 1776. Being the General Fast Appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. To Which Is Added an Address to the Natives of Scotland Residing in America" (Philadelphia, 1776), 40, 47, 50, 51, 52, 60. Evans no. 15224. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale.

[26] Randall Balmer and John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians* (Westport, 1993), 34–41; Hart and Muether, *Better Country*, 87–8.

presumptions. Old boundaries, of parish, of ethnicity, of confession, of prior Christianization, of existing loyalty, and to a lesser extent of race, no longer pertained. The whole nation, indeed the whole world, needed evangelization. The religion business would thereafter be expansive, aggressive, competitive, entrepreneurial, expressive, boosteristic. Missionary self-understanding elicited new skills of leadership and new patterns of organization characterized by initiative, risk taking, mobility, openness, experimentation, vernacular idioms, and popular expression.

The Reformed, the Baptists, and the Methodists made perhaps the most noteworthy contributions toward the construction of what would be later recognized and acclaimed as the signature American pattern of national, voluntaristic, missionary denominations. As noted already, however, they were far from being real collaborators, each doing its part quite separately. Nor did a blueprint, master plan, or common battle strategy guide their separate endeavors. Each found a distinctive way of indigenizing authority, orienting itself to American society as a whole, and conceiving of its purposes in missionary terms. And they were not the only fabricators of the denomination.

From preliminary stages in Puritanism and in eighteenth-century revivalism through to the twenty-first century, various groups beyond these three contributed materially to the shaping of denominationalism as they interacted with, resisted, appropriated, and reshaped the emergent or existing pattern. Contributions came, in particular, from groups that by transatlantic connections, doctrine, ethnicity, language, polity, mission, history, politics, understanding of scripture, or ecumenical outlook resisted reduction to denominational status, identification with denominationalism, or classification as merely an American religious body.

The various restorationist groups that coalesced into the Disciples of Christ represent one variant of important antidenominationalism that eventually yielded several vibrant denominations. With Presbyterian and Baptist roots, origins in Cane Ridge and the ecumenical cauldron of camp meetings, the restorationists (Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott) rejected creeds as constitutive of the church, denounced denominational divisiveness, and summoned Christians to unite on the basis of scripture alone. Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* urged believers to restore the faith of the New Testament and to unite under the name of Christians only.[27] Colleague restorationists embraced other names, each of which sought unity by the reclamation of early Christian identity, belief, and practice (Christian, Disciples, Disciples

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[27] William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (Saint Louis, 1975), 15–28.

of Christ). That this movement evolved into yet another denomination may seem ironic. However, aspirations to unite the divided have animated many reform movements, and in the American context the restorationist ideal both epitomized and furthered important aspects of denominationalism. Denominationalism featured efforts to unite that yielded yet another religious organization and, on the other hand, particular identities that saw beyond the competitiveness to a larger unity. Denominationalism frequently predicated unity on the restorationist platform of scripture alone. And denominationalism oriented religious movements toward the whole, the whole nation (to be influenced), the whole of Christianity (as particularly grasped), and in the twentieth century to Judeo-Christian, and even more diverse commonalities, the whole of the world (as mission territory).

So denominations, as they planted themselves or emerged in North America, perforce had to deal with the cacophony of religious bodies, the way in which competition had set religious game rules, and the effect American denominations collectively and individually had had in shaping the place of religion socially, politically, and jurisprudentially. That competitive voluntaristic environment produced various responses, from reactive definition vis-à-vis to full engagement, and sometimes from the one to the other. American Judaism, for instance, as numbers increased and the Jewish population spread into various locales, gradually went from being synagogue communities to communities of synagogues, and eventually to well-defined denominations (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox).[28]

Roman Catholics, less than 2 percent of religious adherents and numbering around twenty-five thousand after the Revolution but 14 percent and over a million by 1850, represent far more complex interactions with the existing religious culture and dominant organizational style.[29] The complexity resulted from both intrinsic and societal factors – the authority of Rome, parallel structures of orders and dioceses, strong anti-Catholic sentiments among many Protestants, predominance of Irish within the Catholic community, American courts' struggles to understand and sometimes unwillingness to respect Catholic systems of parochial and diocesan authority. Nevertheless under the leadership of the Carrolls of Maryland, particularly of Bishop John Carroll, and reflective of the "established" character of Maryland Catholicism, the church lived relatively successfully between the Revolution and 1820 in the tension between faith commitments and practices and the democratic ethos of the new country. Symbolic of Catholic comfort with the American denominational pattern

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[28] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 52–61.
[29] Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 55, 109–15; Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York, 2002), 14.

was widespread organization of parishes with and vesting authority in lay trustees, chosen by election. Similarly, the Irish-born bishop of Charleston, John England, endorsed in the 1820s a scheme of lay and clergy conventions regularized under a written constitution, a plan that partook of important aspects of the denominational style. This "republican Catholicism" gave way after 1820 to more conventional Romanized or Tridentine ordering of the church as the Catholic immigration surged, the majority of the church became foreign born, new bishops were sent by Rome, "religious" leadership on the parish level was strengthened in the orders and among priests, the backwash from the French Revolution shaped attitudes toward democracy, "nativist" hostility increased, Catholics reacted to the Protestant character of public schools, and in various ways the American Church oriented itself to more traditional forms of Catholic piety and to the authority of Rome. Trusteeism became a flash point, and a siege mentality developed – both negative ways of distancing Catholicism from American denominationalism. Constructively, the Catholic Church showed that it was not merely one among American denominations by establishing its own school system, fostering new and old devotional practices, developing with parish missions ways of reaching underprovided Catholic populations, undertaking a massive building program, and thereby countering the entire Protestant denominational voluntaristic project with a Roman subculture.[30]

Protestant European churchly traditions too (Anglicans, Lutherans), as well as American originals (Christians, Mormons), and smaller bodies (Jews, Moravians, Mennonites, and others), in holding onto their "larger" identities were challenged by but also affected the voluntaristic patterns. The seductive allure of the denominational evangelical pattern and external pressures to Americanize at times produced reactive or avoidance patterns, but even defensiveness had its transformative effect on American denominationalism.[31] In proclaiming the importance of their transatlantic connections, doctrine, ethnicity, language, polity, mission, history, politics, or ecumenical outlook, these movements laid stronger foundations under denominational identities.

Especially important was the strong confessionalism that swept across American religion in the 1830s and 1840s and stamped American denominationalism with much more pronounced churchly, doctrinal, polity, apologetic, and sacramental dispositions. New waves of Lutheran immigrants, the influence of the Anglican Oxford Movement, the leaven of Romanticism, divisions within churches, and new antislavery movements

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[30] Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 29–70.
[31] Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*.

produced confessionalisms of various sorts. Indeed, quite varied were these impulses. Old School Presbyterians, Landmark and Anti-mission Baptists, high church Episcopalians, Mercersburg-influenced German Reformed, Restorationists, Missouri-Synod Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox Jews came to their orientations from quite distinct motivations. Yet they shared a commitment to recover, return to, reclaim, or reinvigorate what they represented as foundational. And that meant resisting aspects of the then vibrant denominational, voluntaristic American patterns. Confessionalism showed its "reactiveness," for instance, in critiques of the "new measures" associated with Charles Grandison Finney, of voluntary societies, of camp meetings, of temperance, and of other "methodistic" practices. More constructively, confessional spokespersons called their co-religionists back to first principles. So the Mercersburg theologians, Philip Schaff and John W. Nevin, in criticizing methodistic and Finneyite revivalism, summoned the German Reformed to the "superior" nurturing Calvinist system of catechisms, confessions, sacraments, creeds, traditions, and kindred churchly practices. Similarly, Charles Hodge and other Old School theologians pled for Westminster standards, Charles Philip Krauth spoke for confessional Lutheranism, John Henry Hobart and Calvin Colton for proper Anglicanism, and James R. Graves for Landmark Baptists.

Reversion to first principles, to founders' practices, to heightened accent on one's own polity derived as well from other divisive dynamics, including especially the immediate abolitionism and other ultraistic reforms of the 1830s. Antislavery figured at some level in the Old School–New School Presbyterian division of 1837–38 and more decisively in the Methodist and Baptist separations of 1843–45. Actually pro- and antislavery convictions led to formation of four separate Methodisms – Wesleyans (1843), Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal South (1844–45), and Free Methodists (1860). So the prototypical missionary-covenantal denominations – Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists – all split, and religious warfare between the divided coreligionists broke out. The animosities that continued intensely for the 1840s and 1850s had some role in preparing the nation for civil war.[32] Divided Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians fought over the allegiances of congregations and of judicatories poised regionally, programmatically, or doctrinally between the coreligionists. To legitimate their stance on slavery, on voluntary societies, and on other dividing issues, the coreligionists resorted to apologetics, to biblical appeals, and to confessional touchstones. In the vituperative exchanges, southern Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians insisted that abolition, other

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[32] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon, GA, 1985).

ultraistic campaigns, and the voluntary societies that pursued such did not respect the churchly authority more properly vested in assembly, synod, and presbytery, or in bishops or in congregations. Northern churches' intrusion into civil and legislative matters like slavery, the southerners argued, did not accord with the literal word of scripture, nor recognize that the church's influence was spiritual not temporal. The doctrine of the spirituality of the church and the recognition that the church was itself a missionary society led Old School Presbyterians to bring trustee-managed voluntary societies for missions, Bible production, tract distribution, and Sunday school promotion under General Assembly, synodical, and presbyterial control. Southern Methodists and Baptists came somewhat later to such Presbyterian convictions. And after the Civil War, northern churches also brought voluntary societies under denominational control, creating thereby a corporate infrastructure, but they did so on very different grounds. They had learned by the effective centralized, professionally led, nationally managed wartime mobilization that accountable organization worked and worked well.[33]

A CASE STUDY

To this integration of confessional principle, of polity or governance, of national mission, and of American identity, other religious bodies came by various routes. Lutherans charted a path illustrative of the complexities, linguistic-ethnic dynamics, and interesting turns in the processes of national denominational organization. By the end of the eighteenth century, Lutherans of Swedish, Dutch, and German extraction established ministeriums in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, worked through the Pietist-Orthodox tensions that the revivalism of the eighteenth century produced, retained strong ties with their European mother churches, and also developed fellowship arrangements with bodies of similar polities (Anglicans), of the same language (Reformed), and of common pieties (Moravians). The oldest, the Philadelphia Ministerium, established in 1748 as "the Ministerium of North America," like the later Methodists, functioned informally, developed procedure as needed, borrowed from other denominations, finally adopted a constitution in 1781, and approved a revised one in 1792. That of 1781 later provided for conferences to be organized to support and oversee congregations scattered over the colonies (South Carolina 1787, North Carolina 1791, New York 1792, Virginia 1793), leaving the relation of these to Philadelphia somewhat ambiguous. New York and South Carolina decided, in the spirit of the Revolution, to

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[33] Richey, "Institutional Forms of Religion," I: 31–50.

include laity, and others followed. The general trajectory was toward use of English and cooperative endeavor with the denominations viewed as closely affiliated.[34] In Philadelphia, however, Justus Henry Christian Helmuth led in a conservative or restorative effort to keep German as the language of worship and of instruction. Making common cause with Reformed and Moravians, a German magazine was launched (the *Evangelisches Magazin*, 1811–17); a hymnal, catechisms, and other materials for nurture were produced. However, elsewhere adoption of English and continued acculturation proceeded as Lutherans scattered south and west. Missionary societies, itinerating ministers, and other proven methods for revival and nurture worked for Lutherans as they did Methodists. Outlying conferences used English in their meetings. And irenic synods, like that of New York, pressed toward greater acclimatization. Pennsylvania, the "mother" ministerium, also encouraged its western and southern conferences to move from delegated to independent and full synodical status.

The emergence of the new synods – Ohio, Maryland-Virginia, North Carolina – posed relational, decision-making, and structural-organizational issues as matters of ministry and mission did as well. A plan for a General Synod, mooted in several places, was drafted in 1820 by the secretary of the North Carolina Synod, Gottlieb Shober, a former Moravian. Ratification of the *Plan Entwurf*, "Proposed Plan," called for approval by three-fourths of the synods. Objections to the General Synod surfaced immediately, and the campaigns for and against it elicited various procedural, substantive, representational, confessional, and authority issues. The contest produced strategic organization of new synods and several reversals of action by individual synods. New "national" leadership emerged against and for the proposed General Synod; among the latter was Samuel Schmucker, son of the then president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. The critics contended that the plans vested too much authority centrally, it (or its proponents) did not sufficiently safeguard Luther's theology, it favored the East over the West and South, and it undercut the productive cooperative relations enjoyed with the Reformed. Even when revised to preserve greater authority and power to the several synods and ratified in 1823 by the minimum number of existing synods, the plan continued to generate controversy for several decades as Generalists and Anti-Generalists campaigned within synods and for the support of newly organized synods.

What really sealed the doom for a single, nationally organized American denomination was not the continued posturing among older populations of largely acculturated Lutherans, but the explosive immigration in the late

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[34] J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church. The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722–1957* (Bethlehem, PA, 1967), 88, 94, 132–3, 138–9.

1830s and afterward of Germans, Swedes, and Norwegians. With these more urbanized trades folk, shopkeepers, and workers came their own clergy, and with both came the new European confessional, anti-Enlightenment currents. Normed on a theology of repristination, a conservative reaction to biblical criticism, a strain of Neo-Lutheranism, and a heightened appreciation of the confessions, the doctrinally conservative new immigrants and their leadership found the commitments of existing Lutheranism too lax and accommodating. The result was the formation of numbers of new synods, notably, that of the trend-setting Missouri Synod (1847). Theological, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences would thereafter checkerboard Lutheran denominationalism and extend into twentieth-century Lutheranism's interaction with culturally dominant styles of religious practice and organization.[35] So whether stimulated by immigration, by theological movements, or by slavery, American denominationalism as a whole reverberated with confessional, ethnic, and cultural overtones; and denominations sharpened their sense of their distinctiveness.

DENOMINATIONAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

The integration of polity, practice, and precept that yielded the denominational system emerged, as we have noted, accidentally and gradually and with various reversions and introductions of fresh stimuli. So also fully developed denominational consciousness took various routes as groups moved, at whatever pace, toward insider status in the project to Christianize America. Even the Methodists who operationalized the national, entrepreneurial, missionary, competitive, evangelistic denominational style were slow to conceptualize their purposes in Christian American terms and to negotiate their way into full acceptance by the more established denominations. Their gradual apprehension and adoption of the Reformed vision for a covenanted nation can be seen in the successive telling of the Methodist story. Methodism's first historian, Jesse Lee, writing in 1810, treated America as stage and made revival and conversions the central drama. Methodist successes were owed to John Wesley's organization and distinctive patterns for ministry – rules for holiness, class meetings, extempore preaching, societies, itinerating preachers, expanding conferences – and their use by inspired leadership. America was but context, landscape.

Writing in the late 1830s, Nathan Bangs, architect of Methodist accommodation to society, began his narrative not with Wesley but with Columbus. He told a story of Methodist discovery of American liberties

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[35] E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia, 1975), 49–56, 81–127, 151–2, 175.

and American discovery of Methodist proper "church" institutions that would protect those liberties – church buildings, stable pastorates, parsonages, educational institutions, print media, organizations for mission – in short, infrastructure. Bangs portrayed Methodism's discovery of its ecclesial self and its building itself structurally into American life. America was society.

Abel Stevens, crafting various histories in the 1850s, edged further toward American exceptionalism and Methodist place therein. He wrote of conquest, not discovery, and imagined a chanced meeting in Glasgow of John Wesley, "inventor" of Methodism, and James Watt, inventor of the steam engine. "Watts and Wesley," he wrote, "might well then have struck hands and bid each other godspeed at Glasgow in 1757: they were co-workers for the destinies of the new world."[36] From Wesley, Methodism gifted America with the machinery to conquer the world morally.

It was Bishop Matthew Simpson who wedded Methodism to the American state, forcefully evoked Puritan covenantal notions, and gave Methodism a civil religious mission. The Union conquest over Southern rebellion, the patriotic fervor of the Civil War, and centennial civic pieties inspired Bishop Matthew Simpson who enjoyed close association with President Lincoln. Simpson began his history with a survey of national accomplishments, the contributions of America to the world. Then he flashed back to Wesley and British Methodism. It was American influences, however, not these "foreign" ones that stamped American Methodism. "The rise of Methodism," he insisted, "was coeval with the Revolutionary spirit." Methodism succeeded, he argued, by overcoming its British origins and embracing distinctively dynamic, democratic American ways.[37]

By this point, having proved its mettle on the battlefield (on both sides), tamed some of its camp meeting excesses, littered the nation with colleges, embraced the Puritan errand to stamp the new world with Christian morality, and built infrastructure for missionizing "freedmen" in the South and the benighted across the globe, Methodism had become the model denomination, northern Methodism especially. Having muscled its way into the Protestant establishment and being joined there in the following decades by Baptists and Disciples, Methodism would commit itself to the

[36] Abel Stevens, *A Compendious History of American Methodism* (New York, n.d. [1868–67]), 19.

[37] The historians and historical works in order of citation and publication are Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists* (Baltimore, 1810; facsimile ed., Rutland, 1974); Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols., 6th ed. (1st ed. New York, 1860; 1838–41); Abel Stevens, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols. (New York, 1864–67) and *A Compendious History*; Matthew Simpson, *A Hundred Years of Methodism* (New York, 1876).

agenda of a Christian America. In 1866 American Methodism celebrated its one hundredth birthday. Chapters in a volume produced for the occasion in describing Methodism also epitomize denominationalism: "Its Special Adaptation and Usefulness to the Country," "Its Labor in the Diffusion of Literature," "Its Educational Labors," "Its Sunday-school Enterprise," "Its Missionary Labors," "Its Loyalty and Patriotic Services."[38] A prescient reader of this volume might have grasped that in the decades after the Civil War, American denominations would think missionally on a global scale, come increasingly to be big businesses, and look structurally like corporations. Denominations? Once mere names, then polities, then competing missional orders, finally a complex of corporations whose free enterprise ambition was a Christian America, even a Christian world.

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[38] Abel Stevens, *The Centenary of American Methodism* (New York, 1865).

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RELIGIOUS AND GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION, 1790–1865

PHILIP L. BARLOW

The religious complexion of the United States changed spectacularly in the two and one-half generations between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. These changes were wrought, above all, by the conquest of the West, by the unleashing of populist forces, by the rise of new religious groups spawned by the country's political freedoms and geographical expanse, and by immigration. At the end of the era, groundwork had been laid for what was emerging as the most religiously complex nation in history.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

Grants of land from Europe's powers to the original American colonists were conceived on a heroic scale. In 1620, for example, the Council for New England secured from King James a new charter granting it all the territory between 40° and 48° north latitude, "from sea to sea." As with other charters, this extreme reach to unexplored lands in the West has struck modern observers as outrageous, avaricious, grandiose, humorous, or simply naïve. In their own time the reach seemed, to most of the land's inhabitants, remote and unfathomable. Unfathomable, that is, until American independence revolutionized not only the political, but also the geographical consciousness of those inhabitants, thereby unleashing new forces. Even then, the continental space to fill seemed infinite.

No sooner had the newly formed United States wrested free of Britain than it quickly acquired the heart of the remainder of the habitable continent. The 1803 purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon added in one swoop 830,000 square miles to United States territory – from present-day Louisiana to Montana and from southwestern Minnesota to northeastern New Mexico – thereby doubling the size of the nation. In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo dictated the terms ending the U.S. war with Mexico. It also added 525,000 square miles to the nation's geography – modern California, Nevada, and Utah, most of Arizona, and western New Mexico

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and Colorado. From Mexico's perspective, the United States added yet an additional 390,000 square miles at the same time, because Mexico had never previously recognized the Republic of Texas nor its 1845 annexation by the United States. Thus Mexico ceded 55 percent of its prewar territory, while the Guadalupe transaction expanded U.S. terrain by one-third. Only two years earlier the United States and Great Britain had concluded the Oregon Treaty, resolving disputed claims in the Northwest along lines that still endure. And in 1853 the Gadsden Purchase completed the continental conquest by securing southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico from Mexico for a southern rail line to the Pacific.

These shifting contracts among great powers looked different to the natives who had preceded them. The Northwest Ordinance, an optimistic piece of legislation passed by the Continental Congress in 1789, had asserted that Indian land and property were "never [to be] taken from them without their consent," and that "laws founded in justice and humanity shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them and for preserving peace and friendship with them."[1] These noble words seethe with irony in light of the fleet pace by which the besieged tribes subsequently ceded the continent. In Native American eyes, a range of officials mixed good-faith negotiations with coercion, treachery, war, and even murder as the U.S. government purchased or appropriated the land. Despite this great retreat, as late as 1870 a curving and considerable swath in theory remained natives' territory: from a patch of Texas west toward New Mexico and Arizona, bending north through Nevada and Idaho, and turning east again through Montana, the Dakotas, and Nebraska, with additional patches throughout the length of California, Oregon, and Washington. But real control lay at least in part elsewhere; within twenty years half of even this remaining land had also been ceded to the United States. Consummating the fears of both Indians and European powers, a "sea to sea" territorial "destiny," which had long seemed "manifest" to American politicians and westerly moving settlers, had with breathtaking speed been made real, legal, and complete. In American law, the boundaries of the thirty-six states and eleven territories soon to become states already by the end of the Civil War approximated their permanent form.

MIGRATION

The people followed the land. Until the end of the colonial era, the Allegheny Mountains, and more broadly the Appalachian chain, had formed a natural

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[1] "An Ordinance for the Government of the United States North-West of the River Ohio," Article 3 (1787).

barrier to westward expansion. But once American sovereignty was established and the mountains were crossed, the populace surged toward the Mississippi River. It paused there less than a generation before gushing to the West Coast and, later and more slowly, backfilling the Great Plains and parts of the Great Basin.

Exceptions to this westward propulsion present themselves. Sundry Indian nations flourished in the West centuries before Andrew Jackson's "Indian Removal Act" of 1830 created a "trail of tears" for the removal to western "Indian Territory" of Choctaws, Seminoles, and their cousins, exiled from their homelands far away in the East and South. Chinese immigrants appeared in California and northward along the Pacific coast in the middle of the nineteenth century. By the thousands came men on boats, in high demand to aid the hard work of western expansion through mining, railroad, and other enterprises. Women accompanied these laborers, often with little choice, brought by husbands or as prostitutes. The 1870 U.S. census discloses that 61 percent of California's 3,500 women earned their livings through prostitution. Among non-Asians, however, economic anxieties over inexpensive labor produced nativist anxieties and the consequent "Chinese Exclusion Act" of 1882, rendering it illegal for "Chinese laborers" to enter the country. Asian immigrants who, with their "new" religions, looked eastward upon America from the Pacific Rim, would not arrive in large numbers until the twentieth century.

Others who planted themselves in western climes, and who had not launched from the eastern United States, arrived earlier and grew deeper roots. By the time the founding fathers of the nation drew up its founding constitution, Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries working their way north had been at labor for two centuries, establishing dozens of missions in what is now California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Russian Orthodoxy arrived in Alaska a half century before the United States achieved its nationhood and two centuries before Alaska joined the Union. Formal missionary labors took hold in 1794; and by the middle of the nineteenth century, John Veniaminov (Saint Innocent) had left Siberia to become America's first Orthodox bishop and had built its first Orthodox cathedral, translated a catechism and portions of the New Testament into the language of the Aleuts, built schools, and oversaw the baptism of more than four thousand natives. Defying the traditionally conceived geo-logic of American religious history, Russian Orthodoxy would in succeeding decades move its headquarters from west to east, stopping for a time in San Francisco and landing by 1905 in New York City.

Despite their symbolic significance, however, such movements as these were numerically minuscule countercurrents. The human flood tide moving westward across the nation was not merely dramatic; it was epic. By

1800 the Kentucky side of the Ohio River Valley had absorbed several thousand settlers. A decade later, new arrivals were clearing land southward in Tennessee and northward in southern Ohio and Indiana. Excepting northern Illinois and Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, and Florida and northern Alabama, the entire immense area east of the Mississippi River was by 1830 generally, if sparsely, populated. By 1850 colonists had breached the great river in sufficient numbers to achieve political clout; on the Mississippi's western banks the Union of States admitted Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa. The Mormon, Oregon, and California trails already bore heavy traffic, fueled especially by the 1848 discovery of gold in California, which was admitted as the nation's thirty-first state in 1850. Both the gold and the state quickly attracted tens of thousands, including some from Latin America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, but primarily from points eastward in the United States.

REDEEMING AND EDUCATING THE WEST

The churches followed this unprecedented human thrust into Appalachia, the Midwest, the Far West, and the Pacific coast. Sometimes religion flowed intrinsically with the people. Occasionally the churches led the movement, comprising the key sustaining force that gave cohesion to otherwise scattered and vulnerable communities. Nationally, the expansion was both geographical and, in relation to the populace, proportional: church membership grew from perhaps 7 percent of the population in 1800 to 25 percent in 1865, when criteria for admittance were less stringent.

Just as in colonial times, ministers were often scarce in relation to those deemed in need of saving or shepherding. Amidst primitive conditions, this shortage sometimes drew selfless leaders of talent, at other times "ministers" of questionable ability and character. Meanwhile, denominational leaders in the East had their hands full in working to survive such threats as a spreading rationalism and a spreading legal disestablishment. Nonetheless, they sounded the alarm to "civilize" and "Christianize" the West whose character they deemed up for grabs. None was more zealous in the cause than Presbyterian evangelist and educator Lyman Beecher, who left prominence in Connecticut and Boston to pastor the Second Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati and become the first president of Lane Theological Seminary, where he trained ministers to win the West for Protestantism. Beecher's 1835 work, *A Plea for the West*, found it "plain" that "the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West." "There is the territory," he wrote, "and there soon will be the

population, the wealth, and the political power."[2] Beecher pleaded that the Protestant and eastern establishment not be blind to their own fate if the coming political power in the West should fall into the wrong – especially Roman Catholic – hands. If the West should fail, the entire "Christian nation" would spiral down into a great "vortex."

Decades before Beecher wrote, Presbyterians and Congregationalists pooled the "home mission" resources of the two largest colonial churches in a bold Plan of Union drawn up in 1801, designed for personal, moral, and financial support and to establish new schools and churches in western New York and the Northwest Territory. One fruit of this marriage was controversy: the Union, indeed, contributed by 1837 to the development of a major schism between "Old School" and "New School" churches in close fellowship. The rise of New School theology and praxis, in turn, bore a connection to the western expansion of the churches, where revivalists and ministers such as Beecher, Albert Barnes, and Charles Finney popularized understandings and practices especially effective in the trans-Appalachian new Republic, including more room for human effort in salvation, a postmillennialist anticipation of societal progress achieved through social activism, and direct, personal, and scarcely restrained public calls for sinners to repent. After 1825, Finney in particular, in central and upstate New York, adopted, though he did not invent, "new measures" in revivalism. These came later to be emulated elsewhere in the West and shown to be effective even in the urban centers of the East. They included emotional preaching, unapologetic invitations for women to pray in public meetings of both sexes, public censure of individuals by name during sermons and prayers, and use of the "anxious seat" where those contemplating Christian conversion came forward to receive prayer and Christ.

With less acrimony, the Presbyterian-Congregationalist Union also produced the influential American Home Mission Society (1826). Leaders in the Union worked concurrently with others, such as Methodist Francis Asbury and Baptist John Mason Peck. Through such cooperation the Union succeeded in forming tract, Bible, and Sunday school societies to aid in proselytizing both the "foreign field" and those who settled between the Appalachians and the Pacific.

Prior to the Civil War, Protestants and a few Catholics had established dozens of missions to Indians in Kansas and Oklahoma ("Indian Territory"). Protestants had dozens more in New York, in Ohio, and in and south of Tennessee. Protestants and Catholics together established more throughout the upper Midwest. And Catholics and a few Protestants had planted yet

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[2] Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati, 1835), 11.

two dozen more in the far Northwest, where the famous efforts of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet effectively engaged the Blackfoot, the Flathead, and other tribes.

But winning Native American converts presented special difficulties: vast linguistic diversity; parallel religious diversity, which demanded that Christianity be presented in widely differing terms; and the geographical spread and mobility of native peoples, which worked against the continuity and intensity necessary to meaningful indoctrination. Compassion, wisdom, sacrifice, and good intentions, moreover, mixed with bungling, drink, diseases, and cultural condescension or exploitation that rendered some missionary labors a mockery. Indian population plunged from 600,000 to half that between 1800 and 1860. Suspicion or hostility persisted among most tribes toward their would-be benefactors.

Not a single tribal tradition escaped the missionaries' influence, and the largest portion of natives eventually did adopt Christianity. Often, however, converts embraced Christianity while secretly preserving native practices or syncretizing the faiths. Catholicism, with its saints, reverence for the Virgin, and elaborate rituals, lent itself especially well to hybrid spirituality.

Other individuals and tribes turned away from white encroachments and to new religions designed to revitalize native values. These religions typically offered strict ethical demands and/or visions, sometimes apocalyptic ones, of a coming age of renewed cultural power. One such was the Gaihwi:io (Longhouse) religion, preached after 1799 among the once-mighty remnants of the Iroquois League by the reformed alcoholic prophet, Handsome Lake (1735–1815). The prophet urged his people to reject the corruptions and self-abuse (alcohol, witchcraft, use of herbs that produced abortions and sterility) occasioned by the resignation and rootlessness accompanying military and cultural defeat. He preached a gospel of self-respect and acceptance of responsibility for building a new generation through marital fidelity and a healthy home life. By the second half of the nineteenth century, his movement had become the primary vehicle for the survival of Seneca traditions.

Another crucial dimension to the western expansion of Caucasian Americans was the founding of church academies and colleges, witnessing to the concern of many a frontier evangelical for the development of the mind. As Lyman Beecher insisted, it was not by tracts and Bibles alone that the West could be won for "Christianity" and decency against Catholicism and uncivilized forces. These were enemies by which "the Sabbath is profaned, and the tavern supplants the worship of God," where "thrift and knowledge ... go out, while vice and irreligion come in."[3] To fight such

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[3] *Ibid.*, 24.

forces as these required potent and permanent "literary and moral institutions": teachers and schools, libraries and colleges, churches and benevolent societies. Exemplifying the latter was the American Temperance Society, which Beecher helped to found in 1826, and which within ten years had generated more than eight thousand local chapters and inspired more than 1.5 million members to take a pledge to abstain from distilled beverages. The effort to serve and save the West, the nation, and the world scarcely knew bounds, finding expression in an explosion of denominational and nondenominational Bible societies, antislavery societies, peace societies, societies for penal reform, charities, orphanages, asylums for the insane – a "benevolent empire."

This impulse to civilize and instruct was potent not only among denominations that required formally educated ministers, such as Beecher's Presbyterianism, but also some that did not. Six times as many Methodist as Episcopal colleges were functioning in the land by 1850. So numerous were these efforts to provide the West with a religiously based education that many of these colleges could not long survive. Of the 173 permanent colleges founded after the American Revolution but before the Civil War, more were clustered in states abutting the Great Lakes than anywhere else, with Ohio (17 colleges) leading the way. Presbyterians founded more institutions than any other denomination, with a total of 49. But Methodists were responsible for 34 and Baptists for 25, while Congregationalists established 21. These numbers for Congregationalists and Presbyterians reflect some of the duplication of the Plan of Union initiative; respected schools such as Western Reserve, Knox, Grinnell, and Ripon were founded under the auspices of both denominations. Roman Catholics created 14 institutions of higher learning during the period, and Episcopalians 11. Lutherans bore responsibility for 6, Disciples of Christ for 5, German Reformed and Universalists 4 each. Quakers and a smattering of other bodies each formed one or several. More than 20 state universities came into being prior to the Civil War as well, but not until after the war did state universities come into their own. For the first two-thirds of the century, the majority of college-educated young people attended the religious colleges. Until then, American higher education thrived under denominational sponsorship, and when that changed, so did the nation's consciousness.[4]

The common antebellum planting of colleges demonstrates that, contrary to its frequent portrayal, the West did not persistently and uniformly disdain learning. Quality did vary, and officials sometimes lowered educational standards on what they considered pragmatic grounds, while others

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[4] Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War* (New York, 1932).

worked to maintain high standards among educators and the ministry. Frequently, Easterners, preoccupied with theological sophistication and proper polity, found themselves ill informed and ill equipped to address frontier needs. Groups less dependent on such leaders and on such sensibilities enjoyed and exploited, among the general populace, a tactical advantage. They developed a practical education, a lively preaching, an eclectic worship, and a simple theology. Tradition did not weigh heavily on them, and improvisation was common, whether in doctrine, polity, morality, architecture, or music. Congregations were sometimes conscious of a ministerial shortage. But often, in the spirit of the new Republic, people of the frontier and the semifrontier, whether churched or unchurched, exulted in the paucity of religious overlords. They inclined toward suspicion of political, ecclesiastical, or creedal authority; and they disdainfully contrasted their freedom with the encrusted practice of stodgy denominational rivals, other nations, and previous eras.

This religious democratization in antebellum America was liberating, but it also induced confusion and insecurity. Some authority must exist, it seemed, and many came to find it directly in the New Testament. This Reformation mantra was not on its surface a new claim, but something had changed. While Martin Luther had asserted the doctrine of *sola scriptura* three centuries previously, he had meant "scripture" as opposed to Catholic "tradition," and he assumed the need for competent biblical interpreters. Believers in the antebellum American frontier, however, now elevated the authority of the Bible higher yet while rejecting the intrusive filters of interpreting clergy, creed, church, or historical precedent. The New Testament, they held, could speak to every individual directly, and education and tradition were apt to obscure the unsullied word of God with the errant opinions of men.[5] The result of this enthusiasm was a release from what they experienced as encrusted, laborious, learned traditions, but a release purchased, said the movement's critics, at the risk of eccentric innovation, antinomianism, mass delusions, a lack of accountability, and a strengthening of the hands of infidels by bringing religion into contempt. "Religious mania," lamented Episcopalian clergyman Henry Caswall in 1839, is "the prevailing form of insanity in the United States."[6]

Such "mania," in the eyes of skeptics, was not in short supply – not in the camp meetings of Georgia, not in sectarian Pennsylvania, not in Emerson's

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[5] George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, eds., *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York, 1982), 79; Nathan O. Hatch, "Sola Scriptura and Novus Ordo Seclorum," in idem., 62–73.

[6] Henry Caswall, *America and the American Church* (London, 1839), 325.

Concord, where he famously reported, "We were all a little mad.... Not a man of us that did not have a plan for some new Utopia in his pocket."[7]

THE RISE OF NEW RELIGIONS

America's geographical, political, and ideological freedoms created rich ground for such fervency. The much-noticed district in upstate New York was especially potent. Looking backward from the 1870s while writing his autobiography, Charles Finney referred to a "burnt district" in upstate New York during the 1820s and 1830s, a region so thoroughly evangelized that it was imagined no "fuel" could remain for the evangelical conversions he had once promoted by the thousands.[8] Sometimes the converts of Finney's and others' revivals attached fiercely to the Presbyterians, Baptists, or Methodists, but he himself downplayed denominational importance, and often revivals on the frontier and semifrontier were emphatically non-denominational. This regional expression of an episodic, national revival incited hoards of citizens to convert to traditional Protestantism, and hoards of those already Protestant to awaken from spiritual slumber. The region also produced an outbreaking of social radicalism, as suggested by the half dozen utopian socialist communities sponsored by François Marie Charles Fourier in New York State alone, and by the pivotal 1848 Convention at Seneca Falls, devoted to women's suffrage and initiated by resident Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her colleagues.

Above all, the region was rife with religious experiment. In the same year that Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan Anthony were holding their convention south of Rochester, John Humphrey Noyes founded, east of Syracuse, his Oneida Society. This was an enterprise lasting several decades where perfection was possible in this world, where property, possessions, and marriage were held in common among the group, and where the devout worked to bring Christ's millennial kingdom to fulfillment, Christ himself having returned in C.E. 70. The same year also witnessed the beginning careers of adolescents Kate and Margaret Fox of Arcadia Township, slightly east of Oneida, who convinced their older sister Leah that they were communicating with departed spirits. This they demonstrated with unexplained "rappings," sounds that spawned a thousand mimics, creating a national preoccupation with Spiritualism that grew throughout the century and survived even Margaret's 1888 confession of hoax. Not far away several communal farms thrived in extended connection with the Shaker

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[7] Charles E. Norton, ed., *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1883), I: 308–9.
[8] Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney* (New York, 1876), 78.

village of Sodus Bay, whose inhabitants, like several thousand others in sister villages in New England, New York, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, practiced celibacy, pacifism, common property, a community and government separate from the wider society, and power over physical disease. They strove toward a less imperfect social contract, one that would curb the excesses of human nature and the inbred selfishness of nuclear families, and would alleviate the dislocations of modern social life. Back toward Rochester was Palmyra, where Joseph Smith reported unearthing the gold plates he translated into the Book of Mormon, published in 1830. About the same time, twenty-five miles to the south and east, William Miller first publicly shared his biblically derived calculations of the specific date of the literal Second Advent of Jesus Christ: sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. Others were persuaded only slowly until 1840, when the obscure regional interest began to morph into a national crusade, with believers also in Canada and Britain, and with perhaps fifty periodicals circulating the apocalyptic message before the predicted time came and went without Christ's appearance. In the five months ending April 1843, six hundred thousand copies of Millerite publications were distributed in New York alone.[9]

Of the numerous new religious groups that arose in the fertile U.S. soil before the Civil War, three made strikingly rapid strides. The first was the amorphous Holiness movement. Although the perfectibility of human nature was a motif of the American Renaissance and included secular sources, this impulse in American Christianity emerged especially from Methodist influence, renewing the perfectionist teachings bequeathed by John Wesley. Phoebe Palmer's weekly prayer meetings begun in the 1830s in New York City and the concurrent revivalism associated with Charles Finney helped to infuse the language of "entire sanctification" into much of American Protestantism. The urge to holiness would assume denominational forms only after the Civil War, with Pentecostal extensions early in the twentieth century.

A second major group arose in response to a second impulse resonant in the New Republic: to heal the "horrid evil" of Christian denominational divisions by returning to the pure Christianity of the first-century church as disclosed solely by the unfiltered Bible. Those inclined to this need rejected distinguishing labels such as Baptist or Presbyterian, preferring to be known simply as "disciples" or "Christians." At home on the frontier, they were suspicious of "man-made creeds" and of clerical privilege (including the title "Reverend"), and they rejected all synods or associations that asserted authority over local congregations. Forces led by Barton Stone,

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[9] William Miller, *Wm. Miller's Apology and Defence* (Boston, 1845), 17.

a veteran of the seismic 1801 Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky, and by
Thomas and Alexander Campbell consummated their union in 1831 in
Lexington, Kentucky, rejecting the term "denomination," yet gradually
assuming the traits of one. Twelve thousand strong at the time of the mer-
ger, the movement's appeal is suggested by its three hundred thousand
adherents thirty years later – with its greatest base in Indiana, Illinois,
Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee.

The era's new religion that ultimately became the most successful was
Mormonism. It also drew the widest national attention, engendered the
most complex history, developed the most distinctive trail across the con-
tinent, and established the most imposing regional presence in the West.
Founded in 1830 in upstate New York by visionary Joseph Smith, the
young "Church of Christ" saw opportunity in the Midwest and estab-
lished its twin centers in Kirtland, Ohio, near Cleveland, and on the literal
frontier in northwest Missouri. There thousands of converts transplanted
themselves, invited by a geographical revelation ("the gathering") to enact
God's literal kingdom and to usher in the millennial reign of Christ. Their
increasing and concentrated numbers brought them recurrently into con-
flict with other settlers in a vigilante culture, a tinderbox fueled by the
Mormons' unfamiliar beliefs and practices, their millennialist interpre-
tations of the region's future, and their northern and European sensibili-
ties toward Indians and free blacks in a region dominated by southern
migrants.

The result was mob action and, in Missouri, pillage and war. With con-
siderable forfeit of life and property, the refugees in 1839 established a new
center in Illinois at Nauvoo. There they flourished for several years before
again running afoul of their neighbors. In June 1844 the prophet, mayor,
entrepreneur, lieutenant-general, and privately polygamous Joseph Smith
lost his life to a mob.

The most consequential of the smaller groups claiming to be the proper
heirs of Smith's authority was the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints, which coalesced in 1860 and was led by Smith's eldest
son, Joseph III. Disavowing polygamy and other unfamiliar practices and
beliefs initiated by Smith at Nauvoo, the Reorganization planted roots in
Iowa and then Missouri. Its moderated ways found peace with (especially)
Protestant neighbors in the Midwest in the coming decades, and found
congruity of identity and theology with them a century later.

Others joined the two-thirds majority who espoused the unmoderated
Mormonism championed by Brigham Young. Young led these followers
out of the United States, across the plains, and into the Great Basin –
initially Mexican territory. In this isolated place, the Saints established
hundreds of settlements, dominating the territory that would later become

the state of Utah as well as parts of bordering states, and ranging south into Mexico and north into Canada. Tens of thousands of converts arriving from the East and from England and Scandinavia populated these settlements. Interrupted only by the Civil War, however, tensions persisted between these believers trying to enact their distinctive religious vision and a wider American society that scowled at their communal ways in economics, politics, and marriage. Not until the end of the century would accommodation be achieved.

IMMIGRATION

Historians tend to lump together as "the Second Great Awakening" the episodic waves of conversions in various districts of the country from the beginning to the middle of the nineteenth century. This awakening changed the religious consciousness and composition of the nation. Episcopalian numbers, which had remained flat since the Revolution, began to climb after 1840, reaching 200,000 by the end of the Civil War, and to triple that before the end of the century, matching and exceeding the Congregationalists for the first time. More affected by the revivals, Presbyterian growth was dramatically higher. A half century after 1815, when their 100,000 members had approximated the number of Episcopalians, the more than 600,000 Presbyterians tripled Episcopalian membership. In turn, Baptists by the end of the Civil War boasted twice the population of the Presbyterians, having exploded to 1.2 million. And Methodists had become twice as numerous as Baptists and would remain America's largest Protestant denomination until the Great Depression. When all this growth is conjoined with the dramatic territorial expansion of the United States, with the migration of easterners into this new national space, with the unparalleled atmosphere of religious and social experimentation, and with the rise of lasting or ephemeral new religious movements, it is clear that a religious metamorphosis had occurred in the infant and adolescent nation between 1790 and 1865.

As potent as these elements of the transformation were, their force was matched by another: the torrent of peoples who poured into the country from abroad. Immigration, along with geography, has defined the United States as much as its constitution. And the immigrants brought their religions.

The colonial era had seen half a million unwilling immigrants imported to America's shores. This trade was at last prohibited in 1808, shrinking the influx of Africans to nearly zero. By this time, the population of the young nation had grown to five million. One in five was black, 90 percent of them slaves.

A black presence pervaded virtually all of the country, heavily in New York City and more heavily in the coastal regions from Maryland and Delaware southward. Blacks composed more than 50 percent of the populace in eastern Virginia and more than 70 percent along much of the South Carolina and Georgia coasts.

Overwhelmingly, the slaves brought to America had been abducted by traders along the West African coast, from the Gambia to the Congo. They came from many tribes: Yoruba, Ibo, Fon, Mandinke, and others. Their cultures and religions were thus diverse, though as a whole they held a close linkage between individuals and the community, between past and present, between the living and the ancestral dead, and between the tangible and the invisible worlds. Ritually petitioned ancestors might intervene between the people and the gods. Gods associated with natural forces such as storms or animals might be invoked so as to control these powers for good or destructive purposes.

Compared to the Caribbean and to Latin America, the number of slaves brought to America was sufficiently small to promote relatively close contact with white owners. And white religion and mores discouraged observance of African rituals and customs. The intentional scattering of peoples and even families by new owners undercut the possibility of well-organized uprising, and also undercut the continuance of tribal religions.

But slave religion as it developed in America did forge common endeavors: supporting the instinct to survive the trauma of geographic and cultural uprooting, and adapting tribal spirituality to a severe and alien world. Vestiges of native African and, sometimes, Muslim traits were submerged in an incipient broad conversion, beginning after about 1760, to Christianity. Even before the Revolutionary War, an enormous number of blacks had heard and responded to at least fragments of the Christian gospel, and the process gained momentum in subsequent decades. Some slaves and free blacks remained aloof from religion. Others actively rejected the Christian witness as an implausible view of the world or as tainted by its connection to Christian masters, or at least to masters whose cultural heritage was diffusely Christianized. Nonetheless, to speak of the African American "conversion to Christianity" during the pre–Civil War period is only a modest exaggeration. Among no other peoples of non-European lineage did nineteenth-century Christianity make such colossal numerical gains.

Although this was largely a Protestant phenomenon, the Catholics too claimed black converts. The first American Catholic bishop, John Carroll, estimated in 1785 that three thousand of sixteen thousand Maryland Catholics were black slaves. French-speaking blacks had settled in and around New Orleans before the turn of the century. Between 1812 and the

Civil War, several communities of black nuns were founded; in Baltimore and New Orleans they managed even to maintain a school and orphanages for black children and to spin off additional convents. Catholic use of material elements in ritual settings resonated with African sensibilities, as did the many Catholic saints, who served as intermediaries with God in ways not dissimilar to the way West Africa's gods did with the Creator God. But in general, except for Maryland and Louisiana, Roman Catholicism was not strong in those states where the black population was greatest, and the formality of Catholic ritual lacked ready avenues to the ecstasy intrinsic to West African religion.

African American Protestantism grew more readily wherever the black population was. Many free and slave groups began a transition from worshiping on the plantation or in white churches to forming their own congregations and, incipiently, their own denominations. Black Baptists numbered more than twenty-five thousand at the approach of the nineteenth century; and several congregations, during and after the Revolutionary War, began meeting apart from white oversight. Early black Methodists made even greater organizational progress, beginning in 1787, when Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, having been pulled from their knees while praying in a gallery closed to blacks in a Philadelphia Methodist church, and seeing that the majority of free blacks attended no church, conceived the idea of starting a separate African Methodist church. Despite fits and starts and internal differences, Allen was in 1816 elected as the inaugural bishop of America's first independent black denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In time such churches, in some instances and some ways, became the oldest and most important institutions in their communities – social anchors to a people for whom even the bonds of family had withered in the furnace of enslavement and permanent separation.

At the beginning of the national period, blacks made up almost 19 percent of the population, a fact of which the first census (1790) takes inadequate account. Of the population, 60 percent were of English descent, 5 percent were Scottish, 4 percent German, and 1 percent, respectively, were Dutch and Irish. Another 8 percent were Native American, which means that more than a quarter of the nation's inhabitants were either black or Indian.

From the 1820s on, however, the tide of mostly white newcomers rose each year, reaching more than one million annually by 1835, and 2.25 million by 1850, thus changing the ethnic composition of America before immigration eased back as national unrest bared itself. Just before civil war erupted, nearly two-thirds of all immigrants were coming from northwest Europe, but only 14 percent of these originated in England and Wales. In 1850, 43 percent of Americans born outside the United States hailed from

Ireland, forced from their native land by the Great Famine in such numbers that in less than a decade after 1845 Ireland had surrendered a quarter of its population. In turn, somewhere at midcentury they made Roman Catholicism the largest church in America, eclipsing even the explosion of Methodist converts. Catholic numbers cannot be determined with precision, as their data in the censuses are sometimes difficult to compare to those of other groups. But they arrived in droves: Irish and Germans in the Northeast, Germans in the Midwest, French in Louisiana and the urban centers of Chicago and the Northeast corridor. Although they were proportionately dominant, one cannot assume that Catholics in the West were everywhere Hispanic. By 1870 the Catholics of San Francisco were mostly Irish, and Catholics in Lavaca County, Texas, were largely Czech.

The second largest contingent of foreign-born citizens came from Germany (26 percent), and many Scandinavians joined them. As this implies, Lutherans had begun to arrive in force, their numbers growing by 1860 to 250,000. One-third of German-born Americans clustered in Pennsylvania and other mid-Atlantic states, but the majority moved across the mountains and into the upper Mississippi Valley. More than 80 percent of all new Scandinavian immigrants moved west and in later decades settled most heavily in the Dakotas and Minnesota. Before the end of the century, a Catholic-Lutheran tandem would constitute a religious domain in the region as striking as the evangelical South. The flood of newcomers from Austria, Hungary, Poland, Italy, and Russia (Catholics, Jews, and Orthodox) would not reach America's shores until later in the century; in 1850 they made up less than one percent of U.S. immigrants. The scant population of the Southwest bore the mark of centuries-old Catholic missions; heavy immigration from Mexico was decades in the future.

Although their numbers would not skyrocket until the early decades of the twentieth century, Jews, the most urban of all the country's immigrants, also began to establish a larger presence. No city could boast two synagogues until an Ashkenazic synagogue appeared in Philadelphia in 1802. But between 1800 and 1850, while the world population of Jews doubled, the U.S. population increased twenty-five-fold, from 2,000 to 50,000. It then trebled to 150,000 in the following ten years, before America's internal war temporarily withered large-scale immigration. These new immigrants were largely from Germany, and they brought the seeds of reform and conflict with the descendents of Orthodox colonial Jews.

In the midst of such demographic, political, or religious tensions, the West served as an escape valve. About half of all nineteenth-century immigrants moved west. The region was also receptive to innovation, as the future history of California would demonstrate. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, to choose a more specific example, came from Germany with new ideas

displeasing to the Orthodox who preceded him. He saw in American transportation and communication revolutions the opportunity – the obligation – to enter into the West (today's Midwest). There he found freedom to adapt to American culture and the contemporary world, to foster ideas embodied in Reform Judaism (for example, family pews in the synagogue, a mixed-gender choir, confirmation, and counting women when forming a religious quorum). He saw in America's interior a fresh opportunity for Jewish independence and education and the formation of a national organization. His decades-long efforts, especially after moving to Cincinnati, bore influential fruit in the years following the Civil War, with the establishment of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1873) and Hebrew Union College (1875).

REGIONS

Denominationalism's significance may seem obscure in a twenty-first-century America where skepticism rises, where "unaffiliated" is among the fastest growing of all "religious" categories, where religious individualism is celebrated, where denominational switching is casual, where the very concept "denomination" is in retreat, and where scholars emphasize other dimensions of religious life. Similarly, the reality or relevance of cultural and religious "regions" may be hard to ascertain in a country seemingly homogenized by modern mobility and mass communication.

Acknowledging the importance of these trends and of magic, popular religion, and the many other aspects of religious life that may be indifferent to formal organizations, it remains true that one does not comprehend religion in the United States without an appreciation for the unfolding of the nation's denominationally informed zones during the nineteenth century. Beneath the obvious radical diversity of the religious present, patterns laid down in former years endure: a base topped by layers that condition the current shifting mix. "Denominationalism" originated as a common term, in fact, to describe a novel circumstance in the history of the world. As the Revolutionary War wound down, many religious bodies had sought to organize themselves into national churches. Disestablishment at the federal and, increasingly, state levels meant that these churches held no privileged relationship to the civil government. Instead, they were voluntary associations of individuals who shared a common purpose and, sometimes loosely, a system of belief. To name them (*de nomina*) came to imply acknowledgment of their more or less equal footing before the law.

Looking back from the twenty-first century, denominational loyalties can be seen to have been eroding for decades, especially among younger

Americans. This is an important trend that has preoccupied pollsters and scholars, but it can, nonetheless, be exaggerated. It is a mistake to confuse the most recent layer with the whole. Scores of millions of Roman Catholics, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mormons, Methodists, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Reform and Orthodox Jews, and others intend to remain what they are. Moreover, the erratically persistent restructuring of American religion, sometimes non- or trans- or anti-denominational, often results in new associations that assume denominational or quasi-denominational traits. For these reasons, regionalism in its denominational inflections between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars is worthy of attention. Although it is too complex to treat here in detail, something of the regional distinctions can be suggested by noting shifts in the largest religious bodies in several spheres.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, the Congregational establishment remained the largest denomination everywhere in New England, save in two counties in Rhode Island. This preponderance reached south to Long Island, where the Congregational churches in the Connecticut-planted towns of Southold and Southampton would become Presbyterian within a few years. The largest church body in New York City was Presbyterian, the church of Scottish and Scots-Irish immigrants as well as of transplanted New Englanders. The old Dutch Reformed strongholds had receded north toward Albany and southward toward Bergin County, New Jersey.

The former Middle Colonies boasted more diversity. New Jersey retained something of the earlier patterns of West Jersey, whose largest group was the Quakers, and East Jersey, with its transplanted New England Congregationalists, now turned Presbyterian. The Quaker strength remained in the original counties of southeastern Pennsylvania, but was by this time challenged in Philadelphia and elsewhere by Lutherans, who predominated from much of Pennsylvania Dutch country down into Maryland and Virginia. Sectarian diversity thrived among the Germans of Pennsylvania, where Lutherans shared church buildings with the German Reformed. The frontier settlements of the Scots-Irish meant Presbyterian predominance in the backcountry of Pennsylvania and in much of Virginia and the Carolinas. Anglicans-become-Episcopalians remained strong in the old settlements of the Tidewater South, but had given way to Baptist and Presbyterian dominance in the Piedmont and mountain areas. Quakers retained their strength in pockets of North Carolina and Georgia. Vestiges of old Catholic Maryland held on, and the Methodists, barely emerging as institutionally independent of their Anglican origins, were the largest body in only a half dozen counties of the southern Delmarva Peninsula in Maryland and Delaware. In brief, the heirs of Puritans held sway in New England, the weakened heirs of Anglicanism in the tidewater South,

with Presbyterians and Baptists contending to dominate the nation's back-country, except for Lutheran country in eastern Pennsylvania and northern Virginia, and pockets of Quaker dominance in south Jersey, southern Pennsylvania, and the Carolinas.

The new century dawned, and the young country stirred with opportunity – with one eye on the West. Congregationalists moved into New York and into the "New Connecticut" of the Ohio Western Reserve, only to have many of their churches turn Presbyterian as the Plan of Union worked its effect. The "Presbygational" predominance achieved by the joint efforts of these transplanted partners, however, faded before two forces. The first of these was the Baptist farmer-preachers, that is, preachers unburdened by ministerial training and high education, who preached on the side while earning their living like those to whom they preached. Hearers, in turn, related easily both to a simplified, accessible, personalized gospel and to those from whom they heard it.

The second ascendant force was the Methodist circuit riders, archetypified by Peter Cartwright. At age sixteen, Cartwright had been converted at the famous Kentucky Cane Ridge camp meeting of 1801. His unwavering response helped further ignite the Second Great Awakening through his preaching: a simple message of free salvation and exacting ethical conduct conveyed with wit, rugged speech, and great emotional power. Cartwright personally baptized twelve thousand souls, and for decades traveled through all obstacles in the backwoods circuits assigned him, reaching those unavailable to more settled churches and less persistent preachers. Despite helping to found and support colleges, Cartwright scorned formal theological training as a requirement for ministry, proclaiming that Methodists could set things on fire while other clergy were busy collecting degrees and negotiating their salaries.[10]

With such advantages as these, the Baptists and Methodists by 1830 had conquered Protestant America, establishing, for example, an enduring evangelical culture in the South. But almost everywhere their growth was phenomenal. Even in upstate New York they predominated in half the counties. One or the other was also the largest denomination in all but a handful of counties in traditional Anglican country, in Tidewater Virginia and southward, even into Florida. By then, the Lutheran belt had contracted south of Pennsylvania, ground similarly surrendered to Methodists. Restorationist Christians grew into the largest body of devotees in eastern Kentucky and counties in Ohio, while, back east, Unitarians had eclipsed the Congregationalists in Boston.

[10] W. P. Strickland, ed., *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher* (Cincinnati, 1856), 181.

Migrating from Maryland, Roman Catholics enjoyed a considerable presence in Kentucky, in the hills south of Louisville. Later there, in 1848, forty-four Trappist monks from the Abbey of Melleray in western France would establish a new home, the Abbey of Gethsemani, near Bardstown, a century before the writings of Thomas Merton turned it into America's most famous monastery. Catholic immigrants streamed into the Northeast and to the nation's perimeters, including southern Louisiana and northward along the Mississippi River, confirming Lyman Beecher's anxiety, uttered in his famous *A Plea for the West*, about the threat of Roman Catholics on the frontier. Apart from this new Catholic strength, however, and acknowledging much religious change, commotion, and parachurch activity, the Methodists and Baptists were the only denominations that could boast an unambiguous national geographic expansion. Indeed, outside the Northeast, the largest denominations in three-quarters of the nation's counties were either Methodists or Baptists.

This pattern etched itself deeply and continued beyond the Civil War, as states and territories assumed their modern boundaries. To be sure, a grand religious miscellany clamored beneath the surface. Small, experimental groups continued to rise and fall and rise. The Mormons worked to secure their latest promised land in the Rocky Mountains, into which seventy thousand migrants would trudge before a continental rail offered relief. New England's Universalists moved into New York, the Quakers to Indiana, and the Amish to Ohio. Disciples moved to Missouri, Lutherans moved to Minnesota, Presbyterians moved everywhere, and Episcopalians disappeared – at least as the predominant regional presence they had been in the colonial coastal South. But just as twenty-first-century America must come to terms with being at once history's most religiously complex nation *and* overwhelmingly Christian, so nineteenth-century America was radically and increasingly diverse yet predominantly evangelical. Religiously, the Age of Jackson and the ensuing years composed the Methodist Age. The Methodist Age, in turn, was supported by Baptists, challenged by immigrant Catholics, and interwoven with a patchwork of diverse religious commitments. And the whole was quite a turn from the colonial preponderance of Anglicans and the heirs of Puritans, reigning atop their own era's sometimes contentious multiplicity.

On the twenty-fourth of May 1844, in Washington, D.C., Professor Samuel Morse demonstrated his new invention, the telegraph. He did so before an august and expectant collection of national leaders seated in the chambers of the U.S. Supreme Court, and he had chosen his four-word message with care. Morse conjured the Book of Numbers (23:23) from the King James Bible as he tapped out his question-statement: "What hath God wrought." He meant to transpose a biblical marveling at Israel's

might to wonder at his own invention, destined to change the world. But he might, with equal plausibility, have applied the words to the stunning shifts in the religious composition of his expanding nation.

In the years between the Revolutionary War that enabled the formation of the country and the Civil War that nearly dissolved it, a metamorphosis occurred. The entwined causes and strands of this great religious change included the nation's surging geographical expansion, its novel political freedoms that inspired experimentation, the consequent rise of new religions and populist exuberance, and a flood of migration and immigration. By such forces as these, a continent, a nation, and its religion had been transformed.

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THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES, 1790–1865

PETER J. THUESEN

On 15 August 1790, American history was made in an unlikely corner of
southern England, at an estate owned by a prominent family of Catholic
dissenters. Though old British penal laws still officially prohibited public
celebrations of the Mass, a crowd packed the Chapel of St. Mary's at Lulworth
Castle to receive the sacrament and witness the consecration of John Carroll
as the first Catholic bishop to the United States. Born into Maryland's
landed gentry and schooled among English refugees in France, Carroll
became the superior of Rome's missions in the infant American nation in
1784 and quickly distinguished himself as an energetic administrator. In
his new role as bishop of Baltimore, a diocese effectively coterminous with
the thirteen original United States, he was in charge of perhaps thirty-
five priests in widely scattered parishes, many of them in locales formerly
hostile to "papists." Such hostility had once been evident in Boston, for
example, where a small Catholic congregation by 1790 was gaining Irish
parishioners. In 1732, when the rumor spread that a Catholic cleric was
in town to celebrate a St. Patrick's Day mass, Governor Jonathan Belcher
invoked the local antipriest law in dispatching the Suffolk County sher-
iff on a futile house-to-house search. Decades later in New York, the old
canard of a Romanist fifth column found new life in anti-Catholic attacks
by the Federalist newspaper *Gazette of the United States* (1789), prompting
Carroll to rebut that Catholics were not enemies of religious liberty.[1] Such
incidents were only a foretaste of the much more virulent attacks Catholics
would endure over the next century as successive waves of immigration

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[1] On Carroll's consecration and the makeup of his diocese, see Peter Guilday, *The Life
and Times of John Carroll, Archbishop of Baltimore (1735–1815)* (New York, 1922), 373,
386–7; and Annabelle M. Melville, *John Carroll of Baltimore: Founder of the American
Catholic Hierarchy* (New York, 1955), 113–18. On the first Catholic congregation in
Boston and the earlier priest scare, see Thomas H. O'Connor, *Boston Catholics: A History of
the Church and Its People* (Boston, 1998), 9, 15. Carroll's reply to the *Gazette* is in *The John
Carroll Papers*, ed. Thomas O'Brien Hanley, 3 vols. (Notre Dame, 1976), 1: 365–8.

propelled the Catholic Church to becoming the largest denomination in the United States, eclipsing the numerically dominant but denominationally divided Protestants.[2]

Catholicism's later success story was scarcely imaginable in Carroll's day, but his consecration was an important milestone. It gave Catholics an official voice in the United States for the first time and raised Catholicism's profile in the competition of faiths unleashed by the new nation's constitutional system. Catholics were not the only beneficiaries of the American experiment in religious liberty. Two days after Carroll became a bishop, President George Washington visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, and declared to the Jewish congregation that in America, "[E]very one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid." For centuries, Jews in Europe had suffered the wrath of Christians who regarded them as Christ killers; indeed, Newport's Sephardic Jews were descendants of those expelled from Spain in 1492. Washington assured the Newport community that the United States "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."[3]

Thus in the space of less than a week in 1790, Catholics and Jews had symbolic coming-out parties, joining the nation's majority Protestants in the public arena. The following year, the First Amendment to the Constitution made clear that the United States was abandoning – in theory, if not always in practice – the European model of state churches and legal disabilities for religious minorities: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The separation of church and state had an important consequence for religious controversies in the period 1790–1865. Whereas religious strife in the English mother country and in colonial British America had often centered on the legal boundaries of nonconformity, American religion after 1791 became an unfettered marketplace of competing theological claims. Not only did Protestants, Catholics, and Jews contend with each other over how to get right with God, but they also debated vigorously within their own camps about issues of momentous theological consequence.

Many Protestant clergy at first feared that the removal of state support for the churches would cause religion to wither and die. The prominent Connecticut minister Lyman Beecher (1775–1863), for example, recalled his "great depression and suffering" at the disestablishment of the Congregational churches in his state. Yet he came to regard disestablishment

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[2] Scholars disagree on the dating of this demographic milestone. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, 1992), 110–15.

[3] Quoted in Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 39.

as "the best thing that ever happened" to religion because it unleashed the zeal of the people.[4] His daughter Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–96) captured the resulting cacophony of doctrinal discussions in her novel *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), which depicts New England farmers debating theology "in intervals of plough and hoe."[5] Stowe only slightly exaggerated the ubiquity of theological argumentation, which thrived amid the advent of cheap printing technologies and the resulting proliferation of religious publications in the early republic.[6] A freewheeling culture of religious debate was born, and it engendered controversies on multiple fronts. Three of these arenas of conflict will be explored in this essay: the Bible, Calvinism, and liturgy. Though the cultural dominance of Protestantism shaped all three of the debates in question, the rise of Catholicism and Judaism – and new traditions such as Mormonism – indelibly imprinted American religion during the antebellum period, foreshadowing the even greater diversity of faiths in the twenty-first century.

THE BIBLE AS BATTLEGROUND

In the denominational free-for-all that ensued in the wake of disestablishment, the Bible proved the most enduring source of controversy. During the colonial era, Protestants of various stripes – Puritans in New England, Dutch Reformed in New Netherland, Anglicans in the Chesapeake, Baptists in the backcountry – all subscribed to the Reformation notion that faithful allegiance to scripture was the antidote to the "invented" traditions and superstitions of Catholicism. So thoroughly did this biblicism color early American religious culture that when Catholics gained a foothold in Maryland, they were immediately put on the defensive by the surrounding Protestants, who had long equated papal Rome with the Antichrist. After the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688–89, Protestants seized control of Lord Baltimore's colony and made Anglicanism the established church, subjecting Catholics to legal penalties through much of the eighteenth century. This was the context of a famous pamphlet war in 1784–85 between John Carroll and his one-time fellow Jesuit and distant relative Charles Wharton, a convert to Anglicanism who became an Episcopal clergyman. Their debate, published in full by

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[4] Quotations from Lyman Beecher's autobiography, as excerpted in *Church and State in American History: Key Documents, Decisions, and Commentary from the Past Three Centuries*, ed. John F. Wilson and Donald L. Drakeman, 3rd ed. (Boulder, 2003), 87.

[5] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing*, ed. Susan K. Harris (New York, 1999), 194.

[6] For an overview, see David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York, 2004).

Wharton in 1817, typified the Bible's central role in the ongoing polem-
ics between Catholics and Protestants.

Wharton reiterated a Protestant claim, common since the sixteenth cen-
tury, that the Bible is a self-interpreting rule of faith that requires no magis-
terial authorities for its explication. "Your religion," he wrote, addressing
his one-time fellow Catholics, "is the doctrine of the council of Trent....
I rely solely upon the authority of God's word, which, as St. Chrysostom
assures us, 'expounds itself, and does not suffer the reader to err.'" Carroll
fired back that Wharton falsely assumed that the doctrines of Trent and
of scripture were in conflict. Moreover, Carroll argued, church tradition
established the boundaries of the biblical canon in the first place, "separat-
ing the true and genuine books of scripture from those which are false or
corrupted." As for the premise that scripture is self-interpreting, Carroll
marshaled another quotation from Chrysostom in which the church father
urged Bible readers to seek out a wise teacher when they encountered dif-
ficult or obscure passages. Such obscurities, Carroll added, can be found in
"almost every book of holy writ." The Protestant reformers unwittingly
proved the point, he insisted, in their failure to agree on the meaning of
Christ's ostensibly simple words, "This is my body," in the institution of
the Lord's Supper.[7]

Wharton's line of reasoning – that true religion is based on the plain sense
of scripture, uncorrupted by later scholastic subtleties – anticipated two
religious themes that, though pervasive in the early republic, went against
the hierarchical, sacerdotal vision of both Anglicans and Catholics. The first
theme, rooted in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment,
was a sense of confidence in individual judgment over inherited tradition.
Exemplars of this attitude include the English freethinker John Toland
(1670–1722), who, in *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), castigated the
priests and theologians who, for centuries, had shrouded the plain message
of the gospel with "Litigious Disputes and vain Subtilties," enthroning
themselves as the sole interpreters of the faith. True religion, in his view,
was characterized by simplicity – the "noblest Ornament of the Truth."[8]
The second theme, rooted in Renaissance humanism and Reformation bib-
licism, was an emphasis on the recovery of ancient sources, especially the
Bible. This biblical primitivism, expressed in the Protestant rallying cry

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[7] Charles H. Wharton, *A Letter to the Roman Catholics of the City of Worcester, from the Late
Chaplain of That Society* (1784), 38, and John Carroll, *An Address to the Roman Catholics of
the United States of America* (1784), 112–16; both in *A Concise View of the Principal Points
of Controversy between the Protestant and Roman Churches* (New York, 1817). Carroll's full
Address also appears in Hanley, ed., *John Carroll Papers*, 82–144.

[8] John Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious; or, A Treatise Shewing, That There Is Nothing in
the Gospel Contrary to Reason, nor Above It* (London, 1696), 160–1.

of *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), looked to the Bible as the pure standard from which later religion was said to have deviated.[9] The combination of these two themes proved a powerful source of religious creativity and controversy as various groups drew widely divergent conclusions from the same Enlightenment-inspired, primitivist logic.

Deists, for example, tended to see the parables of Jesus as the biblical gold buried in the dross of later doctrines. Deism's heyday in elite culture coincided with the birth of the American republic and was especially evident in the thought of the nation's third president, Thomas Jefferson. Like Toland, Jefferson maintained that the "incomprehensible jargon" of the theologians had to be swept away before Jesus' straightforward ethical teachings could shine through. When "we shall have unlearned every thing which has been taught since his day," Jefferson insisted, "and got back to the pure and simple doctrines he inculcated, we shall then be truly and worthily his disciples."[10] For Jefferson, unlearning doctrinal corruptions meant quite literally cutting them out of the Bible. With scissors in hand, he went to work on a pair of King James New Testaments; he needed twin copies so he could work with both sides of the printed page. In addition to excising miracles such as the Resurrection, which he dismissed as superstitious fables, he eliminated the letters of Paul (the "first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus") and the highly metaphysical passages in the Gospel of John. When he pasted the remaining portions in a notebook, he was left with a Bible containing teachings *by* Jesus, not *about* him.[11]

A similar back-to-basics impulse animated early American Unitarians, among whom Jefferson is sometimes counted. Both the Unitarians and Jefferson held to a unitary view of God in opposition to the church's traditional Trinitarian metaphysics, which Jefferson ridiculed as "mere Abracadabra."[12] Yet the earliest Unitarians differed from Jefferson in continuing to insist on Christ's supernatural powers, which they saw manifested in the miracles reported in the New Testament. In the Unitarians' view, Christ was not a preexistent member of the godhead, as Trinitarians

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[9] The best study is Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago, 1988).

[10] Jefferson to Timothy Pickering, 17 Feb. 1821, in Dickinson W. Adams and Ruth W. Lester, eds., *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels: "The Philosophy of Jesus" and "The Life and Morals of Jesus"* (Princeton, 1983), 403.

[11] For an overview of Jefferson's biblical redactions, see Edwin S. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God: A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson* (Grand Rapids, 1996), 123–31; and for tables of the New Testament passages, see Adams and Lester, *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels*, 427–38. Quotation on Paul ("first corrupter") from David L. Holmes, *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* (New York, 2006), 82.

[12] Jefferson to Francis Adrian Van der Kemp, 30 July 1816, in Adams and Lester, *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels*, 375.

taught; rather, his wonder-working power was given to him by God the Father. Unitarians such as the Harvard professor George Rapall Noyes (1798–1868), who, along with his mentor Andrews Norton (1786–1853), helped pioneer critical biblical scholarship in America, marshaled scriptural passages such as Jesus' words in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given me in heaven and earth," to argue that God *made* Jesus the Christ.[13] The Trinitarian idea of a coeternal "one God in three persons" had no convincing biblical warrant, according to Unitarian scholars. The most frequently cited Trinitarian proof text, 1 John 5:7 – "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" – had been recognized by scholars since the sixteenth century as an interpolation; and as early as the 1730s in New England, liberal clergy were publicly questioning the verse's authenticity.[14] By the early nineteenth century, Unitarianism had firmly established itself as a classically primitivist movement dedicated to the restoration of what it regarded as the uncorrupted gospel Christianity of Jesus.

The deist and Unitarian attempts to sweep away the supposedly unbiblical accretions of creedal orthodoxy provoked a major backlash from evangelicals. When the Congregational minister Timothy Dwight (1752–1817) became president of Yale College in 1795, he found that the deism of the "Tom Paine school" – Paine had just launched a broadside against the divine inspiration of the Bible in his *Age of Reason* (1794–95) – was rife among the students. Dwight hammered away against deism in his chapel sermons for six months, the result being that "all infidelity skulked and hid its head," according to his admiring pupil Lyman Beecher.[15] Meanwhile, the inroads of Unitarianism at Harvard prompted orthodox Congregationalists by 1808 to found the rival Andover Seminary. During the 1820s, Andover professor Leonard Woods (1774–1854) and Harvard professor Henry Ware (1764–1845) traded barbs in what came to be known as the "Wood 'n Ware Controversy." Woods accused the Unitarians of approaching the Bible with such a "bias of mind" that they willfully ignored passages suggesting that Jesus was divine as well as human. Ware retorted that the Congregationalists had suspended the use of their God-given reason in reading scripture: "We think it to be no honour to our sacred books to be

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[13] George R. Noyes, *The Gospel Exhibited: A Discourse Delivered Before the Second Congregational Society in Brookfield, November 7, 1831* (Brookfield, MA, 1831), 6.

[14] Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1966), 203.

[15] Barbara M. Cross, ed., *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1961), 1: 27. On Dwight's preaching at Yale in the political context of its time, see John R. Fitzmier, *New England's Moral Legislator: Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817* (Bloomington, 1998), 228–33.

ready to believe both sides of a direct contradiction, because we think that we find them there."[16]

Yet the most controversial brand of biblical primitivism in the early republic was neither deism nor Unitarianism, but a far more radical movement that emerged far from the elite circles of Jefferson's Monticello or the polite parlors of the Boston Brahmins. Mormonism looked less to the New Testament than to the Old Testament as the touchstone of its program of restoration. From the example of the Hebrew prophets, Mormonism derived its foundational idea: ongoing revelation. Mormons regarded their founder, Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44), a man of little formal education, as a living oracle capable of receiving authoritative revelations to supplement those in the Bible itself. The core of these revelations became the *Book of Mormon* (1830), which testifies to the belief that God speaks anew through his prophets in every age. "Because that I have spoken one word," proclaims the Lord in 2 Nephi 29:9, "ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another." In addition to recording entirely new scriptures, Smith invoked the power of prophecy to make a number of inspired corrections to the text of the King James Bible.[17] His prophetic claims provoked intense hostility from non-Mormons, eventually leading to his murder by an angry mob in 1844. But under his successor, Brigham Young, the Latter-day Saints made their famous trek to Utah, where they finished their restoration of Zion in all of its primitive purity, complete with priesthoods of male patriarchs who took multiple wives in imitation of Israelite practice.

To many non-Mormons, the restoration of polygamy merely proved that the Latter-day Saints had been duped by unscrupulous leaders bent on gratifying their own desires. Evangelical Protestants typically lumped Mormons together with Catholics as pawns in an alleged conspiracy to overthrow America's democratic institutions, which Protestant apologists claimed had been founded on free Bible reading. Lyman Beecher first perfected such fearmongering in his *Plea for the West* (1835), in which he claimed that the hordes of superstitious Catholic immigrants then filling the nation's cities were like "a train of powder between an enemy's camp and our own magazine." It was but a short step to implicating Mormons in the plot – a connection drawn by the ex-Catholic priest William Hogan (1788–1848), who equated the credulity of his former coreligionists to

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[16] Leonard Woods, *Letters to Unitarians: Occasioned by the Sermon of the Reverend William E. Channing at the Ordination of the Rev. J. Sparks* (Andover, MA, 1820), 150; Henry Ware, *Letters Addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists, Occasioned by Dr. Woods' Letters to Unitarians*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1820), 94.

[17] Robert J. Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT, 1975).

the naïveté of those who believed in the "ravings and prophecies of Joe Smith." "Would you allow their unclean hands to touch the altars of your liberty?" he asked his readers.[18] Ironically, Mormons had simply taken the Protestants' back-to-the-Bible mentality to its logical conclusion by treating scripture not only as a doctrinal source, but also as a prophetic paradigm. Just as Moses and the later prophets had received commandments directly from God, Smith received unmediated revelation – and thus became a biblicist both in theory and in practice.

CALVINISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Antebellum Protestants may have been united in opposing Mormonism and Catholicism, both of which seemed to enthrone a "pope" as the final arbiter of biblical interpretation. Yet even as they enshrined the authority of laypeople to interpret the Bible for themselves and declared the Bible a self-authenticating and self-interpreting rule of faith,[19] Protestants ran into trouble on issues where the scriptures are ambiguous. Of all the doctrinal questions suggested by scripture, none proved more contentious than those broadly classed under the heading of Calvinism. A Calvinist synthesis, of sorts, had been handed down from the colonial period in the form of the Westminster Confession (1647), a document traditionally accepted with only slight variations by Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and many Baptists. Westminster's theology was starkly beautiful in its logical consistency. All humans are born inherently depraved and deserving of damnation. God, for reasons known only to him, predetermines to save a few, thereby manifesting his mercy; the rest of humankind he consigns to hell, as his justice requires. To Calvinists, no other system could fully safeguard the gratuity of divine grace – the idea that God elects certain persons unconditionally, apart from anything he foresees they will do. God owes salvation to no rebellious sinner; the fact that he chooses to save some individuals proves the truth of the Reformation dictum of "grace alone."

[18] Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati, 1835), 107; William Hogan, *Popery! As It Was and As It Is. Also, Auricular Confession; and Popish Nunneries* (Hartford, 1854), 32–3. On the contours of Protestant conspiracy theories, see David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (1960): 205–24.

[19] John Calvin, for example, particularly stressed the idea that the scriptures are *autopistos* (Greek: self-authenticating, or trustworthy in and of themselves); he thus rejected the primacy of the church over the book. See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill and trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, 1960), I.7.1 and I.7.5: 74–5, 80.

This Augustinian synthesis, inherited from John Calvin and Martin Luther before him, made sense in the sixteenth century as Protestants protested abuses of the medieval church's sacramental economy. By the time of the founding of the American republic, however, Calvin's God seemed an oppressively arbitrary sovereign to many people in a nation that had just thrown off monarchial government. When the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence announced to the world that all men were "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," namely "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," this reflected Enlightenment assumptions about human self-determination that appeared to be at odds with the Calvinist debasement of human abilities. What historian Mark Noll has called the "unusual convergence of republicanism and Christianity at the American founding" led to widespread reassessment of three interrelated planks of the Calvinist platform: original sin, the bondage of the will, and unconditional election.[20]

Unitarians such as Henry Ware helped lead the charge against original sin. The Westminster Confession taught that the guilt of Adam's sin had been imputed to all of humanity, thus corrupting human nature itself. Ware found no evidence of this doctrine in scripture. He insisted that one of the chief proof texts marshaled by Calvinists, Romans 5:12 ("Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned."), proved only the "fact, which none will deny, [of] the universality of sin, that *all* have sinned."[21] Ware believed, moreover, that experience showed that humans are born morally neutral, capable of being led toward either good or evil. "It is not what they are by nature, but by habit; not what they were as they came from the hands of the Creator, but what they have become in the use or rather abuse of his gifts, and of the condition in which he placed them."[22] The Augustinian-Calvinist notion of original sin, in the view of Ware and other Unitarians, risked making God the author of human evil. "The mind naturally revolts" at the "repulsive" doctrine that humans are born innately depraved, Ware explained, because such an idea casts aspersions on God's character as a benevolent creator.[23]

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[20] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2002), 57.

[21] Ware, *Letters Addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists*, 31; see the discussion in E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, 2003), 202–3; and in H. Shelton Smith, *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin: A Study in American Theology Since 1750* (New York, 1955), 79–85.

[22] Ware, *Letters Addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists*, 24.

[23] *Ibid.*, 17.

Original sin was closely linked to a second Calvinist doctrine, the bondage of the human will, which posited that after Adam's fall, humans were free *only* to sin. To its opponents, this doctrine amounted to a grim fatalism. Calvinist apologists therefore expended considerable intellectual energy in the early republic in an attempt to show that God was not a cosmic despot who physically coerced his subjects to engage in evil. This academic project became known as the New England Theology, a lineage running from Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) and his New Divinity successors and featuring such nineteenth-century theologians as Andover Seminary professors Leonard Woods and his successor Edwards Amasa Park (1808–1900).[24] Central to this "Consistent Calvinism" (another nickname of the movement) was Edwards' distinction, developed in *Freedom of the Will* (1754), between natural and moral ability.[25] Under normal circumstances, people had a natural ability to obey God and repent, meaning that in the absence of physical or mental impairment or some external coercion, their minds and bodies were fully capable of turning to Christ. Moral ability referred to what people did by free choice of their wills, which was inseparable from the psychological inclinations or dispositions governing their choices. A person inclined toward sin lacked the moral ability to choose Christ. But because sinners' refusals to convert were entirely due to their own unwillingness, and not due to any natural inability, they were fully responsible for their actions. As one New England theologian put it, "sinners *can* do what they certainly *will* not do."[26]

This theological artifice begged many technical questions. Exactly how does the will relate to inclinations? And how do these, in turn, relate to original sin and the operation of God in inclining elect sinners toward Christ? Out of these questions, a rift developed in the New England Theology between the "exercisers" and the "tasters."[27] "Exercisers" such as Park, who

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[24] An overview of the movement, with primary documents, is Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo, eds., *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids, 2006). On Edwards and his New Divinity successors in particular, see Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, CT, 1989). Two older surveys deserve mention: the sympathetic (and wistful) account by Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago, 1907); and the less sympathetic appraisal by Joseph Haroutunian, *Piety versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* (New York, 1932).

[25] Paul Ramsey, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1, *Freedom of the Will* (New Haven, 1957), 34–47, 156–62.

[26] Daniel Fiske, quoted in Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1995), 121, and for Conforti's summary of natural and moral ability, 120–1. See also the brief discussions in Sweeney and Guelzo, eds., *New England Theology*, 15–16; and Holifield, *Theology in America*, 142–3.

[27] My summary relies on Noll, *America's God*, 282–4; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 143–6, 349–52; Sweeney and Guelzo, *New England Theology*, 70–1, 118–22, 171–86; and Bruce

were intent on emphasizing human accountability for sin, avoided talk of inclinations or dispositions, which seemed to let individuals off the hook, and maintained that the will simply *is* as a person chooses to exercise it. To "Old Calvinists" – those conservatives who refused to join the "Consistent Calvinist" bandwagon – this looked suspiciously like a denial of original sin, understood in the traditional way as an innately depraved nature or inclination toward sin. The "exercisers" insisted they still believed innate depravity, but understood it not as an inherited or imputed trait but as the freely willed "moral exercises" of persons acting under God's immediate power. This explanation, in seeming to make God the author of evil, struck some observers as no better than the notion of an imputed depravity, but the "exercisers" resisted any suggestion that God merely *permits* human sin.[28] Meanwhile, "tasters" such as Woods, who were intent on quelling the Old Calvinists' murmurings that the New England Theology was soft on original sin, preferred to speak of "taste" (or "feelings" or "heart") as a separate faculty governing the will. A person's taste is depraved by nature until God regenerates it, setting in motion the will's actions in conversion.

The New England theology, with its "taster" and "exerciser" factions, was but one party that developed among American Calvinists as they struggled to reconcile republican liberty with the inherited doctrine of the bondage of the will. Other schools of thought, each with its own logical shibboleths, included the New Haven Theology of Nathaniel William Taylor (1786–1858) and the Oberlin Theology of Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875). Finney, as the most famous figure of the Second Great Awakening, was more revivalist than theologian and thus reached the widest audience with what historian Allen Guelzo has called the New England Theology's "double vocabulary of radical free-willism and radical Calvinism."[29] Yet not all of the theological descendants of Jonathan Edwards believed that it was logically possible to reconcile the freedom and bondage of the will. Outside of the masculine preserves of the theologians and clergy, two of the daughters of Lyman Beecher repudiated the

Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, 1985), 55–9.

[28] God governs the moral world "by a positive agency, and not a bare permission," wrote New England theologian Nathanael Emmons. Just as Adam "acted freely while he was acted upon at the moment of his fall," other humans (including infants) are governed by God "both to will and to do." See Emmons, "Man's Activity and Dependence Illustrated and Reconciled" (1842), in Sweeney and Guelzo, *New England Theology*, 177–8; see also Holifield, *Theology in America*, 145–6.

[29] Allen C. Guelzo, "An Heir or a Rebel? Charles Grandison Finney and the New England Theology," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17 (1997): 75. On Taylor, see Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 2003).

Augustinian exegesis from which the doctrine of an enslaved will origi-
nated. In *Common Sense Applied to Religion; or, The Bible and the People* (1857),
Catharine Beecher (1800–78), an educator and social reformer, denounced
the bondage of the will as not only contrary to intuition and common
sense, but also the chief impediment to social reform. If only Augustine's
opponent Pelagius, whose freewill perspective she claimed as her own, had
"had the power and adroitness of Augustine," the churches throughout the
ages would have been focused on the right training of the human mind in
obedience to God's laws rather than on the curing of hopelessly debilitated
minds.[30] Similarly, Harriet Beecher Stowe lamented Augustinian theol-
ogy's dearth of intuition and common sense – qualities she identified as
particularly female – and ridiculed the New England theologians' attempts
to reconcile human free will with divine determinism. As one of the char-
acters in *The Minister's Wooing* observes of the Congregational minister, Dr.
Hopkins (based on Edwards' disciple Samuel Hopkins), "One Sunday he
tells us that God is the immediate efficient Author of every act of will; the
next he tells us that we are entire free agents."[31]

Outside of Congregational circles, Presbyterians endured similar strife
over original sin and the bondage of the will. By the time Catharine
Beecher was openly endorsing Pelagianism, her father was, as historian
Stephen Snyder has quipped, "safely senile."[32] But Lyman Beecher, who
had become a Presbyterian upon his appointment as the first president of
Lane Seminary in Cincinnati in 1832, knew firsthand the perils of ques-
tioning the Augustinian synthesis.[33] He had earlier acquired a reputation
for soft-pedaling the consequences of original sin for infants. At issue was
the Westminster Confession's controversial reference to "elect infants" –
a phrase implying that certain infants are *not* elect and thus (by default)
are destined for hell.[34] Some of Beecher's colleagues in the Cincinnati

[30] Catharine E. Beecher, *Common Sense Applied to Religion; or, The Bible and the People* (New
York, 1857), 300, 310; see also the discussion in Peter J. Thuesen, "The 'African
Enslavement of Anglo-Saxon Minds': The Beechers as Critics of Augustine," *Church
History* 72 (2003): 569–92.

[31] Stowe, *Minister's Wooing*, 45; on women's intuition, 17.

[32] Stephen H. Snyder, *Lyman Beecher and His Children: The Transformation of a Religious
Tradition* (Brooklyn, 1991), 60.

[33] Regarding Beecher's efforts to temper the harshest consequences of Augustinianism,
historian Marie Caskey's characterization of Beecher's mentor Timothy Dwight's view
is apt: "God was sovereign but his sovereignty was such as befitted republican forms of
government." See Caskey, *Chariot of Fire: Religion and the Beecher Family* (New Haven,
1978), 39.

[34] Westminster Confession X.3, in Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds
and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 4 vols. (New Haven, 2003), 2: 620.
Historian James Turner has aptly called infant damnation the "soft underbelly of

presbytery doubted his full allegiance to the Westminster standard and brought heresy charges against him in 1835. He was eventually acquitted, but not before promising to use the Westminster Confession as a textbook at Lane. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Beecher's ministerial colleague Albert Barnes (1798–1870) ran into similar trouble after publishing a controversial commentary on Romans. The Barnes affair ultimately precipitated a schism in 1837 between the advocates of strict confessional subscription (the faction known as the Old School) and the more liberal evangelicals such as Beecher and Barnes (known as the New School).[35]

Beyond the inseparable problems of original sin and the bondage of the will, a third and closely related issue, unconditional election, generated an enormous amount of controversy among antebellum evangelicals. Since ancient times, most Christians had accepted the doctrine of predestination in some form, but they disagreed over whether God elects persons for salvation conditionally (in view of their foreseen merit or faith) or unconditionally (apart from anything a person does). The unconditional view was synonymous with Calvinism, but also resembled the earlier perspectives of Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther. The conditional view came to be known as Arminian, for the Dutch dogmatician Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), but also bore affinities with the teachings of the sixteenth-century Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina and of much earlier figures such as John Chrysostom. In eighteenth-century Britain and in British America, Calvinist evangelicals such as the Great Awakening revivalist George Whitefield (1714–70) and Arminians such as the Methodist founder John Wesley (1703–91) engaged in lively pamphlet wars over the issue, creating a permanent theological rift within the emerging culture of evangelicalism.

By the early nineteenth century, the momentum was clearly with the Arminians, particularly the Methodists, who, according to one estimate, increased from roughly 3 percent of all religious adherents in 1776 to 34 percent in 1850.[36] Nathan Bangs (1778–1862), the head of the Methodist Book Concern in New York City, voiced one of their typical arguments, namely, that unconditional predestination rendered Christ a hypocrite and Paul a liar for claiming that God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). Bangs skewered the New Englanders who had been "initiated into the secrets of Hopkinsianism," a system he believed was rife with logical

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Calvinism" in nineteenth-century America. See Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore, 1985), 90.

[35] On the New School–Old School schism, see George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (1970; repr. Eugene, 2003), 59–87.

[36] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, 1992), 55.

inconsistencies.[37] Similarly, the more populist Methodist Lorenzo Dow (1777–1834) barnstormed across the country accusing Calvinists of talking out of both sides of their mouths: "You can and you can't – You shall and you shan't – You will and you won't – And you will be damned if you do – And you will be damned if you don't."[38] Indeed, more than any other group, the Methodists were responsible for spreading the impression that Calvinism was an unbending scholasticism that denied the simple "Come unto me" (Matthew 11:28) of Jesus' gospel promise. Richard Allen (1760–1831), founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first independent black denomination in the United States, echoed this view. The Methodists, he wrote in his autobiography, "were the first people that brought glad tidings to the colored people.... [A]ll other denominations preached so high-flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine."[39]

Successful as the Methodists were, however, they were only part of a larger anti-Calvinist backlash in the first century of the new republic. For all their differences, four uniquely American traditions born during this era – Stone-Campbell Christians, Adventists, Christian Scientists, and Mormons – all repudiated the seeming absolutism of Calvinism and insisted on the freedom of humans to accept or reject Christ.[40] Each group privileged its own interpretations of scripture as the antidote to the divine determinism of old creedal standards such as the Westminster Confession. The Latter-day Saint case is the most striking and must suffice as an example. Mormon scripture is replete with unqualified assurances of free will. Humans, like God, are free "to act for themselves and not to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26, *Book of Mormon*). Man is an "agent unto himself"; he has "moral agency" and is "accountable for his own sins" (*Doctrine and Covenants,* 29:35, 101:78). The Mormon canon also includes a thinly veiled attack on Westminster's implied doctrine of infant damnation. Mosiah 3:18 in the *Book of Mormon* declares that "the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls." Similarly, Westminster's doctrine of

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[37] Nathan Bangs, *An Examination of the Doctrine of Predestination, as Contained in a Sermon, Preached in Burlington, Vermont, by Daniel Haskel, Minister of the Congregation* (New York, 1817), 48, 52–4.

[38] Quoted in John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York, 1998), 18. On Dow and antebellum anti-Calvinism generally, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989), 130–3, 170–9.

[39] Richard Allen, *The Life Experience and Gospel Labors of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen* (1833; repr. Nashville, 1960), 30.

[40] For a discussion of all four groups, see Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (New York, 2009), 119–29.

limited atonement – that Christ's death was effectual only for the elect, whether infants or not – is confuted by 2 Nephi 25:16, which speaks of "the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind." (This verse once prompted Alexander Campbell, cofounder of the Stone-Campbell movement and himself no less of an opponent of Westminster's doctrine, to quip that "the Calvinists were in America before Nephi.") Even Joseph Smith's inspired corrections to the King James Bible reveal subtle anti-Calvinist redactions. Smith modified the favorite Calvinist proof text, John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," to read, "No man can come unto me, except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me." Likewise, Smith modified 1 Corinthians 1:24, "But unto them which are called," to read, "But unto them who believe," thereby replacing a predestinarian implication with a voluntaristic one.[41]

LITURGICAL DEBATES

A common thread in the controversies surveyed thus far is the essentially empirical temperament of much of antebellum religious thought.[42] The Bible was the great repository of observable "facts." Theology, in turn, was about chapter-and-verse citation, even if groups often disagreed on the interpretation of key verses. (Mormons over time would become similarly empirical in their use of scripture, despite the open-ended nature of ongoing revelation.)[43] As the Old School Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge (1797–1878) put it, the Bible is the theologian's "store-house of facts," just as nature is for the scientist. "We must conform our theories to the facts, and not make the facts conform to our theories."[44]

Yet even as evangelical Protestants enthroned biblical "fact" as king, other religious groups – Catholics, high church Protestants, and Jews – looked to liturgical traditions as their primary badge of identity. Though essentially nonrational and even mystical in character, liturgy is inseparable from theology and, in the case of Christians, from the question of sacramental efficacy – that is, whether churchly rites serve as actual means of grace. Liturgy has important consequences for material culture, including

[41] Quotations from Mormon scriptures and Smith's inspired translation discussed in Thuesen, *ibid.*, 126–9, 280n82.

[42] On the empirical method in American theology, the classic study is Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill, 1977).

[43] At least one early Mormon leader, Parley Pratt, spoke of scripture in terms similar to Hodge's; see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York, 1991), 89.

[44] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York, 1871–72), 1: 10, 2: 335.

architecture, clerical apparel, and even food ways. For many groups in nineteenth-century America, liturgy was also inseparable from non-Anglo linguistic and ethnic identities. Even in the case of English speakers such as the high church Episcopalians, their focus on sacramental ritual distinguished their religious language from the evangelical Protestant vernacular, which privileged preaching and Bible reading over ceremonial reenactment.

For Catholics, the Latin Mass was the centerpiece of a sacramental system that stressed the continual reception of saving grace through priestly intermediaries. Masses were considered efficacious not only for the living, but also for the dead, whose temporal punishments in purgatory could be shortened through the prayers of the living. The sacrament of Penance, normally involving individual confession and priestly absolution, also was an essential means by which the faithful could grow in grace. Yet for evangelical Protestants, particularly those most influenced by Calvinism, Catholic sacramentalism seemed to place far too much emphasis on the intercession of the institutional church and far too little emphasis on God's prior choice of his elect. For many Protestants, in other words, salvation was a matter between the individual and God. The Catholic sacramental economy seemed to leave laypeople at the mercy of the priests which, according to Lyman Beecher, resulted in the "arbitrary clerical dominion over trembling superstitious minds." Beecher contrasted Protestant "independence" with Catholic "thraldom" – a difference that, in his view, made Catholicism inimical to American democracy.[45]

Six years after Beecher leveled his charges, a leading Catholic prelate, Francis Patrick Kenrick (1796–1863), bishop of Philadelphia and later archbishop of Baltimore, entered the fray to defend Catholicism's sacramental system. The immediate occasion of his defense was an attack on high church sacramentalism by Charles Pettit McIlvaine (1799–1873), the Protestant Episcopal bishop of Ohio, whose book *Oxford Divinity* (1841) criticized the "Popish" Oxford Movement then gaining steam among Anglicans on both sides of the Atlantic. Kenrick blasted McIlvaine and other low church Protestants for thinking that they were justified before God by faith alone. "Presumption is too mild a term for this daring flight of human fancy," he declared. "It is madness, impiety, blasphemy." Christian joy must always be "tempered with holy fear." After the hereditary stain of original sin was washed away in baptism, a Christian needed to be continually fed by the Eucharist and absolved through the sacrament of Penance for sins committed after baptism. Protestants, in assuming that they were justified immediately upon believing in Christ, abandoned the progressive

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[45] Beecher, *Plea for the West*, 118.

idea of justification that was the moral strength of Catholicism. "It requires little discrimination to judge which system presents greater facilities of pardon, and greater incentives to sin," Kenrick opined.[46] He praised the high church Episcopalians for "employ[ing] language implying more dignity and efficacy in the Sacraments than their brethren of the Low Church are willing to acknowledge." The recognition of sacramental efficacy, he explained, detracts in no way from the mystery of redemption, but rather sets it forth more fully. "We are not left with mere signs, or tokens, or emblems; but in virtue of the merits of our Redeemer, we receive grace, and strength, and life, through rites divinely instituted to convey them to our souls."[47]

Kenrick's book indirectly highlighted the increasing centrality of liturgical and sacramental debates in the life of the Episcopal Church. Much of the strife stemmed from the ambiguities of the longer Anglican tradition. Anglicanism's sacerdotal vision of the church – Episcopalians and other Anglicans retained Catholicism's threefold hierarchy of bishop, priest, and deacon – naturally supported sacramentalism but left open the question of how "high" the church's rituals should be. The high church tradition dated back to Caroline England and the controversial archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, who once commented that "the altar is the greatest place of God's residence upon earth, greater than the pulpit; for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, This is my body; but in the other it is at most but *Hoc est verbum meum*, This is my word."[48] In the United States, advocates of this brand of high churchmanship, which stressed Anglicanism's superiority over other denominations by virtue of its apostolic succession of bishops, included John Henry Hobart (1775–1830), the bishop of New York. Hobart refused to cooperate with other Protestants in ventures such as the American Bible Society (ABS), founded in 1816, which he feared would encourage a lowest-common-denominator Christianity that ignored essential differences among denominations while elevating lay authority. He insisted instead on supporting his own diocesan Bible society, which distributed the *Book of Common Prayer* alongside of the scriptures. This ecumenical isolationism put him at odds not only with some of his colleagues in the episcopate, including the middle-of-the-road (or "broad church") bishop of Philadelphia, William White (1748–1836), but also with prominent laypeople such as the jurist and ABS supporter William

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[46] Francis Patrick Kenrick, *The Catholic Doctrine of Justification: Explained and Vindicated* (Philadelphia, 1841), 116, 119, 200. On Kenrick's view, see also Holifield, *Theology in America*, 429–30.

[47] Kenrick, *Doctrine of Justification*, 142–3, 159–60.

[48] Quoted in Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism, c. 1530–1700* (Manchester, 2001), 142.

Jay (1789–1858). Jay regarded the ABS as a providential means of enlarging Christ's kingdom, and he rebuked Hobart for standing in the way. He also criticized Hobart for seeming to put the *Book of Common Prayer* on a par with the Bible: "Why, if the scripture be the perfect rule, insist on the necessity of a *digest* to accompany it? Nay, more, contend for the connexion as indispensable."[49]

By the 1830s, however, a new more ceremonial style of high church piety – the transatlantic Oxford Movement – was beginning to revolutionize many Episcopal parishes. Begun in England by the Anglican priests John Kelbe (1792–1866), Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–82), and John Henry Newman (1801–90), who later converted to Catholicism and became a cardinal, the Oxford Movement revived many of the medieval practices and church furnishings that are familiar to Episcopalians today. Liturgically, the movement's emphasis on the doctrine of the Real Presence (the idea that Christ is really present in the consecrated bread and wine of the sacraments and not simply symbolized by them) led to more frequent celebrations of the Eucharist and to the revival of other medieval Eucharistic devotions. Architecturally, the movement's signature style was the Neo-Gothic, an idiom pioneered by the architect Richard Upjohn in Trinity Church, Wall Street (built 1839–46), and later cultivated by architects such as Ralph Adams Cram in New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine (begun in 1912). Interior church designs also featured an array of neo-medieval features, including rood screens (an ornate partition dividing a church's chancel, or altar area, from the nave), sanctuary lamps (a special candle left burning near the reserved sacrament), crucifixes, stained glass, and incense. Clerical vestments, meanwhile, became more elaborate, with bishops reviving the use of miters (the characteristic pointed hat) and copes (a special cloak worn over regular robes). In these and other ways, the Oxford Movement's influence on the Episcopal Church was so pervasive that by the 1930s, a century after Kelbe, Pusey, and Newman announced their position in a series of essays called *Tracts for the Times*, even the staunchest low church parish, according to historian David Holmes, had been transformed by the new ritualism and emphasis on the sacraments.[50]

Episcopalians were not the only Protestants whose ecclesiastical life centered on sacramental questions, especially during the antebellum republic. Lutherans had long defended the Real Presence against low

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[49] Robert Bruce Mullin, *Episcopal Vision/American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America* (New Haven, 1986), 56, and on the Bible society controversy, 50–9. On Hobart as an early high churchman in the mold of Laud, see David L. Holmes, *A Brief History of the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge, PA, 1993), 61–2.

[50] Holmes, *Brief History*, 111; see 103–12 for a discussion of the movement's influence.

church Protestants who would deny the objective force of the sacrament. Martin Luther firmly believed that Christ's words in Matthew 26:26, "this is my body," should be taken at face value as evidence of the actual reception of Christ by the faithful. In America, many Lutheran theologians clung to this belief almost as tenaciously as they did to their ethnic German or Scandinavian heritages. Yet in the early republic, as new pandenominational reform organizations such as the ABS, the American Tract Society, and the American Temperance Union contributed to a widespread millennial optimism about an evangelical united front, some Lutherans began to fear being left behind in an ethnic ghetto. Leaders such as the American-born theologian and General Synod president Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799–1873) argued that the Lutheran church should abandon doctrinal shibboleths such as the Real Presence, which he regarded as a barrier to cooperation with mainstream evangelicals on issues of social concern. He lamented that the nettlesome issue of Eucharistic presence, "a point not decided in scripture, and therefore, of minor importance," had so long divided the theologians.[51] Some of Schmucker's allies even regarded the wine used in the Eucharist as an affront to the evangelical temperance cause. The Hartwick Synod of upstate New York, a constituent body of Schmucker's General Synod, recommended that pastors use "unfermented liquid" for communion "if possible" – a suggestion that struck other synods such as Virginia as "unreasonable" and "unwarrantable."[52]

The Americanizing Lutheranism of Schmucker and his allies provoked a severe backlash, especially after they proposed a revision of the Augsburg Confession in 1855 that eliminated the unambiguous affirmation of the Real Presence. Among the most ardent traditionalists was the German-born C. F. W. Walther (1811–87), who founded the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States in 1847. Walther saw the Missouri Synod, as it was commonly known, as a haven from any rationalism that would water down sixteenth-century confessional dogma. Criticism of the Americanizing Lutherans also came from a high church Calvinist, John Williamson Nevin (1803–86), a professor at the German Reformed Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Indeed, Nevin regarded much of American religion as an antisacramental wasteland. Most

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[51] Samuel S. Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1834), 247.

[52] Hartwick and Virginia Synod minutes quoted in E. Clifford Nelson, et al., *The Lutherans in North America*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, 1980), 141; on "Schmuckerism," see 217–27. On temperance, see also Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, GA, 1988), 90–3.

Protestants, he complained, approached the sacraments with as little awe and mystery as they would "a common fourth of July celebration."[53]

Underlying the sacramental debate was the more fundamental question of whether the hard edges of traditional religion should be smoothed to accommodate what Nevin called the "modern Puritan" aversion to the supernatural. This question haunted Jews as well as Christians. Leaders on the modernizing side included Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900), who, after his move to Cincinnati's Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in 1854, became a leading voice for Reform Judaism through his weekly *Israelite* newspaper and other publications. Somewhat like Schmucker and the Americanizing Lutherans, Wise valued unity among his coreligionists more than fidelity to traditional doctrines and practices. He envisioned a common-core Judaism that shunned disagreements on nonessentials. Among the things he deemed nonessential was the belief in a personal Messiah; he also rejected kashrut, or Jewish dietary laws, which he disdained as "kitchen Judaism." Other Jewish leaders, however, insisted that traditional religion was still viable and necessary in the modern American context. Advocates for this perspective included Isaac Leeser (1806–68), the hazan (cantor) of Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel. Though not opposed to all modernization efforts – he translated Hebrew prayer books and the Bible itself into English, Leeser was incensed when Wise published a revised liturgy, *Minhag America* (1857), which eliminated references to a personal Messiah, bodily resurrection, and other traditional doctrines. By the eve of the Civil War, the warring Leeser and Wise, who in 1855 had briefly joined forces in a rabbinical conference designed to promote Jewish unity, mirrored an increasingly polarized American Judaism.[54]

CONCLUSION

The Jewish debate over the status of Old World traditions in the New World context is emblematic of American religion as a whole in the period from 1790 to 1865. The religion of the republic – a civic faith that blended a fierce commitment to individual liberty with a mythic celebration of a "new order of the ages" – inevitably transformed people's relationships to inherited traditions, thereby demarcating new denominational boundaries. These antebellum transformations included changes in nomenclature.

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[53] John W. Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (1846; repr. Philadelphia, 1867), 119. For analysis, see D. G. Hart, *John Williamson Nevin: High Church Calvinist* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 2005), 115–23.

[54] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 76–9, 96–8, 108–10, 145; Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, 2nd ed., rev. (Chicago, 1989), 37.

During the early republic, as historian Jonathan Sarna has shown, traditionalist Jews such as Leeser first began to denominate themselves as "Orthodox" to distinguish themselves from their more liberal brethren. The designation stuck and became part of the Orthodox-Reform dichotomy familiar today. That the Reform leader Wise also embraced the adjective "orthodox" – he once described himself as an "Orthodox Reformer" – only shows how contested such labels could be.[55]

Indeed, across the spectrum of religious traditions, the definition of "orthodoxy" – the term derives from the Greek roots meaning "right belief" – has always been a source of contention. Similarly, what counts as right practice has been repeatedly renegotiated. The theological controversies in the antebellum republic illustrate this ongoing renegotiation no less vividly than the struggles of other formative periods in the history of religions, for example, the first four centuries of Christianity, when everything from the nature of God to the nature of humanity was vigorously debated. And just as the settlements reached by ancient church councils and creeds hardly forestalled all future theological disagreements, the controversies of 1790–1865 were, in retrospect, merely a dress rehearsal for the battles that would engage later generations of Americans.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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[55] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 87, 97.

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RELIGION AND CONFLICT FROM
INDEPENDENCE TO THE CIVIL WAR

MICHAEL BARKUN

It is impossible to examine the place of conflict involving religion in America without first knowing how Americans perceive the role of conflict in their society. In fact, until recently most views of American history selectively read conflict out of the national story, with one signal exception. That exception was, of course, race, whose salience was such that it could hardly be ignored. From slavery to the Civil War, from Reconstruction through segregation and lynchings, from *Brown v. Board of Education* to the civil rights movement, conflicts about race cast a shadow over both the American past and the American present. All other forms of conflict, however, tended to be ignored or forgotten, made the domains of specialists or of the interest groups they affected, as if a kind of collective amnesia had settled over the subject. This was true of labor strife and ethnic conflict, and it was also true of religious conflict. The overriding desire was for a picture of the American past that emphasized harmony rather than division.

At no time was this stronger than in the 1950s, the years of the Eisenhower presidency. Religion was said to be good in itself. The president himself was believed to have said, "I don't care what religion you are, as long as you believe in something," although subsequent attempts to source the quotation have been unavailing. Yet given the spirit of the times – the frequent juxtaposition of a religious America with "godless communism" – the apocryphal quotation was entirely apt. It was also the era of a mass advertising campaign that told Americans, "The family that prays together, stays together," without indicating what the contents of the prayers should be.

If religion in the post–World War II era was viewed as good in itself, that view was supported by the academy as well as in the form of scholarship that ratified consensus. The historical discipline was dominated by "consensus history" in which the narrative was organized around an insistence on the centrality of fundamental values. It was not only the historical

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discipline that was built around common values. Shared beliefs and a disposition to ignore fundamental cleavages pervaded the behavioral sciences as well. There was a consensus version of political science in which politics was redefined as a set of minor disagreements about dividing the pie. It was supported too by sociological tracts, such as the enormously popular *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* by Will Herberg, who proclaimed the "three major faiths" as simply alternative ways of being American, supplanting the old ethnicities – the "hyphenated Americans" – now that native-born generations were replacing their immigrant parents. The faiths were to be considered coequal pillars supporting social and political institutions.[1]

Clearly, the ambience of the 1950s had no room for social conflict, and certainly no disposition to recognize conflict between religions, much less between religion and the state. The weight of both popular and elite opinion was on sources of common values, not on fundamental cleavages. Religion was the "cement" that bound people together, and differences of belief and institutional forms were glossed over in favor of the common denominators of monotheism and ethical norms.

But a break with this insistence on consensus was coming, forced by the social and political conflicts that erupted in the 1960s and early 1970s. Under the pressure of racial injustice, the Vietnam War, and the nascent women's and student movements, demonstrations, marches, riots, and sit-ins created a level of disorder not seen in America since the early years of the Great Depression. The climactic year was 1968, when both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy were assassinated. Shortly thereafter, President Lyndon B. Johnson created the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, chaired by Milton S. Eisenhower. The commission was to have a powerful impact on the shaping of the academic agenda concerning social conflict, for it sponsored a large number of academic studies about the history and dynamics of American violence, subsequently published under the title *Violence in America*.[2] This research, by its scope and with the weight of the commission's prestige behind it, gave to the study of American conflict a visibility it had never previously possessed.

Conflict in America had now become fashionable, and so had the study of it by scholars. Government and foundations wanted to fund research about it; students wanted courses that examined it; journals wanted to publish articles about it. *Violence in America* became a widely used college text. Within a short time, the study of American conflict became a respected

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[1] Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NJ, 1955).

[2] Ted Robert Gurr, ed., *Violence in America* (1969; repr., Newbury Park, CA; 1979).

and productive academic field, and what had previously been ignored or
forgotten was suddenly revealed.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN AMERICA

Once there was a disposition to examine conflict in America systemati-
cally, it turned out that there had been quite a lot. That was no surprise to
specialists, of course. Labor historians, for example, had long known that
America had had the bloodiest labor history of any industrializing nation.
Where religion was concerned, however, the new research was surprisingly
unproductive. It laid bare what was already well known, namely, that what
was most surprising about religious conflict in America was not how much
there had been, but how little. Unlike some previously forgotten episodes
that the new scholarship uncovered, such as widespread vigilantism, there
was little new about religious conflict to be brought to light. There had, in
fact, been a startlingly high level of consensus.

But there were also two major exceptions, both well known prior to the
1960s and 1970s: the nativist opposition, often violent, against Catholics,
that increased with the growth of Catholic immigration; and the struggles
against the Latter-day Saints, virtually from the group's inception, some in
the form of mob violence, but often with the tacit or explicit involvement
of government.

These situations raised several questions. Why was there not more con-
flict? What kept an increasingly diverse religious situation from spinning
out of control, leading to inter- and intrasectarian violence on a larger
scale? And if there was so great a level of harmony (or at least civility),
why, then, were Roman Catholics and Mormons the exceptional targets of
violence? Why did they not benefit from an ambiance that provided secu-
rity to so many other groups? And what eventually brought those patterns
of conflict to an end?

The resolution of these questions depends on identifying the factors that
influence religious conflict. In fact, the propensity for religious conflict in
America has primarily been a function of two variables, spatial distribution
and belief systems. To the first of these we now turn.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

America was religiously pluralistic from the beginning, although that plu-
ralism consisted almost entirely of a multitude of Protestant denomina-
tions, with a leavening of Catholics and Jews. Despite the overwhelmingly
Protestant character of antebellum America, the sheer number of separate
groups created an environment in which religious rivalries might well

have been intense. Indeed, it is often those separated by the smallest doctrinal differences who exhibit the most bitter enmity toward one another, a characteristic which in the secular world can be seen in the feuds among Marxist sectarians. Small theological differences did not in fact ignite major religious conflict in the United States, an outcome that may be attributed to a number of factors. One of the most important was the initial physical distribution of religious groups.

American religion was geographically segmented from the beginnings of the republic with, as we shall see, profound implications for the locus and intensity of religious conflict. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke have reconstructed the physical distribution of church congregations and members as they existed in 1776.[3] The results are instructive. Although the colonies that had just declared independence were not religiously homogeneous, denominations were sufficiently concentrated so that a denomination might enjoy a position of considerable dominance in one area, but might be virtually nonexistent in others.

For example, almost 99 percent of Congregationalist churches were in New England, which meant only token representation anywhere else in the country. On the other hand, there were no German Reformed churches in New England, as a function of immigration patterns. Of those churches, 62 percent were in Pennsylvania. Similarly, there were no Dutch Reformed churches in New England. All were nearly evenly divided between New York and Pennsylvania. Baptist churches were more widely spread, 30 percent in Virginia, a third in the Middle Colonies, 12 percent in Massachusetts, 10 percent in Rhode Island, and smaller minorities elsewhere. It was, after all, the plea of the Danbury, Connecticut, Baptists that was the stimulus for Thomas Jefferson's famous "wall of separation" letter. Virginia accounted for nearly 35 percent of Episcopalian churches. Maryland and Connecticut, with slightly more than 11 percent each, were the only other states that exceeded 10 percent. Quaker congregations were concentrated, as one might expect, in Pennsylvania, where more than 27 percent were located, but there were significant representations in New Jersey, Virginia, and North Carolina. There were some Quaker congregations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, but not in the rest of New England. Presbyterian churches, too, were concentrated in Pennsylvania, where one-quarter were located, with significant pockets in New Jersey and Virginia, but scarcely any in New England. Finally, Roman Catholic churches were almost exclusively found in the Middle Colonies, with none in New England and scarcely any in the South. The majority – almost 59

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[3] Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, "American Religion in 1776: A Statistical Portrait," *Sociological Analysis* 49 (Spring 1988): 39–51.

percent – were, of course, in Maryland, but there were numerous churches in Pennsylvania as well as in New Jersey and Delaware. The Jewish community at the time of independence was very small, perhaps two thousand, accounting for roughly .04 percent of the population, concentrated in seaport towns such as Newport, Rhode Island; Savannah, Georgia; and New York City.

This geographical distribution, however, did not remain static. If it had, denominations might well have come into greater conflict. As it was, populations were being increased by immigration and were moving west into territory previously unsettled by Europeans. Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow's mapping of religious groups in 1850 demonstrates how much had changed in the roughly three-quarters of a century since independence.[4] The Congregationalist base remained in New England where, if anything, it was even stronger, since it now had a greater presence in Vermont and New Hampshire. But patterns of settlement had also brought it into New York and western Ohio. The Reformed Churches had spread the least, although they could now be found in new areas of New Jersey and south-central Pennsylvania. Baptists enjoyed tremendous growth, especially in the South, but also in upper New York State, the area around Boston, and coastal Maine. Quakers, dealing with both schism and opposition to slavery, moved increasingly to Ohio and Indiana, and later to Illinois and Kansas. The Presbyterians had become a major and sometimes dominant presence in upstate New York and parts of western Pennsylvania and Ohio. They were also present throughout the South, especially in Tennessee and portions of Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina. There were now heavy concentrations of Catholic churches in northern and western New York, northern Michigan, western Pennsylvania, the Chicago area, and southeastern Wisconsin. By 1850, there were also significant Catholic congregations in eastern Massachusetts, eastern Pennsylvania, the New York City area, and eastern Ohio. Jews now numbered about fifty thousand, with pockets in New York City, parts of upstate New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, South Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri. Finally, the Methodists, newer figures on the American religious scene, were significant in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, coastal Maine, New Jersey, southeastern and southwestern Pennsylvania, Ohio, southern Indiana, and significant portions of the South.

What are we to make of these demographic transformations? First, they reduced, even if they did not completely eliminate, the sense that religious competition was a zero-sum game. That is, denominations clearly sought

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[4] Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York, 2001).

to aggrandize themselves by securing as many new members as possible. They might do so by converting the unchurched. Stark and Finke's data suggest that, at least in 1776, a significant portion of the American population did not in fact actively belong to a particular religious organization. However, the reservoir of the uninvolved might be readily tapped out, at which point, all other things being equal, denominations would then prey upon each other, each one's gains becoming the other's losses. However, all other things were not equal. In the first place, the population was constantly growing by immigration. Second, westward movement was producing areas that were relatively unorganized in terms of social institutions. Hence whatever affiliations settlers might previously have had meant little in their new, more fluid situation. With new worlds to conquer toward the moving frontier, denominations had less reason to fight one another in a literal sense, and more incentive to compete in an expanding religious market.

The shifting territorial boundaries had another implication: they offered the possibility of escape by moving ahead of settlement into some region beyond effective control. This was, as we shall see, most vividly demonstrated in the Mormon saga, where physical escape became a survival imperative. But there were also less radical variations.

Territorial expansion meant relatively cheap, available land, and that offered opportunities for religious experimentation. That was especially appealing to small groups with distinctive lifestyles or aspirations that could not be fulfilled within the majority community. As a result, intentional communities began to appear, many of them established by religious or quasi-religious groups. In a seminal essay, Arthur Bestor observed that a great burst of community creation took place in the first half of the nineteenth century in settled areas immediately behind the frontier.[5] These utopian communities were sometimes secular, like the Fourierists, but, like the Shakers, were often religious.

The intentional communities that proliferated were not immune from community hostility. In some cases, their doctrines and practices clashed with those of the surrounding society, as in the case of the Oneida Community's sexual practices. But their use of territorial boundaries and their aim of economic self-sufficiency tended to buffer them against external opponents, in part by minimizing opportunities for interactions with outsiders. Many of the communities collapsed quickly, but they did so not because they were overpowered by their external foes, but because they

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[5] Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663–1829*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1970), 230–52.

imploded as a result of internal stresses, such as insufficient capital, leadership struggles, factionalism, and the like. Those groups that survived longest were those such as the Amish whose distinctive cultures marked them out most sharply from others and who over time were able to negotiate a modus vivendi with governing authorities.

While spatial distribution helped minimize religious friction, it was, as we have seen, an imperfect mechanism, since the religious segmentation of American society was incomplete and groups often were compelled to live side by side. Where they inhabited the same areas, their coexistence was made easier by the peculiar phenomenon of the revival. These occasional spasms of religious excitement tended to move in waves over both newer and more settled areas, igniting in the overwhelmingly Protestant populations mingled feelings of guilt, repentance, and renewed commitment. A particularly concentrated period of revival activity before the Civil War – the so-called Second Great Awakening – took place between roughly 1800 and 1840, energized by such master evangelists as Charles Grandison Finney. When revivals occurred within communities with numerous Protestant churches, they took the form of transdenominational events that pulled in members of many congregations. When they ended, these congregations went back to their separate ways, but the emotional intensity of the revivals helped reduce the possibility for intense subsequent conflict among potential rivals.

The Civil War looms as a wall that seems to divide this religious history, but using the Civil War as a break point defining periodicity in American conflict does not always work equally well. It makes obvious sense where race is concerned. However, it makes much less sense for religion. In many respects, religious conflict before and after the Civil War is characterized more by continuity than by change. The forces that produced conflict before the war, such as the antipathy between Protestants and Catholics, were there in postwar decades. Similarly, countervailing pressures leading to consensus on values remained after the war was over. In the decades before the Civil War, the potential for conflict among major Protestant denominations was muted by cross-denominational ties. These took the form of what James Moorehead has called an "evangelical united front" made up of benevolent societies devoted to such common aims as temperance, tract distribution, and missionizing.[6] They drew supporters from among Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, so that the parochial concerns of each were tempered by joint ventures. But as war approached, the issue of slavery temporarily subsumed all others,

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[6] James H. Moorehead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War 1860–1869* (New Haven, 1978), 7, 16–17.

and it was, of course, along North-South lines that denominations divided, mirroring the split in the polity itself.

Religion functioned during the war, for both sides. Indeed, Lincoln himself, in his Second Inaugural, observed of North and South that "[b]oth read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other." One need only read *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* with serious attention to its words in order to grasp the degree to which religion was mobilized. As always, war was an integrator of societies, so that within the Union and Confederacy respectively, religious conflict was muted for the duration. But once the conflict ended, some old patterns returned. If they returned in any different form, it had to do with changes of scale, some enabled by the war, some that would doubtless have occurred in any case: a national government of increasing reach and effectiveness; the growth of a society, at least in the North, built on cities and industry; populations in those cities increasingly drawn from non-Protestant areas of Southern and Eastern Europe.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

Two types of belief systems are implicated in the likelihood of religious conflict. The first type provides a foundation for religious conflict by establishing conceptions of evil and identifying that evil with members of a particular group. Belief systems of this type often construct stereotypes of the evil believer that may be quite different from the rank-and-file religionist with whom most individuals are in regular contact, yet have sufficient emotional power to retain their hold even though they fly in the face of the facts of everyday life. In addition, such structures of evil often identify the target religion with a conspiratorial plan the aim of which is to destroy the world in which nonmembers live. The second type of belief system, quite different, interprets the social order in an inclusive manner that transcends religious boundaries. By constructing an ideology in which every faith has an equal place in the community, such belief systems make religious conflict far less likely by stigmatizing it as an offense against the social order.

The potential for religious conflict was built into the colonization of America, because those who arrived brought religious antipathies with them. Principal among them was the hatred by Protestants of Catholics and fear of Catholic power. These had been standard political and rhetorical themes in England, and not surprisingly, they remained so in colonial America, reinforced by the struggle between Protestant England and Catholic France for control of North America in the eighteenth century. However, those closest to the battle for French Canada, namely New Englanders, had no Catholics among them, since the relatively small

Catholic population lay farther south. Hence early anti-Catholicism was, as it were, an anti-Catholicism without Catholics, something that would change with emerging patterns of immigration. The greater the number of Catholics in the new nation, the more intense hostility became, although to a certain extent religious animosity and distrust of immigrants became difficult to disentangle. At its core, however, was the belief that Catholics in America owed fealty to a prelate in Rome. Yet while anti-Catholicism drew on old, European roots, a new species of religious conflict arose with the emergence of a new, distinctly American religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Although anti-Catholicism came with the first colonists in the seventeenth century, anti-Mormonism developed only with the spreading of Joseph Smith's message beginning in the 1830s. Yet there were curious parallels. Despite the radical theological differences between Catholicism and Mormonism, the stereotypes held by anti-Catholics and anti-Mormons were strikingly similar. Both emphasized the groups' secrecy. In the case of Catholics, the targets tended to be religious orders, whether in the form of the Jesuits as a secret society or in the form of convents as physical quarters designed in order to permit acts to take place within them under conditions of secrecy. As far as Mormons were concerned, the locus of secrecy was deemed to be the plural marriage household. In both instances, the behavior said to take place behind closed doors, out of sight of nonbelievers, was characterized as brutal, revolting, and shocking to the conscience, almost always associated with sexual misdeeds. Indeed, anti-Catholicism spawned and was intensified by quasi-pornographic exposés, the so-called convent literature that contained lurid descriptions of the sexual violations that allegedly took place behind the walls of nunneries. With remarkably few changes, these works were adapted to attacks on Mormon households where plural marriage was practiced.

Not surprisingly, such emotion-laden and sensational screeds raised the temperature of urban mobs. They also benefited from the rationalization that democracy demanded transparency, and therefore anything that could not be shown to the general public was somehow deemed to be incompatible with a democratic order. During the early days of the republic, the charge that secrecy was un-American was not merely directed at religious groups. The Masons were also targeted. Closed doors, instead of denoting the right to privacy, suggested nefarious and subversive activities that ought to be stamped out by the state and, should the state be unwilling, then by a militant citizenry.

The results are well known: the burning of the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, the largest Catholic institution in the country at the time, in 1834; pitched battles between Protestants and Catholics in

Philadelphia a decade later; the hounding of the Mormons in Missouri by a state government that threatened extermination; the murder of Joseph Smith by a mob in 1844; and intervention by federal troops in the Utah Territory in the late 1850s. While the escalation of hostilities in both cases was enabled by the existing stereotypes of evil, the effect of those symbols was amplified by the growth of both groups. Increasing Irish Catholic immigration in the one case, and the growth of Mormon converts and Mormon territorial claims in the other, appeared to rationalize irrational fears.

As David Brion Davis has argued, attacks on both Catholics and Mormons were justified by conspiracy theories about the alleged secret power each possessed and the diabolical plans each faith was hatching to subvert democracy.[7] While the heyday of religious conspiracism was the nineteenth century, the same literature about Vatican plots and LDS cabals that circulated before the Civil War can still be found on the Internet, some of it virtually unchanged. It is a genre of astonishing resilience. Yet despite their longevity and despite the violence they engendered, these conspiracy theories were never institutionalized in such a way as to make permanent a subservient status for either religion, or to make attacks against either religion respectable over the long term.

Now, it might be argued that such a conclusion can be drawn only by reading the past in light of the present. Given the generally benign American religious environment, it may be easy to forget that in the eyes of earlier generations, the outcome appeared more doubtful. Anti-Catholicism was, in many circles, considered respectable into the post–World War II era, and the Latter-day Saints are still considered by some to be members of a pariah faith. Nonetheless, the overall direction of public attitudes and official policy has been clear: the demonization of faiths that was part of the pre–Civil War milieu evaporated in succeeding decades, however slowly.

The response of Catholics and Mormons to persecution was not necessarily in the form of behavior that was likely to pacify their persecutors. Rather, as R. Laurence Moore observes, both groups reacted by emphasizing their own distinctiveness rather than assimilating.[8] Thus antebellum religious persecution led neither group to try to blend into the majority culture. Instead, they remained religious outsiders, emphasizing their own distinctiveness. While Moore has no wish to blame the victims or to transfer responsibility for acts of violence, he implies that had Catholics and

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[7] David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (Sept. 1960): 205–24.

[8] R. Laurence Moore, "Insiders and Outsiders in American Historical Narrative and American History," *American Historical Review* 87 (April 1982): 390–412.

Mormons acted differently, their enemies might have found less reason to attack. This argument may play out somewhat persuasively in the case of the Mormons, who faced escalating pressure until they gave up plural marriage in the late nineteenth century. However, it becomes far more complicated in the Catholic case.

Anti-Catholicism did not dissipate after the Civil War despite the acculturation of the Catholics who had arrived in the 1830s and 1840s. The reason is not difficult to find. The true explosion of immigration was still to come, in the 1880s and after, and these immigrants, unlike their predecessors, did not come from Northern Europe. Rather, they came from Southern and Eastern Europe, from Italy and portions of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. As the great chronicler of American nativism, John Higham, observes, by the 1890s what had been "[a]n initial distrust … swelled into a pressing sense of menace, into hatred, and into violence." The conjoined themes of anti-Catholicism and anti-immigration were pursued by an array of highly organized groups. Indeed, writes Higham, "No other xenophobia functioned in so highly organized a way as anti-Romanism."[9] Somewhat ironically, many of the organizations directed at the new immigrants, such as the Know Nothing Party, conducted their operations in extraordinary secrecy, mirroring the very clandestinity that they imputed to the Jesuits and the Vatican.

Jews were subject to many of the pressures that impinged upon Catholics, albeit on a far smaller scale. By 1830, the Jewish population had only grown to about 4,500. However, the revolutionary upheavals in Europe in 1830 and 1848 brought waves of immigrants – Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish – especially from German-speaking areas. Consequently, the number of Jews grew to 15,000 by 1840, 40,000 by 1845, and 150,000 by the Civil War.[10] On the one hand, legal restrictions that often existed in Europe – for example, limiting occupations Jews could enter – did not exist in the United States. On the other hand, anti-Semitic stereotypes traveled over the Atlantic as easily as had anti-Catholic ideas.

Despite the ease with which German immigrants acculturated, Jews still found themselves the objects of insults, discrimination, and occasional acts of violence. These were, of course, private acts, not those of the state. Rarely was the national government directly involved, scarcely surprising in light of George Washington's famous promise to the congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, that it would "give to bigotry no sanction."[11] Nonetheless,

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[9] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, 1992), 79, 87.

[10] Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York, 1994), 14, 24.

[11] George Washington, Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, August, 1790, http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/collection/other_hebrew_congregation.html.

there were exceptions, none more dramatic than General Ulysses S. Grant's infamous General Orders No. 11 during the Civil War. At the time, Grant was in command of the Department of the Tennessee, which included not only that state but also Kentucky and Mississippi. Under a cotton-trading system, licenses were required for those who wished to buy cotton. The trade was sufficiently lucrative so that unlicensed traders created a black market for the commodity. A minority of the illegal traders were Jews, but Grant, having internalized the stereotype of the Jewish speculator, was convinced that virtually all were Jews. His order, issued 17 December 1862, expelled all Jews from the territory of the Tennessee on twenty-four-hours' notice on the grounds that "[t]he Jews, as a class [are] violating every regulation of trade. . . ." In early January, a Jewish delegation, protesting the order, was received by President Lincoln, who demanded that the order be immediately revoked.[12]

A story, no doubt, with a happy ending. In fact, although the government was never to be a major source of anti-Semitism, the era up through the Civil War was a period of relative calm. With the surge in post–Civil War immigration, anti-Semitism escalated to a peak reached in the years of the Second World War, after which it began a steady decline.

With the exception of the Mormons, who were the targets of direct action by both state and federal governments, acts of violence against Catholics and Jews were undertaken by private individuals and organizations. The Mormons, attacked by mobs but also in the crosshairs of the state, constitute an anomalous case. They do so for several reasons. First, the most serious assaults on the Mormons took place in geographically marginal areas distant from centers of national authority, Missouri and Illinois, at a time when the national government was relatively weak. Second, the later confrontations were with the federal government when that government had become empowered, after the Civil War. Third, the early Mormon expectation of an imminent millennial kingdom established by Christ was confused by some of its critics with a program for the establishment of a theocracy by the church itself.[13] Finally, in addition to the divisive issue of plural marriage, a significant factor in escalation was Mormon control over territory. The prospect of a large religious enclave within a secular state raised grave questions about the constitutional order. There had, of course, been theocracies in America before. The Massachusetts Puritans come readily to mind, but that was in the colonial period with the sanction of the British government. After independence, the miniature religious organizations

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[12] *Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress: Order No. 11,* http://www.jewishvirtual library.org/jsource/loc/abe2.html.

[13] Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana, IL, 1993), 108–9.

often called "utopian communities" were in practical terms often theocracies, in the sense that religious norms governed all of the minutiae of daily life, and physical and social isolation placed them beyond the reach of government. However, these microsocieties existed on sufferance. If the state chose to ignore their strange institutions and practices, it was because their tiny size posed no challenge to the polity; with few members and little territory, they did not raise any significant sovereignty questions. But the Mormons were another matter. They were forced to deal with threats of extermination in Missouri, then were compelled to abandon the flourishing town of Nauvoo, Illinois, and finally faced the federal government in the expanding realm of Deseret in the Great Basin. Even in the absence of the polygamy issue, it is difficult to see how they and the United States could coexist without some radical redefinition of roles.

BELIEFS ABOUT RELIGIOUS COMITY

Beliefs systems that deal with religious harmony – both among religions and between religions and the state – fall into two broad categories. The first consists of legal arrangements. In the American case, these are well known, since at the national level they are embodied in the First Amendment, an evolving set of court decisions, and a small body of statutory law. The second gets less attention, but for present purposes is the more important. It consists of customs and usages that have grown up, usually without having been codified, concerning the interactions among religious groups and governing authorities. Where the first is formal and explicit, the second is informal and implicit. Because it is easier to see and grasp what is formal and explicit, discussions of religious conflict are often shaped by the categories of constitutional law, such as "establishment" and "free exercise." But to the extent that religious conflict inevitably involves "facts on the ground," such abstractions are often irrelevant, and it usually turns out that the play of informal norms is more important. There are, of course, exceptions in which the linkage between formal norms and religious conflict is clear. For example, when in 1940 the Supreme Court ruled in *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* that a school district could expel a Jehovah's Witness for failing to salute the American flag, the Court inadvertently set off a wave of attacks on Witnesses and their houses of worship (although, in fact, three years later the Court reversed itself in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*). In any case, First Amendment religion litigation was inconsequential before the Civil War. It was many years later before religious groups began to use its tools and, as the Mormons found, late-nineteenth-century courts were often unsympathetic to such arguments.

How might informal norms help to structure the nature of religious conflict in America? We might turn in this regard to a seminal 1967 essay, "Civil Religion in America," by the sociologist of religion, Robert Bellah.[14] His thesis was that "an elaborate and well-institutionalized" civil religion exists separate from the individual religions of America. It consists, according to Bellah, of a non-Christological God concept; a reading of American history in terms of divine purpose drawn from the Founders' concept of America as the "new Israel"; themes of death, sacrifice, and rebirth symbolized and articulated by Lincoln; and a belief that America stands under divine judgment, responsible to God for its conduct. In his initial statement of the civil religion thesis, Bellah argued that America was in the throes of a third stage in its development, catalyzed by the trauma of the Vietnam War. With the hindsight of more than forty years, it is now clear that no such third stage has developed. The civil religion was completed at the time of the Civil War, with Lincoln's rhetorical statements, his death, and the meaning extracted from them. Bellah was adamant in his insistence that the civil religion did not glorify America and was not simply American nationalism. In support of his argument, Bellah drew on two sources. The first was source documents central to American self-understanding, such as presidential inaugural addresses. The second was, in a way, more interesting.

These consisted of religious references and symbols in public settings – "In God We Trust" on money, invocations at civic occasions, "God save this honorable court" at Supreme Court sessions, references to the deity in presidential inaugural addresses, and so forth. These are curious precisely because they are anomalous. On the one hand, they appear to violate the First Amendment's establishment clause. On the other, there has been no disposition to declare them unconstitutional; quite the contrary. Attempts to do so have always failed. If anything, such references have grown over time. Bellah asserted that the civil religion was expressed through a combination of beliefs, symbols, and rituals. Consequently, it consists not simply of assertions about America and the deity, but also includes ceremonies in which the two are joined together in the public mind, as well as sacred sites (Monticello and Gettysburg, for example) which have become, if not places of pilgrimage, at least locations where the commitment to the civil religion may be deepened. While the civil religion thesis provoked controversy virtually from the moment it was proposed, it provides a compelling explanation for the long-term linkage of religion and politics in America, and for the generally amicable relationships among faiths.

[14] Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (Winter 1967): 1–21.

If Bellah is correct, then the civil religion may be seen as an inclusive creedal system that envelops the individual religions of America and in which almost all of them participate. In a later clarification, Bellah distinguished between what he termed "special civil religion," which was the sort he originally wrote about in 1967, and what he now chose to call "general civil religion."[15] By general civil religion he meant "the lowest common denominator of church religions." In other words, the general civil religion consists merely of some sort of ethical monotheism about which all major faiths might be able to agree. It would not, however, be built around the special beliefs about the religious meaning of America that gives civil religion a character apart from that of the individual faiths themselves. A particular religion might negotiate some sort of "opt-out" agreement with the state, in which in return for a promise to comply with the law in all but perhaps certain specified circumstances, the group would wholly or partially receive exemption from involvement in the special civil religion. The general civil religion, however, in Bellah's view provides "the indispensable underpinning of a republican political order," and therefore even those groups that choose not to participate in the special civil religion would presumably still play a supportive political role, albeit perhaps unintentionally. Such opt-out agreements have been negotiated by such groups as the Amish and Jehovah's Witnesses, although not without substantial litigation. For almost all religious groups, however, the civil religion appears to be nonproblematic. That is, they accept that involvement in it is part of American citizenship as well as part of being a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, or Jew in the United States. Those for whom it is problematic are, of course, nonbelievers, persons who subscribe to no God concept and whose numbers appear to be growing. Nonetheless, a strong case can be made that the civil religion developed early as a normative element of American culture and remains so. Despite the rise in the number of the nonreligious, America is still the most religious of industrialized nations, and it is reasonable to suppose that as long as that remains true, the civil religion will continue to be a significant element.

Insofar as religious conflict is concerned, the existence of the civil religion has a dampening effect. In the first place, to the extent that almost all the religious "players" are simultaneously participants in the civil religion, that common membership provides a cross-cutting allegiance that binds together even those who are theologically opposed to one another. Second, by implication, intense sectarian conflict would subvert the civil religion by placing the integrity of the polity in danger. The civil religion,

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[15] Robert N. Bellah, "The Revolution and the Civil Religion," in Jerald C. Brauer, ed., *Religion and the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1976), 55–73.

Bellah argues, is a "glue" that helps keep the society together. By linking the country to transcendence, it legitimizes political institutions. The more religiously diverse America becomes, therefore, the more necessary the civil religion is. It is acceptable if a few relatively small groups, such as the Amish, arrange to opt out of it, so long as the great majority of religious groups remain within the civil religion's embrace.

Yet it is also true that despite their acceptance of the civil religion, some religious groups have still faced hostility. It was not enough for Catholics and Jews that they expressed fealty to the civil religion. Bellah himself observed that "it was a long and slow process before Catholics and Jews were fully included in our civil consensus." They were, along with Mormons, as we have seen, still the objects of vilification, discrimination, and, occasionally, violence. Clearly, conformity to the civil religion might be a necessary condition for diminishing religious conflict, but it is obviously not sufficient. The historian of religion Martin Marty suggests what else might be required. He does so by borrowing a metaphor from William James, "the republican banquet."[16]

In originally hoping for an atmosphere of tolerance in philosophy, James wrote, "Why may not the world be a sort of republican banquet ... where all the qualities of being respect one another's personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time?" Marty, in seeking an image for "a compact of mutual tolerance" among sects, was drawn to James' metaphor, but still needed to give it conceptual "flesh." He did so by distinguishing between what he termed *ordering faith* and *saving faith.* "Ordering faith" consists of those beliefs that lead a polity toward a greater degree of justice in its governing arrangements. It thus overlaps with (although it is not precisely identical to) Bellah's civil religion. "Saving faith," on the other hand, "save[s] souls, make[s] hearts glad, give[s] people wholeness, or provide[s] them with the kind of identity and sense of belonging they crave."[17]

This distinction, according to Marty, is crucial to admission to the republican banquet, for one cannot be admitted without maintaining a distinction between the two. Those groups that insist of indissolubly linking their ordering faith with their saving faith will be denied a seat. The reason is simple: by failing to make the separation, they either cast doubt on their allegiance to governmental institutions or demand that those institutions be recast to fit religious requirements. The former path leads to legal noncompliance, while the latter suggests theocracy. Only sects that can live

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[16] Martin E. Marty, *Religion and Republic: The American Circumstance* (Boston, 1987), 53–76.
[17] *Ibid.*, 66.

with separate spheres of ordering and saving faiths can also manage the mutual toleration that the republican banquet requires.

Who, therefore, gets a seat at the table? Presumably, every religious group might not want one. Some groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, might wish to negotiate opt-out arrangements, believing the division between ordering and saving faiths to be too high a price. Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam also apparently has not desired a seat, although without negotiating a formal opt-out arrangement. For the majority, however, a seat at the republican banquet signifies valued recognition. R. Laurence Moore rightly termed Roman Catholics and Mormons "outsiders" in the early period of each group's appearance on the American scene. The distinction between "insider" and "outsider" is another way of distinguishing between those who do and those who do not have seats at the republican banquet. Yet both groups eventually were able to escape their outsider status, unambiguously in the case of Catholics, somewhat less clearly in the case of Mormons, for whom the process of taking a seat at the banquet has been an ongoing process. "When the Latter-day Saints ... dropped the offending practice of polygamy and muted their claims of the kingdom, they finally were welcome to the banquet as patriots – by fellow citizens who still remain as hostile as ever if they see Mormons in the act of being aggressive about their way of salvation."[18]

This process suggests that although there remains a religious market-place, it is not completely laissez-faire. That is, sects may proselytize, yet they are expected to do so in a reasonably decorous way. Although each presumably regards its saving faith as the best and perhaps the only path to God, it is expected to tout those virtues without casting too many aspersions upon the saving faiths of its competitors. And, it need hardly be added, rivals cannot be attacked through violence, dirty tricks, or other nonrhetorical means. The less restraint is observed in pursuing one's saving faith, the greater the risk to one's seat at the republican banquet. A seat at the banquet is the mark of having arrived, of being treated as equivalent in status to those faiths whose position is unquestioned, positions first held by the Protestant denominations of the colonizers.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AND AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

America has been religiously pluralistic from the beginning. Even though it was at the outset an almost entirely Protestant nation, the multiplicity of sects gave it a genuinely pluralistic character. Had they not achieved some measure of physical separation, their relationships might well have been

[18] *Ibid.*, 74.

far more abrasive than they were. However, relative separation, combined with the option of migration into a sparsely populated West, functioned as essential escape valves. Even as potentially rivalrous sects were spreading, the religious mix became more volatile by the admixture of increasing numbers of Catholics, the sudden emergence of the Latter-day Saints, and the eventual growth of a substantial Jewish community. As one looks back on the shifting demographic picture, what is most remarkable is the degree to which religious animosities not only were held in check, but in general declined over time. With the filling out of the West, the option of territorial escape for dissident believers was foreclosed to all but the smallest groups, a fact the Mormons learned at great cost. While racial violence and unresolved issues of racial conflict hung over American history throughout the twentieth century, religion never had the same divisive potential, even during the high point of nativism after the Civil War.

This is in part attributable, of course, to constitutional arrangements. The federal government stayed out of the business of supporting religion directly, either by the endorsement of a state church or through some form of direct subsidization. It is true that fine points in the interpretation of the "establishment clause" continue to be adjudicated, but for all practical purposes there was no denomination given a preferred position by the state. It is also true that the First Amendment did not bar the individual states from having established churches, which continued to be the case in some New England states into the early 1830s. The other side of the First Amendment's religion provision – the "free exercise clause" – protected small groups against at least the more egregious forms of discrimination where the federal government was concerned. Many state constitutions had similar provisions. The Bill of Rights itself did not become binding upon the states until the Supreme Court's 1940 decision in *Palko v. Connecticut.* Whatever the legal technicalities, what mattered was, first, the disposition of officials to implement constitutional protections and, barring that, the ability of victimized groups to go to court in order to vindicate their rights. This was an uncertain, time-consuming process that often required resources beyond the grasp of those who needed them, which suggests that attractive as many people find the body of First Amendment jurisprudence, its significance is probably secondary.

As the earlier discussion suggested, the primary factors in muting religious conflict were informal norms of consensus and tolerance. These may be differentiated as the jointly held beliefs of the civil religion and the commitment to mutual forbearance required to secure a place at the republican banquet. Neither was nonproblematic. Although Bellah attributes the earliest version of the civil religion to the Founders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, that and subsequent iterations

mattered only to the extent that they were diffused to and accepted by the population at large. That required not simply the dissemination of texts, but the development of common rituals, a sort of sacred calendar through which the beliefs stated in the texts could be made vivid in the lives of the people. This process required decades to develop, so that the civil religion was not immediately available as a mechanism to mute religious conflict. The potential for conflict had, therefore, to be already manageable in the absence of a fully formed civil religion, a requirement met by the issue of spatial separation discussed earlier.

The problematic character of the republican banquet lies in the fact that, like all real and figurative human associations, it is noninclusive. What were once fringe religions eventually come to be regarded as mainstream, which is merely another way of saying that they have joined the republican banquet. However, during the period when they were stigmatized as "fringe" or "cult" or whatever the pejorative label of the moment happens to be, they lie outside the republican banquet's norms of mutual tolerance and forbearance. That is, of course, the dilemma that presently faces the Muslim community in America and allows it to be characterized by other faiths in terms that would not be used against religious groups that already have, as it were, seats at the banquet. Muslims will eventually have their seat, but 9/11 has surely set back the process. Other groups are completely outside the republican banquet. There are groups, as we have seen, who have chosen not to participate in the civil religion, and to the extent that they have done so, they may also have in essence forfeited a seat. But not all opt-out agreements are the same. The terms Amish have negotiated are, for example, more radical than those arranged by Jehovah's Witnesses. Finally, there are those who either have no religion or are atheists or agnostics. They are outside the civil religion, because of the latter's God concept; and the republican banquet is alien to them, since it assumes a modus vivendi among religious groups. However, to the extent that those who do not associate themselves with any religion, whether out of disinterest or conviction, now account (depending upon the survey) for 10 percent to 15 percent of the population, they are themselves a significant interest group. There is obviously no way to judge the size of the nonreligious segment of the population for earlier periods when survey research did not exist and the rejection of religion would have been automatically stigmatizing.

The period up to the early 1860s put in place a framework that, while it did not prevent religious conflict altogether, held it within significant limits. This was a necessity in a society that was religiously diverse from the onset and was destined to become increasingly pluralistic with the passage of time. However, it was the very attribute of pluralism that made the system of relative religious comity possible. Religious diversity did

so by serving as the superstructure erected on the foundation of the civil religion and by offering a spiritual marketplace to serve the needs of a society expanding territorially and demographically. While this did not stop the targeting of those religions sometimes viewed as incompatible with American values, as befell first Catholicism and then Mormonism, the system's openness made it possible for both to cast off their pariah status.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE MAKING OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITIES, 1760–1860

CLAUDE CLEGG

By the time he escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1838, Frederick Douglass had had his fill of the religious pretensions of his erstwhile masters. In reflecting upon his twenty years of lifelong bondage, he would later, in his perennially popular autobiography, spare no words for his disdain of the variety of Christianity that he had encountered on American plantations. "I … hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land," he asserted in the appendix of his published memoir. "I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels." Further, he condemned the apparent hypocrisy of those who would dare instruct others in the ways of moral living and spiritual enlightenment while apologizing for slavery and rationalizing oppression as a positive good. "The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus." Even worse, such men denied the slave access to literacy and the Bible, just as they concurrently condoned practices that ruptured enslaved families at the auction block, deprived enthralled couples of the sacrament of marriage, and robbed bondspeople of the fruits of their labors. To assure his readers that his attack upon the turpitude of certain individuals professing to be Christians was not due to any native hostility toward the gospel, Douglass expressed sincere fondness of "the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ…." Nonetheless, his screed on the man stealer who would prostitute enslaved women or who "scatters whole families … leaving the hut vacant, and the hearth desolate" was merciless in its contempt for the self-serving manipulations of proslavery religion.[1]

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[1] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 1845, reprinted in Michael Meyer, ed., *Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Selected Writings* (New York, 1984), 121–2. Also see William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York, 1991).

The iteration of the Christian message that had drawn Douglass's ire – along with his characterization of the "pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity" that had informed his rebuttal – had long roots in the cultural and political landscape of antebellum America. Douglass's jeremiad reveals the existence of multiple versions of Christian orthodoxy, each serving temporal purposes that were ostensibly at odds with each other. However, his critique also highlights the elasticity and adaptability of a faith that, by the time his autobiography appeared in 1845, could speak to the interests, aspirations, and spiritual needs of both oppressed and oppressor, while still maintaining for many a core scriptural and practical constancy. To Douglass – a former slave turned ardent abolitionist – the suffering of Christ was for the cause of human liberty and spiritual redemption; it had nothing to do with legitimizing a value system in which one was urged to accept "men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members." Yet the perceived necessity for Douglass to point out such individuals serving in these contradictory roles starkly confirmed that not everyone agreed with his interpretation of Christian doctrine.[2]

This essay is principally about the contours and meaning of African American interactions with and elaborations upon North American Christianity during the century prior to the Civil War and emancipation. Moreover, it is also concerned with a number of elements of this encounter that are important to any investigation of black religious life during the late colonial, early national, and antebellum periods. Illustratively, the often creative, but no less improvisational, fashion in which blacks navigated and participated in the Great Awakening will be considered here, along with how they freighted the spiritual interiors of Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian revivals with their own Africa-derived hermeneutics. Given its enduring significance in the African American religious experience, the independent black church movement will also be examined. Launched in the political and social maelstrom of the American Revolution, these new institutions produced a talented array of black leaders who insisted upon articulating a black Christian exegesis that was first given voice at turn-of-the-century revivals. Much of their foundational theology was steeped in a rhetorical protest tradition that predated the republic and found fertile ground among nineteenth-century blacks and whites who harvested a robust antislavery movement from the seeds sown by the Quakers and others generations earlier. However, offshoots of this liberationist Christianity did not restrict themselves to editorial broadsides in northern-based newspapers or obligatory denunciations of human bondage in black churches.

[2] Douglass, *Narrative,* 121–2.

To a great extent, this newly sacralized abolitionism was as much the creation of slave rebels such as Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner as it was an ideological staple of the Quakers or William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*. In the hands of a Prosser or a Turner, the message was even more threatening to the social order since they and other insurrectionists were employing elements of the gospel without regard for white slaveholding opinion.

To counter these alternative applications of Christian doctrine, a full-blown movement to tether proslavery agendas to elaborate theoretical justifications for the institution accompanied the Second Great Awakening. In large part a response to the Turner rebellion and increasingly shrill condemnations of slavery emanating from the North, these sometimes complex renderings of black bondage as mutually advantageous to both master and slave became commonplace by the mid-nineteenth century. Notions of innate African inferiority and cultural backwardness remained cornerstones of the proslavery argument, but increasingly the language of paternalism and reciprocity characterized the southern position. This ideology suggested that a viable peace, even prosperity, could exist among bondspeople and their owners as long as each fulfilled their part of an implicit social contract. This proslavery nostrum was, of course, designed to soothe white fears about servile rebellion while assuring slaveholders that they, too, could be good Christians. Notwithstanding its intended purpose, this deception was routinely laid bare by the burdensome censorship that black religious activities endured after the Turner revolt, the sectional schisms over slavery that afflicted the major Protestant denominations in the 1830s and 1840s, and the gathering strength of abolitionist forces until the eve of the Civil War. If the military conflict of the 1860s dramatized how divided the country had become over the issue of slavery, the sectional, racialized wars of religion of the previous decades demonstrated just how much the struggle for souls and earthly mastery had become constitutive of a national spiritual crisis.[3]

In sum, this essay explores the creation of African American religious identities along the stretched seams of a Christian system of belief employed to underwrite a crystallizing Black Theology, an antislavery canon, a proslavery mythos, and a range of spiritual and intellectual worlds in between. While slavery challenged, contradicted, and compromised American Christianity in nearly every way imaginable, the religion also forged communities, cultures, and practices that were emblematic of both its resilience and capacity for ambiguity when applied to the unstable context of lived experience. One sees in it glimmers of the proslavery creed – so offensive to Frederick Douglass and others – preached from southern pulpits and

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[3] Garry Wills, *Head and Heart: American Christianities* (New York, 2007), 303–15.

heavily reliant upon Old Testament extrapolations and strained allegories. Yet, one can also discern reflections of the insurgent "Prophet" Nat Turner and the plainspoken Quakers, whose God promised wrath and ruin for man's inhumanity to man. Although these historical portraits are quintessential features of the dynamic tapestry of American Christianity, they are neither wholly of it or coterminous with it.

In regard to African Americans, what they became in the United States explicitly begs the question of what their ancestors were in Africa. Thus, as its point of departure, this essay turns first to West Africa for a view of the religious ethos and praxis of African peoples who landed in North America by way of the transatlantic slave trade. A delineation of the general texture of African sacred traditions, only broadly and imprecisely etched here, is relevant to an understanding of the manner in which the spiritual inheritance of enslaved Africans informed their reception of Christian theologies on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Just as Christianity is an inexact term for capturing the diversity of rituals, beliefs, and practices of all those who claim to be adherents of Christ, there is no single label or distinctive theoretical paradigm for holistically characterizing the rich array of spiritual systems that are indigenous to the West African societies from whence the vast majority of the ancestors of African Americans originated. At best, only speculative, cursory observations can be made about the spiritual backgrounds of the millions who were brought into slavery in the Americas. Further, these comments must be predicated upon the fact that the vast majority of these involuntary immigrants came from different societies at different times and as a matter of course did not leave behind records of their lives. With these caveats and limitations in mind, a general framework for characterizing West African religious life does suggest itself based upon what little is known of both the sacred lives of early African American immigrants and their forbearers.

Between what is now the present-day countries of Senegal and Angola, many West African societies embraced beliefs in a supreme god or creator who was responsible for the making of the earth and the universe. This powerful deity was the progenitor of humanity, but was typically believed to be somewhat remote from, even uninterested in, the quotidian happenings of the mortal world. Acting on his behalf, lesser demigods, often assumed to be the offspring of the high god, were much more likely to be involved in earthly affairs, and it was they to whom humans directed their pleas for fertility, bountiful harvests, protection from disease, and divine justice. Along with these deities, West African pantheons sometimes included spirits associated with the physical environment and natural phenomena, such as rivers, forests, thunderstorms, and animal life.

In some instances, divine powers and nature-based spirits could be bene-
ficial to the well-being of a community or its residents, guarding against
harm or ensuring prosperity. On other occasions, these forces could be both
malicious and destructive, particularly when individuals or groups violated
certain religious or moral proscriptions. Similar to mortals, these supernat-
ural entities could even be capricious and random in their interventions in
human matters, which made their will all the more inscrutable to even the
most dutiful worshipers.

Supplementing this hierarchy of gods, demigods, and nature-related
forces, the spirits of ancestors routinely took an active interest in the
affairs of the living. Whether representing the recently deceased or leg-
endary figures of ages long passed, the essence of ancestors was believed
to be ubiquitously present among human societies, with both the will
and capacity to aid and hamper mortal endeavors. In instances of barren-
ness, epidemics, draught, and war, ancestors were called upon to provide
guidance and safe passage. They were also evoked to reify longstanding
traditions and to confer legitimacy upon laws, moral codes, and the reigns
of individual leaders and clans. Ancestor worship concretized kinship net-
works and perennially reminded people that they lived within a larger
realm of meaning that tied them to people across the nebulous boundar-
ies between life, death, and afterlife. Since living and dying were com-
monly viewed as cyclical phenomena, as opposed to a wholly linear trek,
the handling of the bodies and possessions of the deceased took on much
importance in many communities. Funeral rites were not merely designed
to put the dead to perpetual rest, but instead aimed at preparing souls for
future – and ideally beneficial – involvement in the spiritual lives of the
living. Poorly arranged burials could result in the protracted restlessness
of souls, which in turn could bring ill tidings to those whose interment
rituals were found wanting.[4]

Since most any human activity was susceptible to spiritual influences,
little effort or thought was devoted to dividing the world into sacred and
secular polarities. Unlike some modern Westerners, many West Africans
took for granted that supernatural forces permeated and shaped everything
in the environment around them, including ecological systems, fluctua-
tions in weather patterns, the abundance of crops, and the peopling of
villages. Attempting to delineate boundaries between the spiritual and the
nonspiritual made little sense in such a conception of the world, nor was
there a pressing need to confine religious beliefs and practices to European-
style liturgies or catecheses. The spiritual and divine were commonplace

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[4] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*
(New York, 1980), 8–10, 12–13.

in daily life, and signs of the supreme being's impact on earthly matters were evident enough in the natural surroundings and human interactions. Consequently, Enlightenment ideas about the division of church and state were indeed foreign to West Africans when slave ships began packing their hulls and plowing the Atlantic in the sixteenth century. A supreme deity that was truly omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent could not be relegated by mortals to a separate netherworld of influence, an axiom that the average African landing on American soil would not have questioned.[5]

After the first African bondspeople were brought to colonial Virginia in 1619 and for most of the next two centuries, enslaved blacks inhabited religious spheres largely of their making. To put it another way, a salient residue of African sacred traditions remained intact among them, and there were few concerted efforts by whites to convert them to Christianity. Beyond language barriers and other cultural impediments, a range of issues were behind the lack of enthusiasm on the part of both slave and master regarding proselytization. Many white immigrants were not particularly religious themselves, and thus saving souls was not high on their list of priorities. Others believed that offering Christian instruction to slaves might make them entitled to freedom, an outcome that was anathema to a society increasingly dependent upon bonded labor, especially in the southern colonies. Undoubtedly, there were those who felt that converting slaves to Christianity hardly was worth the effort due to the presumed incapacity of Africans to grasp the finer element of Western civilization. More disconcerting was the lingering suspicion that slaves might construe biblical subject matter in a fashion that could justify a moral challenge to slavery, or even rationalize outright insurrection.[6]

If white efforts to convert blacks were tepid at best prior to the American War for Independence, those in bondage did not facilitate matters. As was the case among Europeans, some Africans were simply not inclined toward religious beliefs or expressions, and thus no amount of persuasion would have made Christian theology appealing. Others clung to spiritual traditions that they had imported from their homelands, having brought their deities and ancestral guardians with them across the Atlantic. Working under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Anglican ministers sporadically attempted to save souls among the plantations of British America. Yet their efforts rarely bore discernible fruit due to constricting linguistic boundaries, the indifference of many

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[5] Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People* (Maryknoll, NY, 1991), 11, 15.

[6] "Introduction," in John B. Boles, ed., *Masters & Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740–1870* (Lexington, KY, 1988), 4–5.

slaveholders, and the haphazardly coordinated and poorly funded nature of the missions themselves.

Even more daunting than these obstacles were the suspicions that Africans harbored regarding the white man's religion and its purveyors. Missionary Anglicanism was infused with racism and English cultural chauvinism, both of which were buttressed by presumptions about African heathenism and savagery. Moreover, the Anglican presentation of Christianity was aimed at affirming a status quo built upon hereditary, intergenerational bondage, and perpetually commercialized black bodies. For the African, the religion of the master offered a smorgasbord of white supremacy, from a white god and virgin mother to a white angelic host and earthly ministry. It also posited convenient rationales for black thralldom in the Americas, including biblical references to enslavement and the need for servants to obey their masters. Such a religious diet must have been spiritually impossible for many slaves to digest and psychically damaging for those who did. In any event, relatively few Africans in the colonies would have been exposed to any rigorous and ongoing indoctrination of a religious kind before the American Revolution, and few would have been without the spiritual wherewithal to counter the more racially pernicious elements of proslavery Christianity.[7]

Another factor that complicated the early appeal of Christianity was the reality that a significant minority of enslaved blacks were Muslims who had little use for Protestant teachings. Extant records strongly suggest that these devotees of Islam made persistent and protracted efforts to perpetuate their religious identity, whether through maintaining Arabic names, secretly praying to Allah, or passing Koranic teachings to offspring. However, the circumstances that faced them in America made the survival of such traditions more tenuous during each subsequent generation to the point that traces of Muslim influences in African American communities were rare and anecdotal by the nineteenth century. Among a much larger population of blacks and whites who practiced other faiths – or none at all – Islamic tenets and practices regarding dress, diet, education, morality, and other matters were forgotten, diluted, or otherwise lost. The children of enslaved Muslims would have been raised in an environment that was largely intolerant of Islam and would have thus been compelled to select playmates, friends, lovers, and spouses from among non-Muslims. Somewhat paradoxically, the existence of Islam in prerevolutionary America did not

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[7] Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, 1998), 80; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, 1998), 245.

bode well for the short-term prospects of Christian missionary activity, nor did the minority status of Muslims benefit their long-term efforts to retain their cultural heritage.[8]

If Africans were not particularly enamored of the religious messages that Anglican itinerants and other whites were peddling, there was, nonetheless, a noticeable, if incremental, shift in the appeal of Christianity to enslaved blacks by the time of the American Revolution. Ironically, this new allure of the faith was against a backdrop of historical developments that cast a long shadow over the new nation's future. In general, the American Revolution had turned out to be less revolutionary than some had hoped. While slavery began to slowly disappear in northern colonies turned states that had never been deeply reliant upon the institution, African American bondage remained firmly anchored in the agrarian southern states. Indeed, demand for slave labor to harvest cotton and other crops escalated during the 1790s as white planters migrated west to territories such as Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Missouri. By 1810, the decennial census enumerated 974,622 enslaved residents of the United States, compared to 747,500 in 1790. By 1820, this number had reached 1,529,012. Evident as early as the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and increasingly salient during subsequent decades, the country was becoming irreversibly divided into sections distinguishable by their dependence upon and tolerance for slavery. While the political and economic implications of such a high concentration of bondspeople in the southern tier of the country were becoming clear to even casual observers, the social and spiritual ramifications were played out in more nuanced, but arguably more profound, ways.[9]

While the liberalism of the revolutionary era was not vital enough to squelch human bondage, it did help fuel a revolution of sorts in some Protestant denominations. Commonly referred to as the Great Awakening, churches – particularly the Methodists and Baptists – began to embrace a variety of evangelical Christianity that resonated with wider audiences, in many instances transcending barriers of race, gender, class, and region. The popular appeal of these teachings had much to do with the consuming sense of urgency that ministers conveyed to congregants as they passionately sermonized about fiery damnation for the unrepentant, the glorious possibility of redemption through Christ, and the reassuring notion that God was no respecter of person. In outdoor revivals and other makeshift forums, preachers emotionally elaborated upon a gospel that was available to the masses for the taking, promising spiritual regeneration through a

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[8] Michael A. Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (New York, 2005), 143, 160–1.

[9] *Historical Census Browser,* http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu (accessed 13 Dec. 2009).

new birth in Jesus' love for humanity. Such access to the Christian message and putative salvation had a leveling effect on social distinctions, making it conceivable for the black slave's soul to be in better spiritual condition than that of the white master. This egalitarian ethos softened gender demarcations as well, as both white and black women sang, moaned, and even preached the word before crowds of ecstatic communicants. Regardless of whether one truly believed that the rebellion against British tyranny had ushered in a period of human liberty and equality, it was perhaps easier for many to offer a testimony about the power of God to make all things new. This realization would have been especially pertinent to evangelized commoners, slaves, women, and others who could now question the spiritual and moral bearings of elites in ways that the American Revolution had not.[10]

Despite its fervor and leveling tendencies, the evangelical outburst that marked the Great Awakening had not alone answered enough lingering questions about the efficacy of Christianity and its potential value to African Americans to result in mass conversions. In fact, relatively few blacks would identify themselves as Christians as of 1800. However, a number of conditions had come into being by the late eighteenth century to make the soteriological thesis of certain denominations more palatable. By this time, a majority of slaves in what was by then the United States were native born. Africa was, at most, a secondhand memory to be vicariously experienced through the fading recollections and cultural affinities of aging immigrants. For African Americans, nativity in the British colonies (or the United States) facilitated a general lowering of linguistic barriers between blacks and whites. Moreover, the possibility of a more vibrant cultural – and thus religious – life centered on the production of familial networks was made possible by both the natural increase of the black population and the resultant balancing of the sex ratio. Of similar importance, the fact that the evangelical revivals and their roving propagators had deftly employed the spoken word to convey the gospel provided greater access to Christianity for African people who had principally been socialized in oral-aural traditions of communication.[11]

The broaching of the possibility of a spiritual equality existing between blacks and whites – and between the enslaved and free – was likely the most significant incentive for African Americans to take a second look at Christianity in the postrevolutionary period. Likewise, the susceptibility of the white man's evangelical doctrines to alternative interpretations that

[10] Alan Gallay, "Planters and Slaves in the Great Awakening," in Boles, *Masters & Slaves*, 19–36, 20.
[11] Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 82–3.

alloyed them with surviving remnants of African spirituality and African American aspirations must have also been enticing to some. Still, these explanations of the growing resonance of certain forms of Christianity with African American spiritual needs do not account for the whole picture. At bottom, Christianity could be of only limited utility to enslaved blacks if it remained incapable of adjusting their worldly predicament. Just as their forefathers had not disconnected the sacred and soulful from the earthly and the mundane, it would have been unacceptable to most African Americans to embrace a religion that disassociated their ordeal of enslavement in America from their intuitive efforts to understand the divine rationale behind what had befallen them. That is, a Christian God – especially one introduced by the oppressor – could rise above the level of a false deity or malevolent spirit only if prospective worshipers could imagine a theodicy that illuminated the ultimate righteousness of his will. This was the essence of the matter for Africans who had encountered Christianity while draped in chains and bearing scars from the lash. Only when the Methodists, Baptists, and others seriously placed heavenly salvation in conversation with earthly liberation in the 1780s did selected African Americans begin to bear witness to the possibility of a Christian supreme being that was greater than the petty self-interests of slaveholders and their allies.

To be sure, the evangelical sects were not the first to position slavery in dialectical tension with the will of God. Going back into the seventeenth century, the Society of Friends (or Quakers) had already come to the conclusion that man's ownership of man smacked of immorality, since it reduced both slave and master to a state of sin that violated many precepts of the Bible. The Quakers had not suddenly discovered this ethical dilemma, and their proposed solutions were often interminably deliberated and haltingly executed. Indeed, for generations their evolving moral sensibilities were eclipsed by more practical concerns. On a routine basis, the Yearly Meetings simply tabled discussions of slavery to avoid the rancor that their consensus-based decision-making process was scarcely designed to manage. Along with this hesitancy, decades of slave trading and ownership had made some Quakers financially comfortable and thus resistant to moral critiques of African bondage. As late as 1725–26, Pennsylvania Friends went so far as to pass a slave code whose harshness rivaled anything originating in the southern colonies at the time.

In the aggregate, the Friends' growing opposition to human trafficking was predicated upon a complex mix of humanitarian impulses, clear-eyed calculations of their material interests, and growing concerns about security. Fear of insurrection among ever more numerous bondspeople encouraged many Friends to advocate an end to the slave trade in the eighteenth

century. Furthermore, the violence and vigilance that slavery required of Quaker masters seemed an ill fit with the *Weltanschauung* of a group that was avowedly pacifist. Notwithstanding the less lofty motives behind their epiphany, the Quakers would serve as a model for other Christian denominations that sought to extricate themselves from the moral taint of slavery. Well into the nineteenth century, the abolitionism of the Friends undergirded the most potent religious attacks that slavery and its defenders would have to endure.[12]

In conferences in the 1780s, Methodists issued robust denunciations of slavery, using much the same language and rationale that the Quakers had become known for. To rid themselves of the "abomination" of chattel bondage, the evangelicals attempted to first purge the church's leadership of slave trafficking and ownership, followed by regulations that restricted the indulgence of the membership. Although less centrally organized, the Baptists also endeavored to distance themselves from slavery, with the General Committee of Virginia Baptists in 1789 labeling the institution "a violent deprivation of the rights of nature." Just as important as what was stated for public consumption was that which was allegedly said at the rural revivals and secret camp meetings of evangelized blacks and whites. Throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century, itinerant preachers were periodically accused of stirring up discontent and even insolence among slaves and the relatively small number of free blacks who resided in the southern states. Slave conspiracies, real or imagined, were routinely traced to evangelical activities and influences, which perhaps seemed all the more foreboding to some, given the outbreak of a massive slave rebellion in the French Caribbean colony of St. Dominique in 1791. Even if it was uncommon for evangelicals to explicitly foment discontent among the enslaved, it would not have been difficult for blacks and others to come to their own conclusions about a sermon that suggested the possibility of spiritual salvation without regard to color or status in life.

It would not have been difficult, too, for critics of evangelical Christianity to imagine how talk of spiritual equality and interracial mingling at

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[12] Thomas E. Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (Gloucester, MA, 1965), 4, 9–10, and 68; David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (New York, 1966), 292–331; Ryan P. Jordan, *Slavery and the Meetinghouse: The Quakers and the Abolitionist Dilemma, 1820–1865* (Bloomington, 2007); A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., *In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process*, vol. 1, *The Colonial Period* (New York, 1978), 267–310; Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History* (Baltimore, 1896), 198–9, 218; Herbert Aptheker, "The Quakers and Negro Slavery," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (July 1940): 331–62; Wills, *Head and Heart*, 135, 137, and 152; and "Introduction," in Roger Bruns, ed., *Am I Not a Man and a Brother? The Antislavery Crusade in Revolutionary America, 1688–1788* (New York, 1983), 3–4.

revivals could pose a formidable challenge to the social order. Such concerns would eventually lead to a retreat of white Methodists, Baptists, and others from the more radical and subversive implications of their messages by the 1790s. To a large extent, these denominations would somewhat fall in line with the Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, who for the most part stuck close to traditional liturgy and sacramental practices, avoided the ecstatic and rapturous performances of the revivals, and remained soft-spoken and equivocal on slavery. Thus, as quickly as some had embraced the socially egalitarian and racially progressive spirit of the revivals, others sought to promptly bring the experiment to a close. An expansion of slavery and a retrenchment of racist attitudes helped to partially accomplish this purpose, as churches moved to reify segregationist and exclusionary practices. In the face of such a backlash, some of the evangelical fervor, especially among blacks, either went underground or was primarily confined to separate, urban churches. Nonetheless, while the naysayers largely succeeded in disrupting the political and social trajectories of the Great Awakening, they failed to close the spiritual opening that the evangelical revivals had allowed for religious expression, renewal, and syncretism among African Americans and others.[13]

The blossoming of the evangelical movement was meaningful to blacks on a number of levels. The conversion experience itself, pregnant with psychic power and performative creativity, allowed African Americans to enter the realm of Christianity somewhat on their own terms. Stylistically, the emotional singing and dancing, spirit possession, and oral communication of the message interfaced well with their West African cultural heritage and distinguished the atmosphere of the revivals from the more staid, literary, and hierarchical orthodoxies of the Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and others. Moreover, the emphasis on belief in a "new birth," as opposed to the need to memorize catechisms or submit to ongoing tedious instruction, democratized access to the transformative power of the Christian ideal. The experience of witnessing blacks and whites, men and women, and occasionally masters and slaves worshiping the same God in manners that they thought were pleasing must have left indelible impressions on many revival attendees. Such a religious space must have also allowed for a cross-fertilization of European and African American cultures that would have further separated evangelical meetings from the affairs of other, more

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[13] Alfred J. Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston, 1995), 22–4; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 25, 89–91; James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York, 1997), 144; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 88–90; and Randall M. Miller, "Slaves and Southern Catholicism," in Boles, *Masters & Slaves*, 127–52.

conservative denominations. As slaves, women, and poor people moaned, exhorted, and fainted at these gatherings, slippages in the social categories and understandings of race, gender, and class occurred, which were probably not always easy to firmly reestablish once the crowd dispersed. Given that a plethora of premises and expectations informed the participation of various people at the revivals, the role of these gatherings in promoting a more consequential encounter between Christianity and African sacred traditions is all the more notable.[14]

Considering the dearth of firsthand accounts, it is hard to know how most blacks (or whites) invested the revivals with specific devotional meanings. However, certain features of both these meetings and their exegetic formulations illuminate possible ways in which blacks would have culturally made sense of evangelical Christianity. The ideas of a supreme being or creator as well as this deity having offspring would not have been alien concepts to Africans, nor would the notion of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, or the sacralization of the heavens. The pantheons of many West African religions would have typically included more divine figures, but the polytheistic concept of a single high god was common. Christian beliefs about the power of prayer, the existence of an afterlife, the certainty of divine judgment, and the reality of evil would not have been too remote from African understandings of these matters, though doctrines concerning the innately sinful nature of humanity would have been less acceptable to West Africans. Further, the veneration of biblical personages such as Moses, David, Mary, and various others may have appeared vaguely familiar to those accustomed to ancestral adoration. Overall, there were, of course, numerous and significant differences between Christianity, even of the evangelical variety, and the religious systems that African Americans had inherited from their forbearers. Still, enough superficial and substantive similarities existed between these faiths to provide African Americans with a spiritual template for imagining how Christianity might serve their needs without utterly effacing their psyches and cultural proclivities.[15]

It is more than probable that many of the blacks who participated in the revivalism of the Great Awakening were not conversant with the intricacies of Christian theology. In light of their tenuous grasp of the English language and the widespread illiteracy that marked the early national period, African Americans who attended Methodist and Baptist gatherings likely

[14] Sylvia Frey, "Shaking the Dry Bones: The Dialectic of Conversion," in Ted Ownby, ed., *Black and White Cultural Interaction in the Antebellum South* (Jackson, MS, 1993), 28, 35; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 251–3; and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 132–3, 148–9.
[15] Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 127; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 11.

became more familiar with the outer trappings of the religion than its core ecclesiastical dynamics. This cursory engagement was not necessarily an indication of Christianity's failure to impact the spiritual direction of black communities. Nor did it imply that African Americans, even under optimal linguistic and literary circumstances, would have otherwise desired to conform to the scriptural and liturgical orthodoxy of a religion that was still principally an object of curiosity for many. What seems reasonable to assume is that evangelical Christianity was attractive because it did not insist upon strict readings of the Bible or formal protocols. That is, the revivalist message contained enough theoretical ambiguity and expressive flexibility to accommodate the multiplicity of spiritual backgrounds that people brought to the campgrounds with them. Further, the ability and willingness of blacks to spiritually adopt evangelical doctrines and mannerisms by no means suggested an abandonment of African influences in the tenor and substance of their worship. If anything, this capacity for evolution, change, and synthesis demonstrated the vitality of African American religious traditions, whereas a reluctance or inability to explore or adapt to other belief systems would have been a sign of cultural insularity, even stasis.[16]

Of the many cultural innovations that emerged from the Africanized Christianity (or Christianized Africanity) produced during the Great Awakening, the advent of spirituals is one of the most profound instances of the kind of syncretism that showcased the vibrancy of the African cultural heritage and the integrative propensity of certain variants of Christian theology. The spirituals were a musical form that was nearly perfectly suited to the temporal circumstances of African Americans, both free and in bondage, as well as their otherworldly aspirations. Often poignant, transcendent, and even opaque in tone and meaning, these songs were grounded in the idea that God could speak directly to the heart and soul of the individual, bypassing the written word (which was typically inaccessible to slaves). The spirituals drew upon biblical stories about triumph over oppression – commonly characterizing blacks as God's chosen people – and reveled in the surety that contemporary earthly troubles could be endured and surmounted. Above all, the spirituals allowed for the individuals to tell their story in tandem with the communal narrative in a fashion that made their personal experiences and hopes belong to all. Just as separate black churches would do later in the antebellum era, the spirituals rendered a distinctive black religious and worldly experience that

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[16] Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 132–3; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 251–3; and Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1978), 5.

was not dependent upon the interpretations of white authorities and other interlopers. Since they could be loaded with an endless range of signifiers – from fervent calls for physical, earthly freedom to heartfelt pleas for spiritual redemption – these folk songs had a timeless quality about them, even though they were ultimately very much attuned to the circumstances in which their performers found themselves.[17]

In addition to the spirituals, there were other cultural carryovers from Africa that filled the interstices of the Christianity that blacks brought from the revivals. Under the broad and somewhat misleading rubric of *conjure*, beliefs in magic, witchcraft, signs, and certain homeopathic theories survived the slave trade, slavery, and even emancipation. These traditions rested upon many of the premises that had informed other African epistemological conventions, such as the association of the spirit world with the natural environment and the active involvement of ancestors and certain deities in mortal happenings. The major alteration that conjure endured on American shores had to do with how it interfaced with a burgeoning Christian ethos among blacks and how it helped create (and maintain) a spiritual space between African Americans and whites that may have been necessary to the psychic survival of some slaves and others.

Much of the power that conjuration putatively engendered had to do with it being based upon secret knowledge and techniques that only selected, gifted individuals could employ. Whether they used their talents to protect, injure, heal, or augur the future, conjurers were both revered and feared, even among blacks who had ostensibly converted to Christianity. Belief in conjuration, much like other religious ideals, was the product of a need to make sense of phenomena – such as sudden outbreaks of disease, natural disasters, and serial misfortunes – that defied simple or obvious explanations. It was also part of a cultural lineage of mystical power and faith that connected African Americans to African antecedents. Perhaps more often than commonly acknowledged, conjuration operated in sync with, not opposition to, black Christian beliefs regarding the laying on of hands, the efficacy of prayer, the omnipresence of both good and evil spirits, and the capacity of some to discern signs of the future. In many quarters of the African American community by the nineteenth century, it would have been difficult to determine where beliefs in conjuration ended and Christian convictions began.[18]

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[17] Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 33, 39, and 80; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 242–3, 245, and 250.

[18] Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory & the Foundations of Black America* (New York, 1987), 35–6; Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 73–4; and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 286–8.

Given the personal, internal, and multilayered nature of conversion experiences, there is no sure way to judge the sincerity of those professing Christian rebirth in the wake of the Great Awakening. Much of the evangelizing went on in backwoods and remote towns among people who were unlettered and almost certainly unconcerned in what historians would later try to make of their experiences. In any event, efforts were made to quantify the successes of the revival; however, these data have to be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Methodist records enumerated 11,682 blacks as members of that denomination as of 1790, with that number increasing by roughly 500 by 1797. This figure represented almost a quarter of the church's membership rolls, with the majority of African American Methodists residing in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Among the Baptists, similar successes in black proselytization were reported, though the church's decentralized structure made such record keeping especially problematic. One estimate placed the number of black Baptists at approximately eighteen thousand in 1793, accounting for one-fourth of church membership. A later enumeration placed the number at forty thousand by 1813, which represented a doubling of black affiliates within a single generation.[19]

Aside from the dubious exercise of head counting, the fact that tens of thousands of African Americans considered themselves Christians by the opening decades of the nineteenth century was certainly an indication of the inroads that various denominations had made into the black community since the founding of the nation. Yet, by this time it was also clear that much of this growth was due less to whites having convinced blacks of the rectitude of Christianity than blacks having convinced themselves, as well as other blacks, that the white man's religion might actually be of some use to them. The true test of the pertinence of the new faith to the black experience was whether it would be perpetuated outside of the context of jubilant revivals and in the midst of white backpedaling from any notions of spiritual or temporal equality across racial lines. Ultimately, it would be up to African Americans – as opposed to the first-generation Africans of an earlier time – to answer this question.

Into the new century, tensions and strife over the place of blacks in the American denominations escalated as the spiritual energies of the Great Awakening were forced to acclimate to the realities of slavery and racial

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[19] Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 131; Sylvia R. Frey, "'The Year of Jubilee Is Come': Black Christianity in the Plantation South in Post-Revolutionary America," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds. *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville, VA, 1994), 101–2.

prejudice. By 1800, it would have been clear to most observers that the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others were not committed to overtly challenging the social order, especially at the risk of alienating southern congregants. In 1804, the Methodist General Conference consented to abrogating policies that restricted slave trading among coreligionists in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee. Four years later, church statutes that made reference to slaveholding among rank-and-file members were repealed. Similar to other denominations, the Methodists allowed southern conferences to draft their own policies, granting them wide discretion on the issues of slavery and race.[20]

This codification of white supremacy by American churches was not an anomalous turn of events. In fact, presumptions of black inferiority had shaped most denominational policies since the first Africans arrived in the British colonies. It was actually the interracial texture of the evangelical revivals of the late eighteenth century that was novel, not the concerted efforts to squelch their more radical propositions. In a society increasingly dependent upon bonded black labor, churches were confronted with the dilemma of how to deal with African Americans who, on the one hand, were beings with souls in need of spiritual nourishment and, on the other, were legally defined as commercial property to be bought, sold, and inherited. This conundrum raised many troubling questions. For example, how could the sanctity of slave marriages be honored when such relationships were not recognized by civil law? What should the church do when masters were accused of mistreating slaves who belonged to the same congregation? And what to do with black exhorters and preachers, whether enslaved or free, who felt called to offer spiritual guidance to white or mixed audiences? There were no clear-cut, easy resolutions to any of these scenarios.

In the end, most denominations equivocated at a time when an assertion of moral wherewithal would have been in order. In the contest between Christian fellowship – that is, the imperative to bring all souls to Christ – and an ingrained and profitable system of racial slavery (which was discriminatory and alienating by definition), the latter won out. To be sure, the various denominations reached this denouement by somewhat different means and at different times. Nonetheless, all of the major churches, constricted by endemic racism and further compromised by fears of schism, chose to distance themselves from sentiments and activities that threatened the delicate balance they had struck between members in the slaveholding

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[20] Milton C. Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism: White Protestants, Plantation Missions, and the Flowering of Negro Christianity, 1787–1865* (Metuchen, NJ, 1975), 38; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 89–91.

South and devotees in the emancipated North. In hindsight, the resolution was shortsighted and schizophrenic, but it was also a direct legacy of the evangelical revivals.

While some Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian clergymen may have been caught up in the spiritual euphoria of the Great Awakening, many likely viewed its interracial, lower-class, and often inscrutable ecstatic elements as a threat to ecclesiastical authority. Consequently, churches that desired to "improve" the lives and souls of blacks by counting them as members and providing religious instruction also institutionalized segregationist policies that relegated them to "Negro pews" or separate services. By 1820, these prejudices and fears were regularly articulated through the racial geography of American churches, which were highly segregated and strictly policed. These arrangements were, of course, designed to consolidate religious authority and temporal power in the hands of whites, but in many instances they had just the opposite effect.[21]

The independent black church movement emerged from this context of domineering white control over African American religious affairs. Conditioned by both racial proscriptions in white churches and the spiritual opening that the Great Awakening had provided, blacks launched a nationwide initiative to establish their own houses of worship, with and without the assistance and supervision of whites. Given their larger numbers among Protestant denominations, black Methodists and Baptists were the most prominent and persistent in seeking institutional arrangements that promised more autonomy in their spiritual lives. The examples of George Liele and Richard Allen, former slaves and founders of black churches in Savannah and Philadelphia, respectively, are among the most legendary in the lore of African American religious history, but there were many other clergymen who achieved similar success under even more trying circumstances. Liele founded the First African Baptist Church of Savannah in 1775. Born in Virginia, he would have lived during a time when evangelical stirrings were reaching a crescendo and when the black population had recently transitioned from first-generation African to primarily native born. The naming of his church, as would be the case with Allen's institution, was indicative of the ongoing influence of Africa and Africans in the black population and its cultural forms. It should be noted that Liele, who gathered a following by preaching among blacks on Georgia plantations, was not manumitted until 1777, two years after his ordination and the founding of his church. It would not be wholly implausible to assume

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[21] Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–208, 219; Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 176; Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, 130; and Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York, 1997), 49–50.

that he may have attributed his earthly emancipation at least in part to his conversion to evangelical Christianity.[22]

For all intents and purposes, the black independent church as an established institution in the American North began when Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and several other Philadelphia blacks walked out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787 after being denied the right to pray in the sanctuary. Allen, who joined the Methodists around 1780, had been an itinerant exhorter in New Jersey and Pennsylvania for years before arriving in Philadelphia in 1786. After parting with St. George's, he dedicated St. Thomas's African Episcopal Church in 1794, with Jones as pastor. In establishing what would become the first black Christian denomination in the United States, Allen and allies of his own Bethel Church faced strong opposition from white Methodist leaders over ordination and other matters that eventually landed the parties in a state court. The forthcoming legal verdict affirmed the independence of Allen's congregation. Subsequently, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was founded in 1816, and black churches in New Jersey, Maryland, and other states promptly joined the new denomination.[23]

The establishment of these churches, particularly Allen's AME initiative, was a turning point in various ways. First, these institutions became the most important part of a cultural infrastructure in black communities that would prove durable and relevant over the long term. By the mid-nineteenth century, these edifices would serve as educational facilities, political forums, fraternal societies, and musical conservatories. Many churches adjudicated conflicts between members as well as patrolled moral boundaries. Thus, to a large extent, the institution attempted to contain the affairs of congregants within the black community, avoiding recourse to white authorities and other outsiders. Some black churches did, indeed, maintain cordial ties with white counterparts, but they tended to jealously guard their autonomy and resources. In other instances, black churches, especially in the South, existed within an uneasy atmosphere of suspicion, with many whites ready to close their doors (or raze them) at the first hint of antislavery activity or otherwise unwelcomed proceedings.

Secondly, black independent churches served as training grounds for black leadership, allowing black men, and occasionally women, the opportunity to develop oratorical skills, social networks, and communal strategies. Deprived of the franchise, economically disadvantaged, and socially

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[22] Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 115–116; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 140–1.

[23] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC, 1990), 51–2; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 77, 80–4; and Carol V. R. George, *Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York, 1973).

ostracized, free blacks and slaves relied heavily on the church to provide spiritual and practical direction and to serve as a mouthpiece for their aspirations. Among other things, the evangelical revivals of the late eighteenth century had groomed men like Richard Allen and George Liele to take on prominent roles in their communities, allowing them to travel widely, interact with organizational structures, acquire literacy, and negotiate with whites of different stations. These men, along with many other black exhorters, preachers, and missionaries, tended to be more worldly and cosmopolitan than other blacks, especially slaves. By necessity, they were socially amphibious, capable of exhorting slaves and lower-class whites while putting slaveholders and other elites at ease, or at least keeping them tolerant of their endeavors. Within white churches and denominations, such men received a mixed reception, with some allowed significant latitude in their clerical aspirations while others were flatly denied the right to preach, baptize, or receive ordination. Much of their occupational success depended on the location of the church, the denomination in question, the tone of local race relations, and the preferences of African American coreligionists. Many blacks preferred the pastoral style of other blacks, which often compelled otherwise resistant white officials to employ African American speakers. When given the option of attending a black-controlled church or settling for a black minister handpicked by whites, African Americans appear to have leaned toward the former.

Finally, the black church represented a connection with an African American identity and communal agenda that could scarcely be found in predominantly white counterparts. Similar to their ancestors, many black Methodist and Baptist institutions were not much concerned with demarcating boundaries between the sacred and the secular. These churches had to fulfill a number of societal roles, ranging from religious and entertainment functions to political and antislavery operations. Further, much of the same African expressive culture that had characterized black participation in the evangelical revivals found a niche in black churches, including shouting, dancing, singing, drumming, and spirit possession. In fact, the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, which again attempted to democratize access to spiritual equality and the redemptive love of Christ, found African American churches still aglow with a religion infused with African sacred traditions and the evangelical fervor of the first revivals. If nothing else, the independent black church provided a laboratory for African Americans to experiment with alternative epistemologies and modes of worship, without the need to self-consciously police themselves for the benefit of white critics.

Here it should be noted that it would be inaccurate to either homogenize black varieties of Christianity or assume that all African Americans

equally endeavored to celebrate or preserve their African spiritual heri-
tage. While some black congregations – especially the "invisible," ad hoc
churches in the South that slaves secretly convened – were explicitly and
purposefully engaged with an African cultural past, others assumed that
they would receive better treatment at the hands of whites, or even warrant
assimilation, if they mimicked more conservative liturgies and practices.
Unfortunately for these African Americans, they would be proven wrong
time and again regarding their hopes for white acceptance. The aspirations
of these blacks – typically free, urban, and northern – revealed cleavages
along class lines that encouraged some to think of themselves as socially
remote from the slaves that nearly all of them had descended from. This
class differentiation among blacks would be played out in various are-
nas, but perhaps most vividly in religious affairs. Interestingly enough,
the embrace of a more scripturally based, culturally restrained version of
Christianity by some African Americans did underscore a duality inherent
in the evolving black church. Over time, this institution would prove to
be the most progressive among African Americans, capable of asserting a
self-assured, independent identity. At the same time, it would be capable
of displaying reactionary tendencies that disclosed its fundamental connec-
tion to the premises and values of its white institutional counterpart.[24]

Regardless of the differences in form and substance that characterized the
worship of black churches, African American clergymen and congregants
alike were at the vanguard of an antislavery movement that ripened after
the Great Awakening. Nowhere is this observation more apparent than
among slaves and free blacks who had honed Christianity into a sharp
instrument of rebellion and protest by the antebellum period. As early as
1800, African Americans in Richmond, Virginia, surreptitiously organized
to overthrow the local white establishment, a rather bold initiative by any
standard. Before they could strike a blow for liberty, however, the plot
was betrayed, and several suspected conspirators were captured. During
the trials of Gabriel Prosser – the chief architect of the intrigue – and
others, some of the contours of the plan were discerned, including Prosser's
injunction to his comrades that no Quakers, Methodists, or Frenchmen be
harmed in the uprising, given their putative support for black freedom.

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[24] Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, x, 26–7; Horton and Horton, *In Hope of
Liberty*, 130, 132–5, 144–5, and 148; C. Eric Lincoln, "Introduction," in Wilmore, *Black
Religion and Black Radicalism*, vii; Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 140, 166–7;
Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones*, 22–4; Frey, "'The Year of Jubilee Is Come,'" 110; Gomez,
Exchanging Our Country Marks, 255; Wilson J. Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of
Civilization and Discontent* (New York, 1989), 8; and Monica Najar, *Evangelizing the
South: A Social History of Church and State in Early America* (New York, 2008), passim.

Although Prosser himself was not a preacher, he and his brother Martin were conversant with evangelical Christianity and were known for recruiting followers after Sunday "preachings."[25]

A similar conspiracy to undo slavery was discovered among African Americans in Charleston in 1822. In this instance, Denmark Vesey, a free black, was arrested as the principal designer of the plan. In common with Prosser and his associates, Vesey drew upon a liberative interpretation of Christianity to justify his actions, which ultimately resulted in the hanging of the conspirators. What was distinctive about the Charleston conspiracy is that its leaders explicitly employed a range of other inspirations to advance their revolutionary agenda, including a tradition of conjuring among local Africans that promised to protect the would-be insurgents from harm. Further, in the wake of the capture of Vesey, several members of the local AME church were implicated in the plot, which ultimately led to the burning of the edifice. For the rest of the antebellum period, strict regulations would be applied to South Carolina blacks seeking to gather for religious or other purposes.[26]

More so than either of the conspiracies of Prosser or Vesey, the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831 undeniably linked a radical conception of evangelical Christianity with an earthly mission of armed struggle in the cause of black liberty. Born into slavery around 1800, Turner, a preacher who would pass through the hands of a few owners, had been deeply inspired by Old Testament scriptures about the deliverance of the oppressed and divine wrath against the wicked. Moreover, he was given to visions of the future, which he read in natural phenomena such as scatterings of leaves and an 1831 solar eclipse. Turner's search for a theodicy to explain how a just God could allow for the evils of slavery led him to view himself as the locus of divine will and retribution. His visions had made it clear that "the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first."

In the wake of his revolt that claimed the lives of about sixty whites in Southampton County, Turner was apprehended, and over two hundred blacks – most of whom had not participated in the insurrection – were killed in the resulting white hysteria. Unlike Prosser and Vesey, the Virginia preacher talked freely to his captors about his religious views and sense of destiny. His transcribed confessions denote a man who was convinced of the righteousness of his actions and who, on a regular and unmediated

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[25] Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 & 1802* (Chapel Hill, 1993), 109, 179–81, and passim.

[26] David Robertson, *Denmark Vesey: The Buried History of America's Largest Slave Rebellion and the Man Who Led It* (New York, 1999), 105, 106, 155–8, 160–4, and passim.

basis, spoke directly to a heavenly master. When asked by a white reporter whether, in light of his capture and impending execution, he had been mistaken in leading the revolt, Turner answered with a rhetorical question that summed up his entire raison d'être: *Was not Christ crucified?*[27]

Among other things, Nat Turner and his associates succeeded in shattering the comforting illusion that slaves could not or would not militantly employ Christianity to advance earthly goals that were at odds with the will and interests of their masters. Aside from their use of lethal means to achieve their ends, the rebels made it clear to all that strains of Christian hermeneutics existed that served to justify insurrection. One could even argue that the spiritual world of Nat Turner was, indeed, not derivative of white varieties of Christianity, but was instead a wholly new formulation. That is, to think of Turner's beliefs as tied to those of evangelicals failed to explain how his vision of the incongruence of slavery and Christian theology could lead to an actual war of liberation, whereas the revivals, with all of their fire and brimstone, had not. For many whites, it would be easier to simply label Turner a fanatic and a murderer than to countenance him as a product of the society in which he lived, let alone as a strict practitioner of the teachings of the Bible. Whatever way whites made sense of the rebel preacher, they were still haunted by the disconcerting suspicion that there could be others like him on every plantation and farm, pouring over scriptures and biding their time.[28]

One lesson that the Turner revolt taught slaveholders and their allies was that they needed to more firmly control slave access to religious instruction and social-sacred spaces. Likewise, they needed to counter both the specter of Turner's heterodoxy and increasingly abundant critiques of slavery emanating from northern abolitionist circles. Much of their strategy hinged upon the enforcement of regulations that allowed for the patrolling of black religious activities. Additionally, it incorporated defenses of slavery couched in the language of religious and moral duty, calling upon both master and slave to do their part in keeping the peace. This approach was not so different from what some church authorities had counseled for generations, typically taking the shape of advice to masters to treat their slaves humanely and for slaves to obey their owners. Now, however, the observance of these reciprocal obligations was construed as a positive good that

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[27] Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion* (New York, 1975); "The Confessions of Nat Turner," reprinted in Thomas R. Frazier, ed., *Afro-American History: Primary Sources* (New York, 1971), 36–47.

[28] Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 2008), 9; Randolph Scully, *Religion and the Making of Nat Turner's Virginia: Baptist Community and Conflict, 1740–1840* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008), 8–9.

would better prepare blacks and whites for a mutually beneficial future. The self-serving paternalism inherent in this ethos was as much for northern antislavery audiences as it was for black slaves. It was perhaps even more directed at southern whites who periodically needed reassurance that neither slavery was evil nor were they by association.

Proslavery Christianity was principally about containing black spiritual and temporal aspirations, as well as forging a white southern consensus that was strong enough to withstand both internal and external assaults. To a large extent, slaveholders and their partisans were able to neutralize the radical potential of the Second Great Awakening by squelching black (and white) religious dissent, inserting southern elites into the leadership structure of evangelical Protestantism, and forcefully articulating their own alternative vision of a patriarchal society governed by righteous patresfamilias who acted in the best interests of their white and black charges. Undoubtedly, there were gaps in the superstructure of proslavery Christianity that allowed for continuing challenges and contradictions. Slaves still sought to negotiate the obligations that masters ostensibly owed them, whether in the guise of interplantation religious gatherings, reduced workloads on the Sabbath, or more humane treatment in general. Furthermore, implicit in even proslavery versions of Christianity was the possibility that masters owed their slaves the opportunity for religious enlightenment, even as some whites searched the scriptures to prove that slavery was virtuous or that blacks, as alleged descendants of Ham, were eternally damned to bondage and toil. In the end, proslavery Christianity, like its liberationist variant, proved porous enough for people to exploit its ambiguities and non sequiturs.[29]

What proslavery – or antislavery – Christianity could not do was hold the American church together or bring the country back from the brink of civil war. Conflict over black bondage resulted in sectional schisms in the Presbyterian (1837), Methodist (1844), and Baptist (1845) denominations, which had found it impossible to spiritually contain the political conflict that was rending the nation into pieces. While northern churches became more abolitionist, their southern brethren clung fast to a creed that eventually resulted in Confederate secession from the union. As had been the case for decades, African American spokesmen were increasingly engaged in defining the proper place of Christianity in the struggle against slavery.

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[29] Irons, *Origins of Proslavery Christianity*, 11–12; Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," in Boles, *Masters & Slaves*, 102–6; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 257–8; Frey and Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 140; Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 119–22; and Gallay, "Planters and Slaves in the Great Awakening," in Boles, *Masters & Slaves*, 35.

Whether it was polemicist David Walker who forecast the destruction of slaveholding America in 1829, or Presbyterian minister Henry Highland Garnet who publicly characterized the slave's right to revolt as a "divine commandment" in 1843, or black separatist Martin R. Delany who wrote disapprovingly of "pro-slavery high priests of infamy" in 1849, blacks were salient voices in the national debate over their destiny and that of the country. Thus, by the time a Union victory settled the question of states' rights and slavery's longevity, African American spokesmen had already become the new arbiters of Christianity's relationship to the spiritual and moral vitality of the United States.

Many believed the bloodshed of the Civil War represented redemptive justice for the nation and its past sins, particularly against blacks. Others would invoke the spirit of the abolitionist movement, and its attendant religious elements, in later times to undergird the ongoing struggle for African American rights. However one viewed the war and its aftermath, Christianity proved itself to be as alluring and protean to blacks in the postemancipation period as it had been to their forbears who had gathered at the revivals generations earlier.[30]

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Frey, Sylvia R., and Betty Wood. *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*. Chapel Hill, 1998.

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Horton, James O., and Lois E. Horton. *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860*. New York, 1997.

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Raboteau, Alfred J. *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. New York, 1980.

Wilmore, Gayraud S. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*. Maryknoll, NY, 1991.

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[30] Wills, *Head and Heart*, 303–10; David Walker, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, 1829, reprinted in *David Walker's Appeal* (New York, 1977); Henry Highland Garnet, "Address to the Slaves of the United States," 1843, reprinted in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York, 1951), 1: 229–30; and Martin R. Delany, "Domestic Economy," *North Star*, 23 March 1849, 13 April 1849, and 20 April 1849, 2; reprinted in Robert S. Levine, ed., *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (Chapel Hill, 2003), 151–6.

RELIGION AND THE CIVIL WAR

RANDALL M. MILLER

The Civil War was the central event of American history, and religion was central to the American Civil War experience. Religion did not cause the war, but it did magnify and intensify social, cultural, and political differences that contributed to sectional distrust and eventually disunion. Before the war, religious ideas informed the debates on slavery and the character and destiny of the Union; and, indeed, the divisions within religious bodies over the slavery issue both foretold secession and defined political loyalties during and after the war. When war came, religion gave Americans a rationale for fighting and dying, a means for understanding life and death, a moral compass, and institutional resources for providing relief to soldiers in the field and people suffering on the home front. Then, too, the civil religion of America as a chosen people gained greater force, if also one with regional permutations. The war also made possible African American aspirations for freedom and autonomy, which they expressed most powerfully in their own churches. Religion later helped rebuild the defeated South and explain defeat to white southerners, as it also spurred northern interest in Reconstruction, however imperfect and impermanent such interest proved to be.

From the antebellum period through the Civil War era, the United States was an overwhelmingly Protestant country, notwithstanding a growing Catholic presence almost everywhere and strong, if also numerically small, Jewish congregations in eastern seaboard cities. Protestantism largely defined the dominant American culture. Protestant concepts of morality and social order ruled the public square, just as the Protestant Bible provided the lingua franca of political rhetoric, the principal reading in homes and schools across the republic, and the touchstone for understandings of salvation and social obligation.

The propulsive energy of America in its expanding geography, demography, and economy fed a pervasive American conceit as being a "chosen people" in history and God's design. Americans, however, disagreed on

what kind of society and polity God was commanding them to build. Differences over the direction and extent of governmental support for commercial, industrial, and agrarian interests and over foreign policy led to the rise of political parties, which worked out political compromises that kept the country growing. But disagreement over the rights and interest of slavery could not be contained within the party system. Slavery, after all, was a moral question that pressed on the fundamental issue of what God commanded Americans to do and to be. In the end, different understandings of slavery's place in America would prove nonnegotiable. And the war came.

Arguments over slavery involved arguments over how to read the Bible. By the 1830s at least, proslavery advocates had come to argue that slavery was a "positive good" in that, as practiced in the American South, it provided a stable patriarchal and racial order, affirmed the importance of community and family over individual pursuits, brought prosperity to the nation, and Christianized a heathen people. Proslavery apologists, North and South, looked principally to the Bible, rather than to science or sociology, to show slavery was natural and right. They pointed to the Old Testament patriarchs who had owned slaves and the New Testament injunctions for slaves to obey their masters as proof that God never condemned slavery. To the southern mind, the North was perverting the Bible and God's plan for America by its worship of money, its growing heterogeneity, and its prideful intrusions into others' affairs. That antislavery advocates sought to carry their message directly into southern society, inciting slave rebellion, was proof of abolition as a satanic design. Antislavery was both unconstitutional and unbiblical. To proslavery advocates, and indeed for many Americans, a literal reading of the Bible settled the matter of slavery.

In a Bible-directed Protestant America, antislavery advocates had to make their principal argument from scripture too. Doing so required a more liberal interpretation of the Bible and emphasized the New Testament teachings on the brotherhood of man. Antislavery advocates regarded slavery as a sin based on human greed, the violation of the sanctity of marriage, the inhumaneness of treatment, and the hypocrisy it encouraged among its supporters who preached Christian stewardship over slaves while denying them the scriptures, abusing their trust, and forsaking compassion.

The moral obligations of resisting that "slave power" and saving America from its sin became ever more widely disseminated from pulpits, podiums, and printing presses so that by the mid-1850s northern free-soil politicians might speak of an "irrepressible conflict" between the sections. Slavery forced people to make moral choices. Harriet Beecher Stowe emphasized that in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), a book whose enormous success bespoke the growing northern conviction that slavery contaminated all it touched, including religion. And for some abolitionists frustrated by the spreading

power of slavery, violence seemed the only way to redeem the republic. Thus did John Brown seek to "purge" the land "with blood" in his raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. That act and the sympathy Brown engendered among northerners such as Henry David Thoreau for his willingness to die for a noble cause finally convinced southerners that there was no safety in a Union with such fanatics.

Ironically, in order to make the argument for racial slavery, southerners had to read the Bible liberally. The Bible was silent on race. Needing to find scriptural sanction for the South's "peculiar institution," proslavery advocates colored the story of the curse of Ham as an account of the curse of blackness. Antislavery advocates, in turn, insisted that defenders of slavery find an explicit, authoritative biblical command to enslave Africans. The Bible, they noted, made no such distinction.

The arguments over slavery and reading the Bible became entangled with theological issues regarding biblical criticism and led to the breakup of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches. The slavery issue caused "New School" Presbyterians to divide sectionally in 1857 and "Old School" ones to follow suit in 1861 over secession. The Methodists underwent similar fragmentation, first in 1843 when those wanting a stronger antislavery witness left to become Wesleyan Methodists and then in 1844, at the General Conference of the Methodist Church, when northern Methodists demanded the resignation of a Georgia bishop who owned slaves, whereupon the southern delegates walked out. In 1845 southern Methodists completed the secession by forming the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Meanwhile, southern Baptists left the larger Baptist fellowship and in 1845 formed the Southern Baptist Convention after the northern-controlled missionary agencies had refused to accept slaveholding missionaries. The divisions within the three largest national Protestant bodies hardened sectional identities. And in a federal republic that, except for political parties, lacked instruments of national unity, the breakup of the churches hastened the breakup of the country.

Americans greeted secession and war with a remarkable degree of confidence that a show of arms would soon decide the issues. Clergy blessed the men going off to war, preached sermons on the rightness of the cause, and repeated earlier arguments about what scripture revealed and God demanded of his chosen people. The contest would test men's true character and demonstrate God's favor. Public figures said much the same as the clergy, and countless Americans in their private prayers and farewells bid their men fight as Christian soldiers.

The first waves of soldiers rallying to their flags in 1861 and 1862 came largely from evangelical Protestant backgrounds and from farms and small towns in which family and faith formed the bedrock of community. For

such people, the church often provided the principal place for social fellowship as well as worship. Although many men in 1861 were not yet church members in a formal sense, or even as regular in church attendance as were women, they did believe in the saving power of Christ, as preached by both stationed and itinerant ministers, and they understood the fundamental Protestant ethic extolled in all manner of sermons, tracts, speeches, and even popular fare. They took as settled truth that any honest person could read and understand the "common sense" of the Bible, and they took as observable reality that salvation was open to all who gave themselves fully to Christ. Still, such faith remained grounded in an Old Testament emphasis on God as both mighty and merciful. Theirs was a God of covenant and judgment who demanded discipline and devotion from his people, as prescribed in scripture.

The dominant Protestant ethos of the day spoke directly to the way men were supposed to conduct themselves in camp and in battle. It informed and reinforced the emerging Victorian code of courage that pervaded northern and southern culture by midcentury. That code insisted that public behavior revealed inner character. It required that men be brave and virtuous to honor family, community, and God, and in turn promised that faith and morality would be the soldier's armor. Such belief cast war as an ennobling experience, where those in right relationship with God would prevail. Godliness promised success in combat, as it also ensured that those coming home would be uncorrupted by wartime service. In sending their men off to war, women invoked the Victorian code of courage, and ministers prayed for its guiding light.

The realities of war tested such belief. Organized religious services were irregular and, during campaigns, even erratic. To be sure, in both northern and southern armies many officers made religious services compulsory. Keeping the Sabbath was the order of the day when the armies first organized. As the war dragged on and as armies and operations grew in complexity, military demands interrupted or disrupted many Sabbaths. The religious calendar soon yielded to campaigning, which by the end of the war often meant constant marching and fighting. Even when encamped, officers made Sunday a time for putting affairs in order and readying for the next battle. At the same time, many soldiers seized the Sabbath for rest and recreation to relieve tensions from war and the boredom of drill and camp life. Many soldiers felt uneasy about such violations of the Sabbath. Indeed, disbelief and distain for the Sabbath among soldiers became an oft-cited explanation for failures on the battlefield and sufferings in the army.

Northern and southern clergy alike worried that war threatened to corrode society's morality and Christian commitment if the churches did not counter the debilitating effects of camp life and give meaning to the loss of

life. They also recognized they would never have such an opportunity for mass evangelism again. The armies became a new field for religion.

Northern churches proved more successful at meeting the challenges of supplying soldiers with religious materials and a more regular ministerial presence because of their extensive prewar experience with mission work abroad and among immigrants in cities and their superior publishing facilities. Southern churches, and the Virginia-based, interdenominational Evangelical Tract Society, also drew on their antebellum experience to produce prayer books, hymnals, pamphlets, and tracts that reached many soldiers and people on the home front. Southerners also established religious newspapers designed particularly for soldiers. The religious tracts and papers followed the conventions of the day in stressing stories of personal redemption and moral discipline.

Many churches made missionary work in the armies a major concern during the war. Such initiative had the advantage of geographical proximity, low costs, and potentially high returns among a people already attuned to Christianity. The effort reinforced the churches' strong sense of national purpose and pride, and encouraged more investment in missionizing after the war, both at home and abroad.

The North capitalized on its history of establishing and running social betterment organizations by forming two large institutions – the United States Sanitary Commission and the United States Christian Commission – that mobilized benevolence and directed it efficiently to soldiers. In doing so, it linked the home front with the military in vital ways and helped make women essential elements in the interests of spreading religion and serving the state.

The United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), established in June 1861, was a philanthropic body backed by powerful clergy and laypeople already conversant with organizing benevolence on a large scale in northern cities. Its approach to charity work was to avoid sentimentality and to treat each social problem in a scientific and systematic way. It relied on salaried agents to carry on its work, with the leadership of the USSC in the hands of Christian reformers schooled in such work. Its principal mission was providing medical aid and medical inspectors to the military and overseeing improved sanitary conditions in the camps, all for the holy cause of the republic and the social as well as physical health of its defenders.

The USSC did not evangelize explicitly, but its purpose and message were clear in connecting Christian charity with civic obligation. The USSC grew quickly during the war to become the largest philanthropic organization in America, and the experience of USSC agents and supporters in meeting the physical, psychological, and personal needs of the soldiers confirmed for many of them the nobility and necessity of their calling.

Postwar charity work benefited from such experience and from the network of communication established among the agents.

The United States Christian Commission (USCC) grew from a call by the New York Young Men's Christian Association in 1861 for evangelical organizations to join in a national body to provide religious materials, support for chaplains, and direct pastoral care to the soldiers. The interdenominational USCC had a more explicitly evangelical purpose than the United States Sanitary Commission with which it sometimes competed for public donations and support. In addition to a cadre of paid agents, it sent roughly five thousand volunteer "delegates" to the Union armies, who preached sermons, held prayer meetings, and distributed religious and other morally uplifting literature. The USCC delegates also assisted army chaplains in services and counseling. The USCC increased its impact by allying with the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society to distribute millions of Bibles, testimonies, tracts, scriptural chapbooks, hymnals and psalm books, and weekly and monthly religious newspapers. It also established lending libraries in the camps to encourage reading. The USCC delegates added new tasks as nurses on the battlefields and in the hospitals, preparing meals for the sick and writing letters for wounded soldiers.

In its work, the USCC demonstrated what later became known as "practical Christianity," or the Social Gospel. The experience profoundly affected those engaged in or receiving the aid. Indeed, several who later were Social Gospel ministers learned the value of "practical Christianity" from their work with the USCC and invoked that experience as proof that the Christian way demanded attention to people's physical as well as spiritual needs.

The southern effort came largely through denominations and even individual churches rather than a "national" organizational structure independent of any church body. The Southern Baptist Convention took the lead in 1862 by working with mission boards in the various states to solicit money and recruit missionaries. The southern Presbyterian Church followed in 1863 when its General Assembly directed funds and appointed commissioners to attend to each of the southern armies. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1863, authorized its bishops to appoint missionaries to work with the armies. By the end of the war the Methodists had sent more missionaries and chaplains to the armies than any other denomination. This also was true in the northern effort, for the structure of Methodism and its system of assigning ministers to fields of service made the adjustment to wartime service relatively easy.

Eventually, both the United States and the Confederate governments responded to worries from home about the temptations of camp life and

the lack of regular services by providing for chaplains and supporting the work of the churches and organizations supplying religious materials to the soldiers. The Lincoln administration, for example, increasingly encouraged the USCC in its work by facilitating the acquisition and movement of supplies.

The most direct governmental commitment to shaping the religious condition of the armies was the commissioning of chaplains and giving them permission to provide pastoral services and preaching among the soldiers. Many soldiers wanted such a presence, and even officers who originally doubted the efficacy of chaplains moving about the camps came to appreciate their calming effect and the ways they encouraged discipline among their charges. Chaplains won favor with military men by emphasizing that Christian soldiers were more likely to submit to authority, maintain discipline in the camps, and fight without fear of death. Also, especially in the South, chaplains made explicit the soldiers' duty to carry out God's plan for their "nation" by obeying their officers and staying the course. Some chaplains, for example, inveighed against desertion as a sin and likened deserters to Judas Iscariot.

The North proved more successful in providing chaplains, though many regiments went without such service during the war. Catholic and Jewish soldiers especially lacked clergy from their own faith. As the character of the northern armies changed by 1863, with tens of thousands of blacks and immigrants, many of them Catholics or nonevangelical Protestants such as Lutherans, coming into the military, meeting the religious needs became more complex and contested. Catholics, for example, complained about Protestant evangelizing among them and demanded their own priests. But only forty priests, often called "Holy Joes" by the soldiers, served the northern armies during the war with roughly two hundred thousand Catholics in the ranks. In the Confederacy the problem was simply one of numbers; fewer than half of the regiments had a chaplain of any denomination or religion. In the end, private initiative, sanctioned or at least encouraged by the governments, counted more than public authority in bringing religion to the armies. In that regard, the separation of church and state ruled the wartime experience, though by default more than by design.

Each side had its share of "fighting parsons" whose courage in standing in battle won the respect of the soldiers and reinforced among them the common claim that they fought together in a holy cause. More important was the role of chaplains in giving pastoral care to troubled soldiers, providing regular religious worship, and serving as links to the home front. On the latter count, many soldiers entrusted the care of their letters, pay, and other matters to chaplains, while families back home sent supplies and correspondence with the chaplains and missionaries to keep soldiers

connected to home. Chaplains who shrank from duty, drank too much, or in any way failed to meet soldiers' expectations for courage and care were unwelcome in the ranks and usually had a brief tenure. The length of service for most chaplains was short anyway so that chaplains and missionaries had to demonstrate their worth immediately. Such necessity stepped up the religious intensity in the camps.

The war made many men fatalistic, if they were not already so. Death proved anything but ennobling as musket and cannon fire tore through bodies, which when thus disemboweled, decapitated, or otherwise mutilated seemed anything but a temple of God. Battlefields were strewn with the wounded and dying, writhing in agony and begging for mercy. The ravages of disease, which carried off more soldiers than did battles, added to the horrors of death, which stalked the camps and hospitals and took the bravest and dullest without discrimination. The supposed Victorian verities about faith and courage as one's armor were proving untrue. Death and suffering needed explaining, and faith needed emboldening.

For some soldiers, the fatalism made them less fearful of death. For others, the fatalism led them to believe that providence decided their fate, so they fought on resigned to whatever would come. Protestants and Catholics alike shared such fatalism, which became more pronounced as the war continued. At the same time, soldiers sought to know God's plan for them and to warrant his favor by opening their hearts to his saving grace. Not waiting for chaplains or agents from Christian organizations to meet their spiritual needs, many soldiers built their own little chapels in the camps and conducted prayer meetings and Bible study, or in other ways exercised lay initiative in creating a religious context for their wartime service. Wanting the assurance of God's approval before battle even fostered a makeshift ecumenism whereby soldiers sought the blessings and prayers from whatever clergy were present. The most famous example of such need was the general absolution the Catholic Father William Corby of the Irish Brigade gave to the Army of the Potomac before the second day of battle at Gettysburg in 1863, an act later memorialized in statue at the battlefield and story in schoolbooks. The soldiers also asked family and community to pray for them, which they did with congregational prayers in Protestant churches and special masses in Catholic ones.

The most visible evidence of religious concerns among soldiers were the revivals that swept across both armies from 1862 on. The reality of death especially spurred revivals, which broke out most effusively among victor and vanquished alike after bloody battles. The Army of Northern Virginia, for example, erupted with widely reported great revivals in 1862, 1863, and 1864. Later recountings of these revivals did much to encourage the postwar myth that southern armies were more "Christian" than northern

ones. Revivals in northern armies got less notice in contemporary or subsequent accounts of the war, but counted tens of thousands of converts each year.

The imminence of death made soldiers, and their families, anxious about its aftermath. Soldiers on both sides understood that they needed to prepare to die. Clergy of all faiths in and out of the army preached that the individual was the master of his or her eternal fate and that one's relationship with God at the moment of death predicted one's future. Preachers pounded home the theme that those who died with faith in God and a clear conscience might gain the reward of family reunion and eternal life in heaven. The revivals echoed such themes, to telling effect.

Christians especially emphasized the certainty of heaven, but Jews also pointed to a "better life" to follow one's mortality. Such thinking reinforced Victorian ideas on the necessity of conversion and one's final conduct in this world. Absent the familial setting of home and the tempering effects of women's domesticity and piety, the soldiers needed their governments, chaplains, nurses, and fellow soldiers to provide the context to die in a way that ensured their place in heaven and comforted families at home with such knowledge. Thus, for example, as became popular in story and song, the nurse became the surrogate kin to the dying soldier in the hospital. He would not die alone, and his last words declaring for family, country, and God would be recorded. Likewise, chaplains understood that they must help the soldier "die well" and then write a letter of consolation to the soldier's family reporting that the son, brother, or father had done so. For people of all faiths, such accounts became narratives of sacrifice and even conversion during and after the war.

The war years magnified the promise of heaven in American culture. Between the 1830s and the 1870s, numerous books, sermons, tracts, and poems were published on the subject of heaven, with more than one hundred such books published in the 1860s alone. Increasingly, Americans came to anticipate and view heaven less as a distant and ascetic place and more as a place of repose and reunion, with the familiar comforts and companionship of this world present in the next. Thus, death for the Christian soldier, or any believer, was less a parting than a passage to a new home, as it was described in the best-selling *Heaven Our Home* (1863) by William Branks.

For many Americans, such promise of heavenly reunion did not allay grieving and loss when death came to loved ones. Among them, some turned to spiritualism to make contact with the deceased and to be consoled that communication between them did not end with their physical death. Most Americans, however, followed more conventional means of dealing with death. That included preparing the dead for their journey to the "new home" of heaven. Such concern led to improved methods of

embalming that allowed families to view the body of a deceased loved one in a quasi-lifelike condition and so to ensure remembrance of the man, especially the dead soldier, by family, friends, and community in rituals of mourning. Somehow, preserving the body ensured the right heavenly repose, as it also blurred the distinction between the living and the dead. Accordingly, chemical embalming gained widespread use during the war, and the funeral industry grew apace as families sought to make the dead presentable and to provide a proper farewell.

Many soldiers died anonymously, dumped into mass or shallow graves as the armies worried more about serving the living than dealing with the dead. The facts of such deaths and the need for assurance that those who died would not be lost to family forever led federal and state governments to organize efforts to recover the bodies of their dead, identify them, and dignify their death with proper burial and graves marking their sacrifice in the holy cause. The public sanctification of death began during the war and continued into the next century with monuments, memorials, and battlefield preservation providing didactic and patriotic reminders of manly service and sacrifice.

The immediate need was to find and identify the dead. In this, state and local governments and private organizations took the lead early on. State-aided efforts soon were overwhelmed by the scale of death and complications of identifying and recovering bodies after battles. Northerners were better able to respond to the need by working through the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), which assumed new responsibilities of registering the dead, locating lost loved ones for families, and arranging for the shipment home of fallen soldiers or for their burial close to where they had died. Private companies also stepped in to find and then ship bodies to those who could pay the fare. When services were unavailable or families could not afford shipping and other charges to bring loved ones home, public and private organizations sometimes set up small cemeteries near battlefields or hospitals to give the dead a respectful resting place.

Among southerners, it also was expected that black slaves who had accompanied their masters to war would retrieve the bodies and bring them home. Such practice reinforced among white southerners the ideal of the "faithful slave," which, after the war, became part of the "Lost Cause" mythology of slavery as a supposedly benign and benevolent relationship between master and slave. For southerners, too, the manner of burial promised an affirmation of their just cause in seeking to preserve the Christian social order resting on slavery and patriarchy. This need was powerfully represented in William D. Washington's 1864 painting, *The Burial of Latane*, that depicted the Christian burial of a Confederate cavalryman in 1862 by strangers, several women, and two slaves who attended him with

prayer. The painting struck a chord among white southerners, who flocked to see it in Richmond and contributed money to the Confederate cause because of it.

During the war the costs and complexity of recovering, identifying, and reburying fallen soldiers led the U.S. Congress in 1862 to authorize the president to purchase grounds to be used as national cemeteries for its soldiers. Acting on such impetus, the War Department set up five cemeteries near sites of great battles. Two of these, Antietam and Gettysburg, were created in cooperation with northern states whose men had fought in the battles. Gettysburg became hallowed ground after the dedication of the national cemetery there on 19 November 1863, and especially due to President Abraham Lincoln's famous "Gettysburg Address" that called on the living to fight on so that "these dead shall not have died in vain" to save a nation, "under God," that was dedicated to a "new birth of freedom" and democracy.[1] Public figures and clergy together anointed other sacred spaces wherever soldiers had fought and died.

The re-ennobling of death in the rituals of burial, mourning, and remembrance also made it easier for men to learn to kill. War demanded that soldiers overcome the ingrained Judeo-Christian ethic that abhorred killing another except in self-defense or in a holy cause. Many soldiers agonized over the prospect of having to deliberately kill another person, especially fellow Christians and erstwhile countrymen. As ideas about Christian reunion in heaven gained currency, they worked to mediate concerns about killing. Thus, paradoxically, for some soldiers, the belief that life did not end in this world and was better in the next allowed them to accept their role as soldiers trained to kill.

Governments on both sides also declared days of thanksgiving after victories and of fasting after defeats so that their people might reflect on the purposes of the war and rekindle their support for it. Churches chimed in. Churches used such days to call people to account with a mixture of jeremiad for the lack of sacrifice and prayers for renewed resolve. Also adding to public assertions of being God's particular people was the statement in the Confederate constitution that God ordained the new government, and for the Union's part the declaration imprinted on United States coinage, "In God We Trust."

In the South, some ministers insisted that redemption would come only when southerners honored their Christian obligations as slaveholders entrusted with uplifting their slaves with Christian witness, regular religious services, and protection of the sanctity of marriage. This was

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[1] Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ, 1953), VII: 23.

not a criticism of slavery as an institution, but rather one of slaveholders not fulfilling God's special charge to the South to create a truly Christian slaveholding republic. Ministers insisted that God was chastening southerners with defeats and deaths because they had fallen away from him and they needed to recognize his divine authority. The ministers assured southerners that such chastening was in fact the proof that God had not forsaken them as a people and in their cause, even if the government failed.

In the North, ministers, and even whole congregations, likewise explained the sufferings of the war as God's hard hand on an unrepentant people. Specifically, antislavery ministers lay the blame on the Lincoln administration's reluctance to make the war one for emancipation, the only way, they sermonized, to redeem the Union in God's eyes. Several delegations of ministers went to Washington to lobby for such a cause, and Lincoln on one occasion chided them from asking of him what God had not yet revealed as the way to victory. After emancipation became policy and as Union successes came, northern ministers explained imminent victory as proof of God's favor because the nation had thrown off its great sin. Lincoln, too, later averred that emancipation was a necessary condition to America's redemption, and he vowed from 1863 on never to go back on his God-ordained pledge to end slavery.

There were doubters among Americans essaying the meaning of the war and God's supposed favor for one side or the other. Most significantly, Abraham Lincoln came to express such a view. Lincoln, a lifelong believer in providence but also a fatalist, invoked God frequently during the war as he struggled to understand it. Personal loss added to his introspection. He came to see a more judgmental God, and even an inscrutable one. In 1862 he had written a private meditation on the war that forecast his rapidly evolving thinking. In it, he concluded that "it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purposes of either party" in the war and that "God wills this contest and wills that it shall not end yet."[2] For Lincoln, the war was necessary, part of God's design to realize "some great good" that mere man could not wholly know or understand.

In his Second Inaugural Address, March 1865, Lincoln meditated publicly on the war's cost and consequence as fulfilling God's will rather than any man's or nation's conceit. In a short speech, he observed that "[a]ll knew" that slavery caused the war, but he noted that the North was as much responsible as the South for the sin of slavery. God had brought on the war and would continue it, if he willed it so, "until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword." He continued by remarking that both northerners and southerners read the

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[2] *Ibid.*, V: 403–4.

same Bible and prayed to the same God asking for his "aid against the other," but the "prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully." As Lincoln observed in making sense of the nation's ordeal by fire, "The Almighty has His own purposes."[3]

Lincoln sought humility and compassion rather than vengeance, and he refused to claim or use God as a tribal deity. But Lincoln's thinking did not take hold. His assassination on Good Friday, 14 April 1865, and subsequent death made him a martyr to the cause of the Union. The apotheosis of Lincoln as God's anointed prophet for American exceptionalism soon distorted his Second Inaugural sermon. In eulogies across the North, ministers and public men described Lincoln as a providential instrument for God's plan for America in saving the Union and freeing the slaves. Lincoln as savior reinforced the civil religion of America as the chosen people. The cause thus was just, and any means used to realize the great goal were justified.

To be sure, other critics of the war raised questions about the justness of it. Such voices grew louder as the war ground on with seemingly no end, as invading armies and marauding guerrillas increasingly blurred distinctions between the battlefield and the home front, and as inflation, profiteering, and abuses of power called into question the supposedly Christian character of the people.

From the beginning, peace churches refused to endorse the war as a matter of principle. In the North, where most existed, that stance did not keep clergy and laypeople among them from advocating for emancipation as a policy or supporting their government by way of relief for wounded soldiers and for orphans and widows outside their own faith tradition. And some individuals among them thought the cause so just that they gave up their pacifism to serve in the army, which action led to being disciplined by their Quaker meetings or Mennonite congregations during or after the war. The federal government allowed conscientious objectors to avoid service by paying a commutation fee, which hardly satisfied many Quakers, Brethren, and Mennonites who thought it blood money; and in 1864 the government waived the fee if the "genuine objector" by reason of faith did alternative service in a hospital or in aiding the freed people. Initially, the Confederate government allowed individuals from specified peace sects to avoid military service by hiring a substitute, but manpower shortages ended that practice. The arguments each government and its supporters made that they were fighting for a "holy cause" in a "just war" made pacifism seem "treasonous" to the people making sacrifices for God and country so that the peace churches won few converts to their ideas about liberty and conscience.

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[3] *Ibid.*, VIII: 332–3.

Also dissenting from the war were those who thought it the work of their religious, cultural, and political enemies. In the North, especially, draft resistance and antidraft riots revealed the ethno-religious fissures in society. In the coalfields of Pennsylvania and in the streets of New York City, for example, Irish Catholics refused to sign up for a war they deemed a Protestant and Republican plot against their religion and liberties. Irish Catholic coal miners chafed at the overbearing work rules imposed by their Protestant and Republican "overlords" and equated the draft, the suppression of labor organizing, and the low wages as part of a larger Protestant and Republican design to subjugate them as a people. When grafted onto anti-black sentiments after emancipation became Union policy, such resentments burst out in violence against the symbols of Protestant and Republican "order," including blacks who were seen as rivals for work, favorites of reformers, and the cause of the war's long duration and suffering. To such Irish Catholics, the Protestant invocations for emancipation and sacrifice for a Union to be remade by reform and the rough handling they experienced at the hands of mine owners, government officials, and the army all pointed to an unjust war.

At the same time, other Irish, and also German, Catholics lined up to support the cause of their region – their particular "nation." In the South, Catholics by and large endorsed secession, joined the ranks of the Confederate armies, fought nobly, and claimed their "southernness" in doing so. Their "patriotism" became a universal ticket for acceptance in the larger society during and after the war. Likewise, in the North, many Catholics rallied to the flag and won accolades, however grudging at times, for their loyalty and bravery. After the war, Catholic Union veterans joined with other veterans to promote remembrance of the war as a unifying experience and claimed their place as defenders of the Union. Also significant in that regard, anti-Catholic feeling was muted by the service of Catholic nuns who brought succor to the suffering on the battlefields and in hospitals, irrespective of religion or loyalty to any particular government. Numerous soldiers remarked on these "angels of mercy" whose selflessness taught them to think of Catholic religious in new ways.

Jews also divided along sectional lines, with rabbis making the case for or against slavery and secession. Although Jews served admirably in both northern and southern armies and won respect for such service, several incidents of anti-Semitism during the war showed that Jews remained a "suspected" minority religion in the dominant Protestant society. Frustrations over inflation and hoarding of goods in the South led to attacks on Jewish merchants as profiteers and "Shylocks." In the North, too, Jews were called out as moneygrubbers and worse; and in 1862 Union general Ulysses S. Grant, in an effort to root out smugglers, issued an order expelling

"Jews, as a class" from his military district in Tennessee. President Lincoln revoked that order in 1863. In the end, anti-Semitism did not cause Jews to give up support for their causes, and they were able to parlay their military service into social acceptance after the war – at least among veterans.

By spring 1865 the imminence of Confederate defeat drove many white southerners to dissent from the government and desert from the armies. Women facing departing slaves, marauding deserters and outlaws, and invading armies begged their men to come home to protect them, literally to act as Christian men in putting family and community before any secular commands by government. The preaching of ministers arguing that southerners' sinfulness explained God's disfavor added to the sense of imminence and hastened the collapse of the Confederacy. When Robert E. Lee, the embodiment of southern hope, surrendered at Appomattox in April 1865, many of those who had fought on praying for a miracle now accepted their fate. Indeed, religious ideas about providence now contributed to southern defeat.

The North emerged from the war triumphant, with a new sense of national purpose and destiny. Protestant ministers took the lead in explaining the victory as the forge of a true nationhood that had its necessary baptism in blood. The worship of America as God's chosen nation acquired a more bellicose character that would contribute to American imperial ambitions, justify the further conquest of the West, and encourage the brass-knuckled capitalism that pushed aside anything in the way of "progress." Even American mission work overseas and among native peoples expanded with a strong confidence that America's redemption through war especially fitted its people to bring salvation to others.

Viewed from a broad perspective, the war left some churches broken while others recovered an organizational unity lost during the sectional divide. The Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches remained separated into northern and southern denominations, which for southerners affirmed their churches' "purity." Other religious groups repaired relations. Thus, for example, the Episcopalians reunited after the war. The Roman Catholic Church had not formally split over slavery and sectional loyalty, but northern and southern Catholic clergy had largely allied with the region where they were located. After the war the Church worked mightily to bring clergy together in common concerns of church building, missions, and preservation of the faith in a still aggressively Protestant America, and disciplined clergy too active in politics. Likewise, Jews put aside political differences to come together, though ethnic and doctrinal questions still divided them. Churches with their principal concentrations in the North or the South, such as Congregational churches, had aligned with their region, or stayed out of the fight altogether, so that the end of the war required no

effort at patching up divisions, though within individual congregations, political differences had led to purges and schisms during the war.

In the postwar years, churches largely turned inward to attend to their flocks. Many people were exhausted from the war and only too willing to let nonsectarian and governmental organizations assume greater responsibility for curing society's ills and ensuring good government. Internal matters were too pressing. Concerns about divisions caused by the war gave way to issues of doctrine, discipline, evangelizing, and providing pastoral counsel for people still on the move and needful of care. Indeed, the latter was a major concern for churches, for men returning from war needed to readjust to civilian life; and the high incidences of alcoholism, abandonment of families, roaming, and even suicide showed the adjustments would not be easy. Churches provided help to the indigent and comfort to men broken in body and spirit and families broken apart by the war. And they continued to apply the lessons learned about death and mourning during the war.

Such reorientation reflected, too, a major theological consequence of the war, at least for the major Protestant denominations. For all their insistence on discerning God's design through scripture and believing providence delivered the Union from its fiery trial, many northern church people had to admit that it was the armies that brought victory in the end. Bullets rather than Bibles won the war. Also, the disagreements among clergy as to what the Bible actually required on matters such as slavery, secession, emancipation, and Reconstruction weakened their claims to leadership. The constant invocations of the Bible to justify any number of political interests and even party loyalties also diminished its capacity for unifying people able to read it for themselves.

During Reconstruction, northern churches' principal interest was promoting black freedom and self-reliance and general southern improvement through education. During and after the war the Protestant religious press called for educational and other aid to the South, and several Protestant denominations and even individual churches sponsored schools, supplied and paid teachers, and distributed reading materials to whites and blacks alike. Northern missionaries in the South also established Sunday schools there, which white southerners, otherwise suspicious of northern "intrusions" into local affairs and resentful of northerners' presumptions of moral superiority and their Republican politics, welcomed because they brought needed teaching materials and Bibles. Southern white churches soon adapted Sunday school materials to fit their own needs and provide their own lessons in morality.

Northern churches invested most heavily in education for the freed people. Virtually all Protestant denominations made some attempt

at setting up schools. Also important was the nonsectarian American Missionary Association (AMA), which founded over five hundred schools for blacks in every former Confederate state, as well as in Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, and chartered nine black colleges. Northern churches and the AMA also worked with the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency for relief that supplied materials to missionary teachers, many of them white women recruited directly from northern churches. At the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore (1866), the Catholic Church promised educational and material assistance to the freed people, though in practice much of that came from religious orders and eventually in segregated parish schools.

Meanwhile, in a mass exodus, by 1867, southern blacks had left biracial congregations to form their own churches. Northern white-dominated churches failed almost completely to win adherents among the freed people. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME Church), the largest and most powerful black denomination, established many churches in the post-war South, but most southern blacks preferred starting up independent congregations rather than affiliating with the northern-based AME Church or anyone. Baptist churches, especially, proliferated. Therein, congregational autonomy gave blacks the freedom to worship as they pleased.

As the freed people spread out geographically to farm individual plots, black churches cropped up across the Reconstruction South and became the forge for making the black community in every locale. Churches ran schools, sponsored social events, and established mutual aid associations; and black ministers preached self-reliance and moral probity as the path to redemption. In such churches, a "Black Theology" that combined the promise of Moses with the salvation of Christ gave blacks a powerful sense of mission and community.

Churches also became centers of political debate and mobilization. Ministers expounded on the duty to vote as the best way for the freed people to help themselves secure their freedom. Ministers also used their stature and speaking and organizational skills to enter politics directly. More than one hundred black ministers won election to southern legislatures during the Reconstruction era. Such political activity made black churches the special targets of the Ku Klux Klan and other white terrorist groups who understood that destroying the churches and driving off or killing the ministers might silence blacks and their Republican Party allies altogether.

During Reconstruction separation by race, class, and political identity became more pronounced. A general purging went on across the South, as churches and communities drove out those who were deemed "disloyal" for having supported the Union during the war or Reconstruction after it.

They also cast northerners as the devil's agents for having defiled churches by military occupation and destruction of church property and allowing blacks to use church buildings under the protection of the military during the war. Such unpardonable sins prevented northern churches from winning supporters. Political loyalties also meant refusing northerners admission to southern white churches.

White southern churches, meanwhile, worked to rebuild the physical structures damaged or destroyed during the war. But most of the rebuilding was internal. Men returning from war, many of them crippled by wartime injuries and disease, sought to regain their place in the home and in society where women, who were left widowed or abandoned because of the war, no longer accepted unblinkingly the old truths about God as a protecting father and their men as Christian patriarchs. The white churches responded by restoring community through worship, social services, Sunday schools, and programs to bring families together in the church. Personal behavior and spiritual renewal dominated postwar church concerns, regardless of denomination.[4]

White southern churches also reentered politics, as ministers called for a public morality that would reject the authority of the "corrupt" Republican-controlled governments and restore a racial order consistent with biblical "truths." Many white southern clergymen took up the "Lost Cause" by arguing that the Confederacy had been Christian and constitutional in purpose. Likening the South to the Israel of old, they insisted that the Confederacy's military defeat was a chastising God's punishment for the people's selfishness during the war. They prophesied that the South would be redeemed by God only by recommitting to Christian principles, repudiating Republican rule, and revering southern heroes who had fought in a holy cause. The deification of the Confederate soldier, especially Robert E. Lee, and the consecration of monuments, statues, grave sites, and other public reminders of Christian duty and obligation, drove home that promise. Church and state reaffirmed the rightness of the southern way in rituals of redemption, as celebrated on Confederate Memorial Day, and recast the war as a noble calling. Such behavior and remembrance further alienated blacks from white churches.

By the end of century, American religion remained more divided than before the Civil War. Immigration, migration, schisms, and doctrinal disputes continued throughout the century; and the Civil War in its causes, conduct, and consequences had riven denominations and fostered distrusts

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[4] Several sentences in this and the next paragraphs are from Randall M. Miller, "Churches," in Richard Zuczek, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Reconstruction Era*, 2 vols. (Westport, 2006), 143–6, and are used by permission of the author.

that persisted well into the twentieth century. To be sure, there was some movement toward reunion. On matters of race, many white northerners accepted white southern definitions of racial hierarchies and the need to assert authority over "darker peoples." Northern white churches had retreated from Reconstruction, and many had taken up the "white man's burden" in subjugating natives in a conquest of the West, encouraging imperialism, and arguing for immigration restrictions. They also joined in rituals of sectional reconciliation that emphasized the nobility of the Civil War soldier, ignored slavery as the cause of the war, and dismissed Reconstruction as a fool's errand. However much northern churches glorified the United States as God's nation, they no longer worried about southern separateness. The civil religion of America actually allowed for difference, and it also encouraged a renewed emphasis on individual salvation and moral upbringing. Churches went their separate ways, but the United States held together.

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Section III

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CHANGING RELIGIOUS REALITIES

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DIVERSITY, REVIVAL, RIVALRY, AND REFORM: PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800–1950

MICHAEL J. MCCLYMOND

Statistics tell a story. The newly formed United States of America included roughly 300,000 Protestant Christians in the year 1800. Yet by the year 1950, this number had grown to 43 million. This is a 143-fold increase, or a growth of 14,300 percent. The figure becomes more striking when one considers that the population of the nation, according to the United States Census, increased during the same period by the order of 28.4 times, from 5.3 million to 150.7 million. The increase in Protestant Christian affiliation during this period was 5.0 times the rate of the general population increase. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark noted that "the most striking trend in the history of religion in America is growth." The overall rate of religious adherence in the U.S. population steadily climbed from 17 percent in 1776, to 34 percent in 1850, 45 percent in 1890, 56 percent in 1926, 59 percent in 1952, and 62 percent in 1980.[1]

One thing should be clear. It is a mistake to think that there was a Christian golden age in the United States during the colonial era, followed by a long gradual process of secularization and decline. *Steadily increasing religious affiliation* is the dominant pattern in the United States over the last two centuries. The period of lowest religious affiliation in American history occurred around 1800 when there were much lower levels of church membership than at the present.[2] Several lines of inquiry arise out of this numerical information, to wit: Why has Protestant Christianity been such a strong and growing phenomenon throughout most of American history? What were the driving factors in this expansion? What disparities existed between the various groups? Why did some grow while others stagnated?

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[1] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, 1992), 1, 16.

[2] One test of how well "churched" America was is the ratio of inhabitants to church congregations. By this measure, there were 427 inhabitants per church congregation in the year 1650, rising to 1,122 in 1800, and falling again to 528 by 1950. Edwin Scott Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York, 1962), 162.

What cultural and social impact did Protestant growth have on American society and culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? This essay will attempt to give a concise answer to these questions. It will begin by noting the factors identified by church leaders, historians, and sociologists to account for the dynamic character of American Protestant Christianity.

UNDERSTANDING THE ETHOS OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM

From the 1830s to the present time, the literature on American Protestantism has returned time and again to certain common themes – "democratic" or "republican" religion, the absence of a state-subsidized church or religious monopoly, the separation of church and state, a voluntary system of religious endeavor, a tendency toward optimistic and millennialist hopes, an activist faith in the churches' role in society, and the role of innovation and religious creativity. From the early days of the republic, churches were voluntary associations, not dependent on government revenues or subsidies – with exceptions, in earlier years, for the established Anglican Church in Virginia until 1776, and the Congregational Church in Connecticut until 1818, in New Hampshire until 1819, and in Massachusetts until 1833.

By the mid-1800s, a consensus began to emerge on the role of religion in American society. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his pioneering work, *Democracy in America* (1835), asserted that "there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America." He explained that American Christianity had a different character than Christianity in other contexts. "The greatest part of British America was peopled by men who, after having shaken off the authority of the Pope, acknowledged no other religious supremacy: they brought with them into the New World a form of Christianity which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion." Tocqueville laid stress on the strong decentralizing forces at work in American society and coined the term "individualism" to describe what he saw in America. Yet he emphasized the countervailing tendency of religion to nurture "habits of the heart" that drew people into commitment and community with one another.[3]

Building on the work of Tocqueville, Robert Baird, in *Religion in America* (1844), embodied a confident Protestantism characterized by an individualistic approach to evangelism or "soul-winning," straightforward appeals to the teaching of the Bible, a missionary campaign to convert the world,

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[3] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. Philips Bradley (New York, 1945), 1: 311.

and an ethos of hard work and intense piety. Baird believed that the major Protestant denominations were basically compatible with one another and could effectively collaborate in Christian service. He included a section in his book on "unevangelical denominations," including Roman Catholics and Unitarians, but he generally viewed them as marginal to American life. The power of the American churches lay in what Baird called the "voluntary principle," which meant that "the people feel that they can help themselves.... Should a church steeple fall to the ground ... instead of looking to some government official ... a few of them put their hands into their pockets, and supply these means themselves."[4] What Ralph Waldo Emerson referred to as "self-reliance," and what others have called "rugged individualism," featured prominently in Baird's account of American Protestantism.[5]

Philip Schaff's *America* (1855) and Leonard Bacon's *A History of American Christianity* (1897) echoed the interpretations of American religion laid down by Tocqueville and Baird, while adding new elements to the mix. Given his Continental background, Schaff – like Tocqueville – was impressed with the strength of the American churches in the absence of a European-style system of governmental patronage and of tax support for ministers and churches. American laypeople were more active in Christian endeavors than their European counterparts. Moreover, American clergymen had to compete for congregants and exert themselves to maintain their standing within a kind of religious free-market system. As a result, both clergy and laity were invigorated. "Free-will offerings" supported "a multitude of churches, ministers, colleges, theological seminaries, and benevolent institutions," wrote Schaff. Another element that Schaff noted was America's flair for religious innovation and for altering Old World creeds and practices: "America seems destined to be the Phenix [*sic*] grave ... of all European churches and sects." From the conflict of the American religious groups "something wholly new will gradually arise," Schaff predicted, and thus there was something positive in the "sectarianism" often lamented by European observers.[6] Recent authors have also highlighted the innovativeness of American religion as a factor in its growth and cultural influence.[7]

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[4] Robert Baird, *Religion in America*, abridgement with introduction by Henry Warner Bowden (New York, 1970), 124.

[5] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1940), 145–69.

[6] Philip Schaff, *America* (1855), cited in R. Marie Griffith, ed., *American Religions: A Documentary History* (New York, 2008), 266–8.

[7] See, for instance, Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); and Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religious Groups in America* (New York, 2000).

Toward the century's end, Leonard Bacon gave a detailed account of the
"organized beneficence" of the American Protestant churches in the 1800s.[8]
Yet it should be noted that both Schaff's and Bacon's ideal of Christian col-
laboration offered pride of place to Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and
Episcopalians, gave only grudging acknowledgment to Methodists and
Baptists, failed to account for African American churches, and excluded
Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Mormons, Adventists, Holiness, Christian,
and adherents of other smaller groups. Even at its most expansive, the
Protestant "united front" had built-in limitations.

Twentieth-century interpreters added new elements in their view of
American Protestantism. One of these was the "frontier hypothesis" as
formulated by Frederick Jackson Turner, to the effect that "the pecu-
liarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled
to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people ... in win-
ning a wilderness."[9] Applying Turner's concept, William Warren Sweet
in *The American Churches* (1948) argued that revivalism – and especially its
Methodist version – was a form of religion well adapted to a frontier setting
and expanding nation. Those who lived on the frontier were "impatient of
restraint, lovers of liberty" and "not afraid to entertain new ideas."[10] Sweet
thus intimated that the ethos of American Protestantism was due not to
church-state separation, but to the frontier environment itself. Another
implication of Sweet's analysis was that Christian revivals had passed
their prime. Having flourished in the frontier setting, revivals would
vanish as the frontier itself vanished from the national map. Yet Sweet's
prediction of revivalism's eclipse proved premature.[11] The post–World
War II period witnessed a surge of revivalist Protestantism as reflected
in the preaching of Billy Graham as well as in the newer Pentecostal and
charismatic churches.

A different interpretation of revivalism appeared in Timothy L. Smith's
Revivalism and Social Reform (1957). Far from being social laggards, in
Smith's view the leading revivalists were a cultural vanguard "in the wide-
spread attack upon slavery, poverty, and greed," preparing the way for
what became known as the Social Gospel. They promoted interdenomina-
tional fellowship, gave priority to ethics over dogma, and democratized the

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[8] Leonard Bacon, *A History of American Christianity* (New York, 1901), 246–91.

[9] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1921), 2. The
quotation derives from the reprinting of Turner's 1893 essay, "The Significance of the
Frontier in American History."

[10] William Warren Sweet, *The American Churches* (New York, 1948), 34–5.

[11] Michael J. McClymond, "Issues and Explanations in the Study of North American
Revivalism," in McClymond, ed., *Embodying the Spirit: New Perspectives on North American
Revivalism* (Baltimore, 2004), 4–5.

practice of Christianity. In light of their social impact, one might say that the revivalists were the original progressives. Smith rejected Sweet's frontier hypothesis, claiming that the "vital center of American Protestantism was in the cities rather than the rural West."[12] Revivals were an urban, transatlantic phenomenon in the 1800s – as much at home in the cities as in the countryside. Like Smith, Nathan Hatch in *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989) placed Methodists in the foreground. The crucial distinction in the early 1800s, Hatch argued, was not between conservatives and liberals, but between elites and populists. The New England elite feared "barbarism" in the West, held to Calvinist theology, and sought to maintain ministerial privileges and a seminary-educated clergy. Yet Methodists and Baptists held raucous worship services, embraced Arminian theology, and believed that academic theology was less important than an ability to preach in plain, passionate language.

Beginning in the 1970s, mainline church leaders became increasingly concerned about membership losses registered in the 1960s in some larger Protestant denominations. Dean Kelley's *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (1972) fomented controversy with its claim that tolerant, open-minded, culturally engaging churchmanship correlated with decline rather than growth. Expanding churches, Kelley argued, demanded doctrinal conformity with their creed, enforced behavioral compliance, and imposed sanctions against rule breakers. Through a kind of reverse psychology, it was strictness and not leniency that attracted and held church members. More recent studies have confirmed Kelley's basic argument – notably, Roger Finke's and Rodney Stark's *The Churching of America, 1776–1990* (1992). Finke and Stark argued that America throughout its history has been a religious marketplace in which stricter, more demanding groups won the larger numbers of new members. "To the degree that denominations rejected traditional doctrines and ceased to make serious demands on their followers, they ceased to prosper. The churching of America was accomplished by aggressive churches committed to vivid otherworldliness."[13] Finke and Stark showed that the Congregationalists were well positioned for expansion at the end of the 1700s. Yet by 1820 or 1830 they had already lost substantial "market share" to the Methodists and Baptists.

Methodist history seems to confirm Finke and Stark's thesis. While the Methodists were an undignified and culturally marginal group in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the Methodist growth rate was phenomenal. Equally striking, however, is the leveling effect from 1900 to 1950, which

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[12] Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1957), 7–9.
[13] Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 1.

followed the gradual decline of the strict "class meetings," the embrace of a more liberal theology, and the bishops' rejection of the independent Holiness evangelists.[14] By the 1960s the Methodists showed a decline in total numbers. *The Churching of America* overturned a number of prevailing assumptions. Contrary to the "myth of urban irreligion," cities in general have been hospitable to religious practice and adherence. When different religious groups compete with one another, this generally raises the level of religious affiliation in a given region. Following the logic of the marketplace, a greater number of religious options means that the market will present specialized offerings to cover a range of religious preferences.

To summarize then, a century and a half of scholarship on American Protestantism suggests that its remarkable growth and vitality has much to do with its voluntary support system, its entrepreneurial ethos, and the high demands placed on church members. To a large extent, the leaders of American churches expected much more – and got much more – than their counterparts in the European state-supported churches. Because of the official disestablishment of religion (a process not completed in all states until the 1830s), America was a religious marketplace in which many different versions of Protestant Christianity were available to the public at large, churches competed with one another for members, and this competition encouraged exertion and innovation in the religious sphere. Paradoxically, it was the stricter and more demanding religious groups that have shown the highest growth rates during the last two centuries – the Methodists and the Baptists in the early 1800s, with the Southern Baptists continuing their expansion until recently, followed by the Holiness groups of the late 1800s, and then by the Pentecostals (after 1901), the Fundamentalists (after 1919), the Evangelicals (after 1942), the Charismatics in the mainline churches (after 1960), and the newer Neo-Charismatic or "Third Wave" churches (since the 1980s). Stricter quasi-Protestant groups such the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses have also grown rapidly.

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[14] On changes in nineteenth-century American Methodism, see David Francis Holsclaw, "The Demise of Disciplined Christian Fellowship: The Methodist Class Meeting in Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1979); Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism, 1790–1935* (New York, 1965); and A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington, 1993), and "A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp-meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness versus the Methodist Episcopal Church," *Church History* 66 (1997): 268–83.

TABLE 11.1. *Roman Catholics and Protestants in the United States*[15]

Roman Catholics	Protestants
1800: <0.1 million	1800: 0.3 million
1840: 0.5 million	1840: 2 million
1880: 6 million	1880: 9 million
1900: 12 million	1900: 16 million
1920: 18 million	1920: 25 million
1940: 21 million	1940: 32 million
1950: 28 million	1950: 43 million

A STATISTICAL PICTURE OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM, 1800–1950

A nuanced portrait of American Protestantism emerges when we look at specific data. Table 11.1 shows the total figures for Roman Catholics and for major Protestant groups.

The total number included in the major Protestant groups remained higher than the numbers of Roman Catholics at all points. Yet the Roman Catholic Church by the mid-1800s – roughly the time of the Civil War – was larger than either the Methodists taken collectively or the Baptists taken collectively, and thus became the largest single religious community in the United States.

An interesting picture takes shape if we count not the number of members or affiliates but the numbers of *congregations* in the United States within various traditions, and then trace this across the decades. Such a comparison helps to assess the relative growth and vitality of differing traditions (see Table 11.2).

Some comments are in order. For the earliest year of reference – 1660 – one notes the preponderance of the Congregationalists, who had seventy-five congregations as compared with seventy-nine in all the other denominations listed. The Anglicans were the second strongest tradition in the 1600s. One is struck by the large increases in the number of congregations by the year 1780. While the numbers of congregations of Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Dutch Reformed have all grown by roughly a tenfold factor, the Baptists and the Presbyterians congregations have each increased almost

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[15] These are rounded or rough figures, taken from the graphs contained in Gaustad, *Historical Atlas*, 110–11. This study did not include Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses among the Protestant groups.

TABLE 11.2. *Christian Congregations in the United States –
by Year and by Tradition*[16]

	1660	1780	1820	1860	1900	1950
Adventist	—	—	—	—	—	2,712
Anglican/Episcopal	41	406	600	2,145	6,264	7,784
Assemblies of God	—	—	—	—	—	5,950
Baptist	4	457	2,700	12,150	49,905	77,000
Christian Science	—	—	—	—	504	3,040
Church of the Brethren	—	—	—	—	—	1,029
Church of God (all groups)	—	—	—	—	—	6,972
Church of God in Christ	—	—	—	—	—	3,407
Church of the Nazarene	—	—	—	—	—	3,480
Churches of Christ	—	—	—	—	—	14,500
Congregational	75	749	1,100	2,234	5,604	5,679
Disciples	—	—	—	2,100	10,298	7,769
Dutch Reformed	13	127	180	440	619	763
Evangelical United Brethren	—	—	—	—	—	4,323
German Reformed (Evangelical and Reformed)	—	201	300	676	1,677	2,754
Greek Archdiocese of North and South America	—	—	—	—	—	320
Lutheran	4	240	800	2,128	10,787	16,403
Mennonite	—	—	—	—	—	1,201
Methodist	—	—	2,700	19,883	53,908	54,000
Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)	—	—	—	—	1,041	2,700
Pentecostal (all groups)[17]	—	—	—	—	—	3,682
Presbyterian	5	495	1,700	6,406	15,452	13,200
Quaker	—	—	350	726	1,031	654
Roman Catholic	12	56	124	2,250	10,339	15,533
Russian Orthodox	—	—	—	—	—	399
Salvation Army	—	—	—	—	—	1,380
Unitarian	—	—	150	264	455	357
Universalist	—	—	200	664	800	401

[16] Data compiled from *ibid.*, 3–4, 43–4, 54–5.

[17] "Pentecostal" is commonly used to designate a family of denominations and not a single group. The term, as Gaustad uses it, seems to refer to several smaller bodies and does not include the larger denominations listed elsewhere on the chart and often thought of as Pentecostal.

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100-fold in this period of 120 years. The Lutheran congregations increased by a factor of sixty, and the Roman Catholic congregations five times over.

The Methodists seem to have come out of nowhere by the year 1820 – not being a part of the 1780 census – with 2,700 congregations in total. This is roughly equal to the number of the Congregational and Presbyterian congregations together. The Baptist growth is also striking, though not as dramatic as that of the Methodists. In the 1820 census one finds for the first time such groups as the Unitarians and Universalists, which did not exist as distinct religious bodies at the time of the 1780 census.

By the year 1860, the Methodists surpassed the Baptists with the largest number of congregations of any religious group. The number of Roman Catholic congregations grew eighteenfold from 1820 to 1860, in large part due to Irish and German Catholic immigration. Not surprisingly, the 1830s through the 1850s was a period of intense preoccupation with the Catholic "threat" to America's Protestant identity.

We see only flat or modest growth among the Quakers, Dutch Reformed, Unitarians, and Universalists by the year 1900. The Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians were all continuing their growth, and yet the growth rate for the Methodists was sharply tapering off. During the late 1800s, the rate of Catholic growth was more striking as compared with Protestant rates. Once again, immigration played a decisive role, with Italian, Polish, and Eastern European Catholics joining the earlier surge of Irish and German Catholics. The Christian Science church entered the tally in 1900, while the Mormons were continuing their growth.

By the year 1950, the Methodists for the first time were not growing at all in the number of congregations, thus putting an end to what once seemed an unstoppable expansion. The Dutch Reformed were not growing by this point, while both the Quakers and especially the Unitarians were losing congregations. The Presbyterians had a slight decrease in their number of congregations. The Disciples were significantly smaller, and yet this was related to a church division that led to the emergence of the Churches of Christ – a conservative offshoot that grew rapidly and was counted separately. Very striking in 1950 was the massive increase in the various Holiness and Pentecostal groups, and especially those that were not a part of the 1900 religious census, such as the Adventists, Assemblies of God, Church of the Brethren, Church of God (all groups), Church of God in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical United Brethren, Pentecostal, and Salvation Army. If we count together all the new Holiness and Pentecostal groups, then the total number of congregations comes to 32,935. This tally falls short of the 54,000 Methodist congregations in 1950. Yet one must consider that almost all of these congregations were established in about a half century's time. Thus the 1950 data show that

the spiritual dynamic by midcentury had shifted from the Methodists toward the newer Holiness and Pentecostal churches. The Baptists were continuing to grow through the first half of the 1900s, though at a lesser rate than in the 1800s.

Because of the circumstances of American slavery, it is not possible to give accurate statistics for black Americans who were church members during the colonial period and the pre–Civil War era. Speaking in generalities, the black population increased from about 1 million in 1800 to 3.5 million in 1860, 9 million in 1900, and 15 million by 1950. According to the 1936 religious census, of the 5.6 million black church members polled, 67 percent were Baptist, some 25 percent belonged to one of four Methodist bodies (African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal, or Methodist Episcopal), and only 2.5 percent were Roman Catholic. While this census may not have given full weight to the newer Holiness and Pentecostal groups, it showed the long-term predominance of Baptist and Methodist congregations among African Americans. A 1958 study showed that black church membership as a percentage of the black population exceeded the figure of 63 percent, the national average at this time.[18]

REVIVALS AND REVIVALISM IN PROTESTANT AMERICA

How did Protestantism grow? One of the distinctive features of American Protestantism was an ebb and flow in spiritual intensity. This meant that there were both rapid growth spurts and periods of relative stasis. The word generally used to describe the periods of growth or intensity is "revival," and its correlative term is "revivalism." While it is not always possible to tie a particular occurrence of religious revival to membership gains in the churches, in certain cases the correlation is clear. For example, in the aftermath of Charles Finney's preaching campaign in Rochester, New York, in 1830–31, church membership in the city doubled in six months. Paul Johnson described the revival's impact on the men of Rochester as follows: "In 1825 a northern businessman dominated his wife and children, worked irregular hours, consumed enormous amounts of alcohol, and seldom voted or went to church. Ten years later the same man went to church twice a week, treated his family with gentleness and love, drank nothing but water, worked steady hours ... and spent his spare time convincing others."[19] The nationwide 1857–58 revival led to striking increases

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[18] *Ibid.*, 148–51.
[19] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York, 1978), 4–5, 8.

in church membership within the first and second years after the revival, especially among Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.[20] In numerical terms, the greatest expansion was that of global Pentecostalism, which from its cradle in the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906–9 – and other points of dissemination – mushroomed to include some 524 million people around the world by the year 2000.[21]

Jerald Brauer claimed that "revivalism is the most important movement in the history of Protestantism in the United States."[22] William McLoughlin spoke of "revivals" and "awakenings" as the "shaping power of American culture from its inception," and he interpreted the whole of American history as a "millenarian movement" that included five major periods of cultural change and revitalization, stretching from the early 1600s to the late 1900s.[23] Religious revivals have affected almost every element of American society, including young and old, all races and ethnicities, the rich and poor, the college-educated and the working classes, urban and rural communities, and immigrants as well as natives.[24]

"Revivals" in American history were periods of renewed interest in religion – times of *intensified experience*. Participants in revivals often reported that old beliefs and doctrines suddenly came to life for them in new ways. Jonathan Edwards – colonial America's greatest intellectual – reported that on reading the Bible one day "there came into my soul … a sense of the glory of the divine being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before."[25] From this point onward, Edwards reported that he saw the world with a new pair of eyes. He perceived a glow of divine glory in the clouds, trees, and all of nature. As a revived person, Edwards went on to revive many others in the so-called Little Awakening of Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734–35, and the Great Awakening of 1740–41 that swept through the American colonies. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), Edwards' eyewitness account of the Northampton revival, is perhaps the most influential writing of its genre, even today.

[20] J. Edwin Orr, *The Event of the Century: The 1857–1858 Awakening* (Wheaton, IL, 1989), and Kathryn Long, "Revival of 1857–1858," in Michael J. McClymond, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*, 2 vols. (Westport, 2007) 1: 362–6, esp. 363.

[21] David B. Barrett, et al., eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York, 2000), 1: xx.

[22] Jerald C. Brauer, preface to Jonathan M. Butler, *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling: Heaven and Hell in American Protestantism, 1870–1920* (Brooklyn, 1991), xv.

[23] William J. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607–1977* (Chicago, 1978), 1, xiv.

[24] For a fuller account, see the essays and primary documents contained in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*.

[25] Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings: The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 16, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven, 1998), 792.

During religious revivals, whole communities were gripped by a powerful sense of the divine presence. Participants spoke of their great joy and faith, deep sorrow over sin, passionate desire to evangelize others, and heightened feelings of love for God and fellow human beings. Sometimes people publicly confessed their sins. Masses crowded into available buildings and filled them beyond capacity. Services might run until midnight. News of a revival traveled rapidly, and sometimes reports of revival – in person, print, or broadcast media – touched off revival in a different locality. Revivals were usually controversial, with proponents and opponents who vehemently criticized one another. Often in revivals there were bodily manifestations such as falling down, rolling on the ground, involuntary muscle movements, laughing, shouting, and dancing. Revivals involved reports of extraordinary occurrences, viewed by participants as "miracles" or "signs" of God's presence. These included such phenomena as dreams or visions. Beginning with the revivals of the late 1800s, there were reports of the healing of the sick. During revivals, conflicts broke out between ministers and laypeople, the latter believing that they were guided by God and not subject to ministerial authority.

American religious revivals are not spread equally throughout the decades and generations. Instead they were clumped into particular periods, including the 1730s–1740s, c.1800–c.1835, 1857–58, 1904–09, and 1949–50. A first major era of revivals was the 1730s and 1740s when the modern Evangelical movement began in Britain under the leadership of George Whitefield with John and Charles Wesley. On the American side, Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennent, and others took advantage of Whitefield's preaching expedition to America in 1740–41 to stir the embers of local revivals into a colonies-wide conflagration known as the Great Awakening. By contrast, the entire period from the late 1740s through the 1790s showed a dearth of revivals.

During the early 1800s, the Second Great Awakening was more diffuse. Differing regions and denominational traditions had their "seasons of grace" at varied times. Yet if the First Great Awakening set up a template for Evangelicalism in America, the Second Great Awakening was no less pervasive in its effects. This awakening was more theologically diverse than its predecessor. It included not only Calvinists, but Baptists and Methodists who embraced an Arminian stress on free will, challenged the authority of seminary-educated clergymen, and ignored the bookish, elite culture of New England. Charles Finney, beginning in the 1820s, embodied a brash new style of revival preaching. Using everyday language that some called coarse, Finney preached compelling sermons, prayed aloud for individuals by name, allowed women to pray aloud in mixed gatherings of men and

women, demanded immediate, public decisions for Christ, and summoned his converts to the "anxious bench" – a practice later referred to as the "altar call." Finney's "new measures" for evangelism caused controversies among the Presbyterians who had ordained him, and played a role in the 1837 Presbyterian split.

A key innovation in American revivals was the camp meeting, a days-long, outdoor, public religious gathering for evangelizing nonbelievers and for edifying the faithful. The most famous early camp meeting was held at Cane Ridge in Kentucky in August 1801, attended by some ten thousand people and noteworthy for the strange bodily manifestations (falling, weeping, and even animal-like sounds) among participants. The American Methodists by 1820 were holding about one thousand camp meetings in the United States every year.[26] Ellen Eslinger writes, "The camp meeting formed a world unto itself as rich and poor, man and woman, black and white, joined to pray together. For a few days and nights, participants inhabited a society ruled solely by Christian principles."[27] By the twentieth century, camp meetings had generally been replaced by tent meetings that offered protection from cold, hot, or rainy weather, but which like the camp meetings gave attenders an opportunity to inhabit temporarily a Christian enclave.

Yet the Second Great Awakening had an elite Calvinistic as well as a populist face. Alarmed by the spread of "French infidelity" (i.e., freethinking) during the 1780s–1790s, New England Congregationalists formed prayer networks on behalf of revival and denounced the skeptical philosophies that had become fashionable. Yale College president Timothy Dwight – Jonathan Edwards' grandson – gave public addresses that culminated in a revival in 1802–3 in which nearly a third of the Yale students professed conversion. Yale College underwent campus revivals of varied intensity in 1741, 1802, 1831, 1858, 1905, and 1962–63. A leading feature of the Second Great Awakening revivals, in both populist and elite forms, was a focus on missionary endeavors and social reforms, including abolitionism, temperance, foreign and domestic missions, Sabbath observance, and other causes.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, fewer than a quarter of all African Americans had been converted to Christianity. Yet revivalist Christianity was appealing because it resonated with an African emphasis on

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[26] Kenneth O. Brown, "Camp Meetings and Tent Meetings," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 75.

[27] Ellen Eslinger, "Cane Ridge Revival," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 88.

experiencing God's immediate presence. Throughout history, black Americans have maintained a revival tradition with distinctive characteristics.[28] Music, movement, rhythm, and dance were integral to black worship. Testimonials collected from former slaves during the early 1900s show the importance of revivalist religion in the daily lives of black Americans. Faced with agonizing life circumstances, blacks were able through their faith to maintain hope, dignity, and a sense of community. Often their spiritual narratives were dramatic, as in the account by an ex-slave who describes how "the power of God struck me" and "it seemed like something struck me in the top of my head and then went on out through the toes of my feet. I jumped, or rather, fell back against the back of my seat. I lay on the floor of the church. A voice said to me: 'You are no longer a sinner. Go and tell the world what I have done for you.' "[29] Conversion was a bodily experience and sometimes a drawn-out ordeal. Visionary elements were common – voices speaking or images appearing. The black intellectual W.E.B. DuBois grew up in New England and yet was awed by the spiritual power of the black revival services that he witnessed in the 1880s in Tennessee. DuBois lauded the beauty of "the Music" (i.e., black Spirituals) as a "most original and beautiful expression of human life and longing." He spoke of the revival's "Frenzy" – an emotional expression that had African as well as American and Christian roots.[30] Not all black leaders supported revivals. Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) called for better education of black ministers, viewed revivalist religion as vulgar, and regarded emotionalism in worship as a hindrance to social progress. Members of the black elite have expressed such views from the 1800s until the present time.

Women were conspicuous in the black revival tradition. Black preacher Jarena Lee, in her autobiography, noted that "though . . . there were lawyers, doctors and magistrates present to hear me speak, yet there was mourning and crying among sinners, for the Lord scattered fire . . . by the instrumentality of a poor coloured woman."[31] Amanda Smith, a self-described "washerwoman evangelist," was a female preacher during the 1870s–1890s in the AMEC, a missionary to England, India, and West Africa, and author

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[28] On black revivalism, see Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, 1979); and Glenn Hinson*, Fire in My Bones: Transcendence and the Holy Spirit in African American Gospel* (Philadelphia, 2000).

[29] Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and the Autobiographies of Ex-Slaves* (Philadelphia, 1969), 45.

[30] W.E.B. DuBois, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, 1903), 134–7.

[31] Jarena Lee, *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* (1836), cited in David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, 2005), 131.

of a five-hundred-page autobiography. She achieved all this despite birth into slavery, a lack of formal education, two unhappy marriages, the death in infancy of four of her five children, and lifelong opposition to her preaching from male ministers.[32] As blacks relocated from the rural South to major cities during the Great Migration of the early 1900s, revivalism persisted in an urban landscape of tenement apartments and storefront churches. Conversion occurred as penitents lay on the floor of the church, encircled by church mothers and praying saints, urging them to "come through" to a conscious experience of God's grace.[33]

The revival of 1857–58 – known as the Businessmen's Revival, the Layman's Revival, the Union Prayer Meeting Revival, or the Third Great Awakening – was a layman's movement. It may have been the closest thing to a truly national revival in U.S. history. Instead of centering on preachers and sermons, the 1857–58 revival revolved around prayer meetings in churches, auditoriums, and theaters in the downtown business districts. Starting in New York City, these "union" meetings occurred in hundreds of cities and towns across the nation, generally took place over the noon hour, and struck observers because of the numbers of males attending. Many women attended separate gatherings. Major Protestant denominations gained more than 474,000 new members during 1856–59, more than twice as many as were added in 1853–56. The revival brought new energy to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and showed what could be achieved through coordinated, interdenominational effort. It set the stage for revivals among both Confederate and Union troops during the Civil War.[34] In cultural terms it provided American males with an opportunity publicly to show their emotion – through public weeping – and thus established the display of emotion as a category of collective identity.[35]

During the closing decades of the 1800s, America experienced industrialization and urbanization, and the church faced new intellectual challenges. Yet during the 1870s Dwight L. Moody fashioned a new form of urban evangelism that blended forthright preaching, sentimental storytelling, altar calls, and a business-like efficiency in publicizing mass gatherings and gathering converts into cooperating churches. He was an evangelist that a Gilded Age capitalist might admire. Moody's approach to urban mass

[32] McClymond, "Smith, Amanda Berry (1837–1915)," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 402–4.

[33] James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (New York, 1953), 167–8, 174–8 – the conversion of "John," the novel's protagonist.

[34] Long, "Revival of 1857–1858," 1: 362–6.

[35] John Corrigan, *Business of the Heart: Religion and Emotion in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 2002).

evangelism set a precedent for twentieth-century evangelists such as Billy Sunday, Aimee Semple McPherson, Francisco Olazábal, Oral Roberts, and Billy Graham. In the late 1800s the more exuberant forms of revivalism were relegated to the fringes of the respectable Protestant denominations. Holiness evangelists – preaching salvation, holiness or "sanctification," and, increasingly, a message of healing for the physical body – were no longer welcome in the Methodist Church, and so became largely independent of denominational control. The urban rescue mission, exemplified by the Salvation Army, grew out of the Holiness movement. The 1890s witnessed a surge of interest in the Holy Spirit, spiritual healing, and other manifestations of divine power. Some were waiting for a new "Pentecost" in the American church. By the century's end, the Holiness movement's earlier preoccupation with *purity* gave place to a concern for *power*. The stage was set for the twentieth-century emergence of Pentecostalism.

Tracing its origins, according to one account, to an experience of Spirit baptism and tongues speaking by Agnes Ozman in Topeka, Kansas, on 1 January 1901, Pentecostalism emerged out of diverse elements. Among these were revivalist evangelicalism, divine healing, prophetic "end-times" Bible conferences, expectations of Jesus' return, calls for increased missionary efforts, Methodist sanctificationism, Reformed "Keswick" or "Higher Life" teaching, and an informal network of independent "come-outer" Holiness groups. By midcentury one observer called Pentecostalism a "third force" alongside of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.[36] The Pentecostals were radical, rampant supernaturalists. They expected God not only to forgive sins, but to heal the sick, to give dreams and visions to instruct them, to provide money to send missionaries, and to give supernatural ability to speak languages they had not studied.

Another characteristic of Pentecostalism was its rapid diffusion. The three-year-long revival at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles during 1906–09 proved decisive for the emergence of world Pentecostalism. Visitors came from every corner of the globe, and many went to new places after their transformative experiences in California. Within twenty years the Azusa Street "alums" had reached some twenty-five to thirty nations with the Pentecostal message. The Pentecostal expansion in North America reflected a global upsurge in revivalist Christianity. Between 1904 and 1909 there were powerful spiritual stirrings first in Wales (1904–05), in parts of India (1905), in the city of Los Angeles (1906), in Korea (1907), in Chile (1908), and in the Manchurian region of China (1909). The Pentecostal movement was thus both a fruit of global revivalist culture and a contributor to this culture. Early Pentecostalism deemphasized racial, ethnic, and

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[36] Henry P. Van Dusen, "Third Force in Christendom," *Life*, 9 June 1958, 113–24.

gender distinctions. Photographs of the original leaders of the Azusa Street Mission show blacks and whites, women and men, working together on terms of intimacy and equality. Remarkably for the time – an era of exclusionary "Jim Crow" laws – white Christians accepted the African American William Seymour as their leader. Yet the harmony did not persist. Within a decade, the Azusa Mission leadership had fractured along racial lines, new policies blocked the recognition of women's leadership, and by 1914 the white Pentecostals had organized the Assemblies of God denomination, while Seymour reluctantly conceded that the Azusa Mission would be forced to rely on black – not multiracial – leadership. Latino Pentecostals founded separate denominations to escape the paternalism of Anglo leadership. Yet Frank Bartleman's utterance at the revival's outset, that "the color line was washed away in the Blood [of Christ]," was a reminder of what the Pentecostal tradition had once been and could aspire to become again.[37]

During World War II and in its aftermath, the Evangelical movement evolved out of early-twentieth-century Fundamentalism and brought back revivalism. Beginning at his 1949 Los Angeles revival, Billy Graham rocketed to national and then international prominence, where he has remained for sixty years – a symbol of the American revival tradition. College campuses became a focus for spiritual awakenings in 1949–50, and again in 1970 and 1995. The charismatic renewal movement burst into national awareness in 1960 when Episcopal minister Dennis Bennett acknowledged from the pulpit of his southern California pulpit that he had spoken in tongues. This event signaled a crossover of charismatic gifts, previously limited to the socially marginalized Pentecostals, to mainline Protestants. Articles on the charismatics soon followed in *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines.[38]

The unexpected revival among California hippies in the late 1960s and early 1970s had a long-term impact through the emergence of the Calvary Chapel and the Association of Vineyard Churches (both linked to the "Jesus people" of the 1970s), and, further afield, the spread of a relaxed, informal style of "contemporary" worship in a wide spectrum of American churches from the 1980s onward. Indeed, the subtle influences of Pentecostal-charismatic practices were widespread. Roman Catholic parishes offered "contemporary" masses while some Lutherans and Presbyterians ended services with "healing prayers" that had never previously been part of their worship tradition. Outbreaks of revival in 1994–95 in Toronto, Canada, and Pensacola, Florida, had a global impact, as both locations became pilgrimage sites for Pentecostal and charismatic Christians. The host congregation

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[37] Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern Pentecost* (South Plainfield, NJ, 1980), 54.
[38] See *Time*, 15 Aug. 1960, and *Newsweek*, 4 July 1960.

in Pensacola drew more than two million visitors in only three years. The revival in Toronto proved to be even more influential, though it aroused controversy with the appearance of "holy laughter" and other involuntarily bodily manifestations.[39]

RIVAL CLAIMS AND INTRA-PROTESTANT TENSIONS

Protestants in America during the 1800s and well into the 1900s were a contentious lot who argued among themselves and made conflicting claims. Congregationalists and Presbyterians upheld the ideal of a learned ministry, and so looked askance on the Methodists' and Baptists' practices of lay exhortation. Joseph Vail, a Congregationalist minister from Connecticut, commented in 1803 that he could not approve of "giving license for everybody to speak and to exhort." Such meetings opened the door for "the ignorant and inexperienced" to exhibit their "pride" and "self-importance."[40] Lyman Beecher's *A Plea for the West* (1834) captured the anxiety of New England ministers that the western United States would collapse into "barbarism." Their proposed remedy was to transplant northeastern religion and culture to frontier regions, and the Plan of Union (1801) linked Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the task of domestic mission. Meanwhile, the New England Congregationalists had to deal with schism in their midst when the Unitarians declared independence in 1819, and a Massachusetts court decision in 1833 allowed the Unitarians to sever ties with the Congregationalists and yet hold onto their church property.

From their origins in the 1740s, the Methodists were controversial because of their demonstrative services – what a British observer in 1744 called "those sudden Agonies, Roarings and Screamings, Tremblings, Droppings-down, Ravings and Madnesses."[41] As one might expect, the Methodists – like other enthusiastic groups – settled down within two or three generations. The phenomena mentioned would have been as embarrassing to upscale American Methodists in the 1840s as they had been to an educated Englishman in the 1740s. A great strength of the Methodists in the late 1700s and early 1800s lay in their dedicated, itinerant clergy who constituted a "brotherhood of poverty" in which all preachers, regardless

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[39] The Toronto revival was attacked in Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival* (Dallas, 1997), and given qualified affirmation in James A. Beverly, *Revival Wars: A Critique of Counterfeit Revival* (Pickering, Canada, 1997).

[40] Cited in Mark Noll, et al., ed., *Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids, 1983), 168.

[41] Edmund Gibson, *Observations Upon the Conduct and Behaviour of … Methodists* (1744), cited in Hempton, *Methodism*, 33.

of social status, length of service, or talent, were expected to receive the same salary and to experience the same privations. In a 1798 message, Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury noted that "the lovers of this world will not long continue traveling preachers." Asbury himself never bought a house, never married, traveled 250,000 miles (mostly on horseback), and ate whatever food was given him.[42] The minimum Methodist clerical salary in 1800 of eighty dollars per year (raised to one hundred dollars in 1816) was about one-fifth of what Congregational preachers earned.[43] The Methodists sometimes referred to the Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers as "hireling" preachers. By contrast the Methodists offered "plain truth for plain people" and insisted that they were not afraid to offend the high and mighty with blunt talk about sin, worldliness, and repentance. Though the Baptist clergy did not itinerate to the same extent as the Methodists, they also in the 1800s were drawn from the people and often were not formally educated for ministry. Baptist congregations often had a bivocational minister – a farmer, blacksmith, or shopkeeper on weekdays, and a preacher on Sundays.

Baptists and Methodists, though sharing a similar cultural ethos, took opposing views on baptism. The Methodists baptized infants, while the Baptists insisted that only adults (or perhaps children) who could make a conscious profession of faith were proper recipients of baptism. What is more, the mode of baptism mattered to the Baptists. Methodist or Presbyterian "sprinkling" or "pouring" was inadequate. Only full immersion counted as baptism.[44] Baptist congregations installed "baptistries" at the front of their church sanctuaries so that immersion baptisms could be performed during worship. Moreover, the Baptists were not shy about propagating their views among those who had received only infant baptism. Baptist evangelists sometimes appeared at or near Methodist revival meetings to ask whether people wanted a real baptism – that is, by immersion in a pond or river. Yet the Baptists had internal as well as external debates. The Primitive or Antimission Baptists, led by Daniel Parker, took the Baptist principle of local, congregational governance to its logical limit. They rejected all denominational structures and mission agencies, withholding their financial support and withdrawing from affiliation. The twentieth-century Fundamentalist Baptists followed their example, emblazoning the word "Independent" as a badge of honor on placards outside their church buildings.

Yet the most interminable of the intra-Protestant theological debates was between Calvinists and Arminians. While the Presbyterians were

[42] See John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (New York, 2009).
[43] Hempton, *Methodism*, 121.
[44] Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York, 2005), 142.

officially Calvinistic, and the Methodists officially Arminian, the Baptists in their earlier period were split down the middle with "Regular" and "Hardshell" Baptists holding to Calvinism, and "General" Baptists embracing Arminianism. Over time most Baptist groups gravitated toward Arminianism. The matter took on special urgency when two leading lights of British evangelicalism – George Whitefield and John Wesley – came down on opposite sides. Wesley's sermon "Free Grace" (1740) denounced Calvinistic predestination and asserted that this doctrine was a "blasphemy" against God.[45] Though Wesley eulogized Whitefield at his death, their theological spat remained unresolved. During the early 1800s Methodists claimed that Calvinism was an elitist faith inconsistent with the message of "free grace" for all. Methodist Peter Cartwright acknowledged the role of Presbyterians in the famous Cane Ridge Revival, but claimed that "they, almost to a man, gave up these points of high Calvinism, and preached a free salvation to all mankind."[46] Cartwright had a point – revivals did change people's theology. Yet participants in Cane Ridge went in several directions – some to the Methodists, others to Barton Stone's "Christian" movement (later to be termed Restorationist), and still others to the Shakers. The Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge, and his Princeton Seminary colleague B. B. Warfield, debated all comers – Arminianism, Unitarianism, the New Haven thinkers, Charles Finney, and German rationalism.[47] Judged by intellectual erudition, few could match Hodge and Warfield in their spirited defense of confessionalist Calvinism.

In the aftermath of the 1801 Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky, a new set of views – known in time as Restorationism – came gradually into focus. Among its leaders were Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell. One of their themes was unity. It would be best, they argued, to abandon all later denominational labels and rely solely on the term "Christian." Another theme was primitivism, a return to what was conceived as New Testament Christianity. Creeds and confessions, though dear to Lutherans and Presbyterians, were not helps but hindrances to faith. Stone and Campbell were ambivalent on revivalism too. Both believed that there had been too much emphasis on religious emotions and not enough on gospel truth. Stone-Campbellism had a rational element that set it against popular evangelicalism. Finally, there was a stress on proper baptism. Though rejecting Roman Catholicism, they held a view of baptism akin to a Catholic position. The physical act of baptism brought remission of sins and the

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[45] John Wesley, "Free Grace," in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London, 1872), 7: 373–86.

[46] Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (New York, 1856), 46.

[47] See the compilation volume, Charles Hodge, *Essays and Reviews* (New York, 1857).

reception of the Holy Spirit, an idea traditionally known as "baptismal regeneration."[48] Alexander Campbell engaged in public debates with the skeptic Robert Owen, Roman Catholic Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Presbyterians W. L. McCalla and N. L. Rice. The published versions of these and other debates by Campbell ran to thousands of pages. He was a leading religious polemicist.

Restorationism created problems for the Baptists since they had long insisted that their views were based solely on the New Testament. Alexander Campbell had himself begun as a Baptist. Yet the Baptists did not leave the Restorationists unanswered. By the 1850s they developed a viewpoint known as Landmarkism, teaching that Baptists were "the only Christian community which has . . . preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages." Baptists did not need to restore the gospel since they had never lost it. Landmarkists argued that the earliest Christians were Baptists. Despite the claims of the Catholics, it was the Baptists who had continued in an unbroken succession through the centuries. Landmarkists went so far as to deny that non-Baptists groups were churches. They denied the validity of immersion when practiced outside of Baptist churches – so-called alien immersion.[49] Landmarkism's continuing influence became apparent when William Whitsett, professor and president of Southern Baptist Seminary, published *A Question in Baptist History* (1896), challenging the notion of an unbroken Baptist succession through the centuries. He could not find any evidence that British Baptists had immersed prior to 1641. In consequence, Whitsett was forced to resign from the seminary and teach elsewhere, though his historical research was later vindicated.

Adventist, Holiness, and Pentecostal Christians all made claims that set them apart from others. The Adventist movement took its beginning with William Miller's prediction of Jesus' return in 1843. Through the influence of Ellen White, whose abundant writings marked her as a "prophetess" in the eyes of her followers, the Adventists adopted the view that Saturday was the only legitimate day for Christian worship – hence the designation, *Seventh-day* Adventist. Another distinction was White's stress on proper diet for righteous living. John Kellogg, founder of the cereal company and progenitor of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, was among her disciples.[50] The Holiness people in the Methodist Church and in other denominations were

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[48] John Mark Hicks, "The Role of Faith in Conversion: Balancing Faith, Christian Experience, and Baptism," in William R. Baker, ed., *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Downers Grove, IL, 2002), 91–124.

[49] Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), 182–5.

[50] See Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville, 2001).

also a breed apart. Their "second blessing" experience came subsequent to conversion and was thought to bring a higher level of spirituality. So also with the Pentecostals; most believed that they were an end-time remnant that Jesus Christ would soon take with him to heaven while worldly denominationalists were left behind. Spirit baptism was not merely about speaking in tongues; it sealed a person's identity as part of the true "Bride of Christ."[51]

Distinctions and rivalries among American Protestants in the 1800s and early 1900s had to do with behavior as well as belief. Historically, both Methodists and Baptists were generally "teetotalists" who rejected all consumption of alcohol. Among some nineteenth-century American Protestants – and perhaps for the first time in church history – fermented wine was banished from the Lord's Supper in favor of unfermented grape juice. Holiness and early Pentecostal groups maintained stringent behavioral standards. There were written or unwritten prohibitions against the consumption of alcohol, smoking, Sabbath breaking, card playing, pool shooting, theatergoing, film watching, and sometimes against necktie wearing, gum-chewing, and the eating of pork, catfish, or ice cream. Long hair on men, short hair on women, women's cosmetics, and fashionable female dresses, ribbons, and hats were also banned. With some exceptions, most of these cultural taboos disappeared in Pentecostal circles during the late twentieth century. The mainline charismatics of the 1960s and 1970s, who had never shared in the sectarian Pentecostal culture, drank their beer and wine with a clear conscience. By the late 1900s, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist congregations rarely stipulated whether their members should smoke or drink. Yet some Baptists, especially in the South, continued to be "teetotalist." In conservative churches, moreover, there was a stubborn taboo against tobacco. Lighting up a cigarette in the church parking lot was a sure mark of being a visitor or newcomer.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IMPACTS

As Protestantism expanded, so did its cultural influence. Various authors have seen a link between the Great Awakening of the 1740s and the democratic and republican ideologies propounded during the American Revolution. Mark Noll speaks of "Christian republicanism"

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[51] Mel Dieter's *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Metuchen, NJ, 1996) highlights the centrality of Methodism. Vinson Synan in *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, 1997), views the Holiness movement as a prologue to Pentecostalism.

as an American cultural creation.[52] In early modern Europe, republican political ideas were often associated with secular, anticlerical, and anti-church views, as evident during the French Revolution. The American Revolution, by contrast, was friendly to religion. It bequeathed to the American people a "Christian republicanism" that understood limited, constitutional government as a political system uniquely congruent with biblical principles. What Tocqueville in the early 1800s called a "democratic and republican Christianity" was a blending of seventeenth-century Calvinist political theories with eighteenth-century American revolutionary ideologies and populist, lay-oriented impulses emanating from the religious revivals.

Another cultural legacy of Protestantism lay in a sacred patriotism that distinguished America from other nations. In 1630, while yet on board ship and bound for Massachusetts Bay, John Winthop in "A Model of Christian Charity" announced that the eyes of all nations would be on the settlers in America. This theme continued. Ezra Stiles in *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor* (1783) declared, "This great American revolution, this recent political phenomenon of a new sovereignty arising among the sovereign powers of the earth, will be attended to and contemplated by all nations." Presbyterian Robert Smith preached that "the cause of America is the cause of Christ."[53] Around 1900, U.S. Senator Albert J. Beveridge stated that "of all our race He [God] has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world."[54] America's global reputation for humanitarianism had something to do with this ideology of the "redeemer nation." Yet while the notion of a noble calling could inspire people to unselfish and heroic deeds, it also could and did foment bigotry, xenophobia, and war against outsiders. The unconscionable treatment of Native Americans, African Americans, immigrant communities, and foreign nations (in imperialistic conflicts) reflected a shadow side of American Protestant patriotism.

American Protestantism during the 1800s was known for its reformist zeal. Charles Finney wrote that "the great business of the church is to reform the world – to put away every kind of sin.... The Christian

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[52] Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2002). For variations on this theme, see Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), and Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, 1977).

[53] Cited in Noll, et al., *Eerdmans Handbook to Christianity in America*, 168, 137.

[54] Cited in Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, 1980), vii. See also Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971).

Church was designed to make aggressive movements in every direction . . . until every form of iniquity shall be driven from the earth."[55] The hymn, "America, the Beautiful," exhibited a kind of millennialist dream in one of its verses.

> O beautiful for patriot dream, that sees beyond the years
> Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears!
> America! America! God shed His grace on thee.

"Undimmed by human tears"? Only an American Protestant would likely have penned these words. Charles Sheldon's novel *In His Steps* (1897) posed the famous question, "What would Jesus do?" and ended with its protagonist having a vision of Jesus and pondering the impending "dawn of this millennium of Christian history."[56] Nor were optimistic views limited to conservative churchmen. Social Gospel pioneer Walter Rauschenbusch declared spiritual victory in 1912 when he wrote that "the larger part of the work of Christianizing the social order is already accomplished."[57]

The early 1800s witnessed the formation of "moral" and "Sabbath societies" to promote Protestant lifestyles.[58] This was a golden age for Protestant print culture. Countless periodicals appeared, representing every conceivable shade of opinion. American Protestants were among the world's most intensive consumers of religious literature.[59] The American Bible Society (est. 1816) and the American Tract Society (est. 1825) sought to put the Bible and good Christian literature into every home. Schools in America used *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*, which sold 122 million copies between 1826 and 1920, and enforced Protestant values with such lessons as "Respect for the Sabbath Rewarded," "The Goodness of God," "No Excellence Without Labor," and "Religion the Only Basis of Society."[60] Prior to the Civil War, nearly all college presidents were clergymen, who typically taught courses on "moral science" or "evidences of Christianity." Protestant Christianity seemed to be in the water, food, and air of America. Roman Catholic objections generally fell on deaf ears. American Protestants failed to perceive that the tax-supported public schools were offering a distinctly *Protestant* education, or rather indoctrination.

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[55] Cited in H. Ray Dunning, ed., *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of Last Things* (Kansas City, 1995), 166.

[56] Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps: "What Would Jesus Do?"* (Chicago, 1897), 293.

[57] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York, 1912), 155.

[58] On Sabbath observance, see Alexis McCrossan, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (Ithaca, 2000).

[59] See Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill, 2004).

[60] Noll et al., eds., *Eerdmans Handbook*, 281.

Throughout the 1800s and 1900s Protestants pursued domestic and foreign missions, establishing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810) and the American Home Missionary Society (1826). The Student Volunteer Movement among American university students, beginning in 1886, recruited nearly twenty thousand new recruits for missionary service – referred to as the largest influx of new personnel for Christian missions in the history of Christianity. Throughout the 1800s, temperance societies sought to remove drunkenness and alcoholic beverages from American life. Women played a crucial role, especially through such organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, established 1874, headed by Frances Willard. Evangelical feminists lobbied for a greater place for women in the church's ministry and leadership. The abolitionist struggle was tied closely to the history of Protestant revivalism. Historian Gilbert Barnes, and more recently John Hammond, showed a direct correlation between involvement in Protestant revivals and abolitionist viewpoints.[61]

The energy of American Protestant social activism was diminished by a series of setbacks and disappointments in the early 1900s – the outbreak, events, and aftermath of World War I, the failure of Prohibition, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism and Communism in Europe, and the lingering effects of the Fundamentalist-Modernist split. Nonetheless, the civil rights struggle of African Americans was largely centered in the black churches. The 1950s–1960s campaign for racial equality was an extension and adaptation of a Protestant revivalism that already permeated the lives of most black Americans – a form of "political evangelism," in the phrase of David D. Daniels III.[62]

In sum, then, American Protestantism exerted powerful social and cultural influences because it was expansive, evangelistic, energetic, activistic, progressive, optimistic, and millennialist and did its work through voluntary organizations of clergy and laypersons who acted independent of governmental supports and controls. Particularly during the early 1800s there was an ideal of self-reliance, self-denial, and hard work on behalf of lofty goals. From their earliest days Americans set their eyes not only on their own land, but on the entire world as their sphere of action and influence. It is not surprising that the United States first landed a man on the moon. On

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[61] Gilbert Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830–1844* (Washington, DC, 1933), and John L. Hammond, *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and American Voting Behavior* (Norwood, NJ, 1979).

[62] David D. Daniels III, "African American Revivals," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 7. See David L. Chappell, "Religious Revivalism in the Civil Rights Movement," *African American Review* 36 (2002): 581–95.

the other hand, American Protestantism was often self-righteous, cocksure, jingoistic, meddlesome, anti-intellectualistic, flamboyant, imperialistic, war prone, and cruel toward racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the evil of slavery continued unabated while Protestant Christians argued among themselves over its legitimacy. Taking the measure of American Protestantism as a whole from 1800 to 1950, one might repeat what many non-Americans have said, namely, that the Americans seemed an optimistic bunch. They were unusually ready to take on grand and global causes. If there is a single, salient legacy of the Protestant movement in America, it may be an instinct and spirit of hope.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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Section III

CHANGING RELIGIOUS REALITIES

DIVERSITY, REVIVAL, RIVALRY, AND REFORM: PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800–1950

MICHAEL J. MCCLYMOND

Statistics tell a story. The newly formed United States of America included roughly 300,000 Protestant Christians in the year 1800. Yet by the year 1950, this number had grown to 43 million. This is a 143-fold increase, or a growth of 14,300 percent. The figure becomes more striking when one considers that the population of the nation, according to the United States Census, increased during the same period by the order of 28.4 times, from 5.3 million to 150.7 million. The increase in Protestant Christian affiliation during this period was 5.0 times the rate of the general population increase. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark noted that "the most striking trend in the history of religion in America is growth." The overall rate of religious adherence in the U.S. population steadily climbed from 17 percent in 1776, to 34 percent in 1850, 45 percent in 1890, 56 percent in 1926, 59 percent in 1952, and 62 percent in 1980.[1]

One thing should be clear. It is a mistake to think that there was a Christian golden age in the United States during the colonial era, followed by a long gradual process of secularization and decline. *Steadily increasing religious affiliation* is the dominant pattern in the United States over the last two centuries. The period of lowest religious affiliation in American history occurred around 1800 when there were much lower levels of church membership than at the present.[2] Several lines of inquiry arise out of this numerical information, to wit: Why has Protestant Christianity been such a strong and growing phenomenon throughout most of American history? What were the driving factors in this expansion? What disparities existed between the various groups? Why did some grow while others stagnated?

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[1] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, 1992), 1, 16.

[2] One test of how well "churched" America was is the ratio of inhabitants to church congregations. By this measure, there were 427 inhabitants per church congregation in the year 1650, rising to 1,122 in 1800, and falling again to 528 by 1950. Edwin Scott Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York, 1962), 162.

What cultural and social impact did Protestant growth have on American society and culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? This essay will attempt to give a concise answer to these questions. It will begin by noting the factors identified by church leaders, historians, and sociologists to account for the dynamic character of American Protestant Christianity.

UNDERSTANDING THE ETHOS OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM

From the 1830s to the present time, the literature on American Protestantism has returned time and again to certain common themes – "democratic" or "republican" religion, the absence of a state-subsidized church or religious monopoly, the separation of church and state, a voluntary system of religious endeavor, a tendency toward optimistic and millennialist hopes, an activist faith in the churches' role in society, and the role of innovation and religious creativity. From the early days of the republic, churches were voluntary associations, not dependent on government revenues or subsidies – with exceptions, in earlier years, for the established Anglican Church in Virginia until 1776, and the Congregational Church in Connecticut until 1818, in New Hampshire until 1819, and in Massachusetts until 1833.

By the mid-1800s, a consensus began to emerge on the role of religion in American society. Alexis de Tocqueville, in his pioneering work, *Democracy in America* (1835), asserted that "there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America." He explained that American Christianity had a different character than Christianity in other contexts. "The greatest part of British America was peopled by men who, after having shaken off the authority of the Pope, acknowledged no other religious supremacy: they brought with them into the New World a form of Christianity which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion." Tocqueville laid stress on the strong decentralizing forces at work in American society and coined the term "individualism" to describe what he saw in America. Yet he emphasized the countervailing tendency of religion to nurture "habits of the heart" that drew people into commitment and community with one another.[3]

Building on the work of Tocqueville, Robert Baird, in *Religion in America* (1844), embodied a confident Protestantism characterized by an individualistic approach to evangelism or "soul-winning," straightforward appeals to the teaching of the Bible, a missionary campaign to convert the world,

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[3] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. Philips Bradley (New York, 1945), 1: 311.

and an ethos of hard work and intense piety. Baird believed that the major Protestant denominations were basically compatible with one another and could effectively collaborate in Christian service. He included a section in his book on "unevangelical denominations," including Roman Catholics and Unitarians, but he generally viewed them as marginal to American life. The power of the American churches lay in what Baird called the "voluntary principle," which meant that "the people feel that they can help themselves.... Should a church steeple fall to the ground ... instead of looking to some government official ... a few of them put their hands into their pockets, and supply these means themselves."[4] What Ralph Waldo Emerson referred to as "self-reliance," and what others have called "rugged individualism," featured prominently in Baird's account of American Protestantism.[5]

Philip Schaff's *America* (1855) and Leonard Bacon's *A History of American Christianity* (1897) echoed the interpretations of American religion laid down by Tocqueville and Baird, while adding new elements to the mix. Given his Continental background, Schaff – like Tocqueville – was impressed with the strength of the American churches in the absence of a European-style system of governmental patronage and of tax support for ministers and churches. American laypeople were more active in Christian endeavors than their European counterparts. Moreover, American clergymen had to compete for congregants and exert themselves to maintain their standing within a kind of religious free-market system. As a result, both clergy and laity were invigorated. "Free-will offerings" supported "a multitude of churches, ministers, colleges, theological seminaries, and benevolent institutions," wrote Schaff. Another element that Schaff noted was America's flair for religious innovation and for altering Old World creeds and practices: "America seems destined to be the Phenix [*sic*] grave ... of all European churches and sects." From the conflict of the American religious groups "something wholly new will gradually arise," Schaff predicted, and thus there was something positive in the "sectarianism" often lamented by European observers.[6] Recent authors have also highlighted the innovativeness of American religion as a factor in its growth and cultural influence.[7]

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[4] Robert Baird, *Religion in America*, abridgement with introduction by Henry Warner Bowden (New York, 1970), 124.

[5] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1940), 145–69.

[6] Philip Schaff, *America* (1855), cited in R. Marie Griffith, ed., *American Religions: A Documentary History* (New York, 2008), 266–8.

[7] See, for instance, Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); and Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religious Groups in America* (New York, 2000).

Toward the century's end, Leonard Bacon gave a detailed account of the "organized beneficence" of the American Protestant churches in the 1800s.[8] Yet it should be noted that both Schaff's and Bacon's ideal of Christian collaboration offered pride of place to Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, gave only grudging acknowledgment to Methodists and Baptists, failed to account for African American churches, and excluded Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Mormons, Adventists, Holiness, Christian, and adherents of other smaller groups. Even at its most expansive, the Protestant "united front" had built-in limitations.

Twentieth-century interpreters added new elements in their view of American Protestantism. One of these was the "frontier hypothesis" as formulated by Frederick Jackson Turner, to the effect that "the peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people ... in winning a wilderness."[9] Applying Turner's concept, William Warren Sweet in *The American Churches* (1948) argued that revivalism – and especially its Methodist version – was a form of religion well adapted to a frontier setting and expanding nation. Those who lived on the frontier were "impatient of restraint, lovers of liberty" and "not afraid to entertain new ideas."[10] Sweet thus intimated that the ethos of American Protestantism was due not to church-state separation, but to the frontier environment itself. Another implication of Sweet's analysis was that Christian revivals had passed their prime. Having flourished in the frontier setting, revivals would vanish as the frontier itself vanished from the national map. Yet Sweet's prediction of revivalism's eclipse proved premature.[11] The post–World War II period witnessed a surge of revivalist Protestantism as reflected in the preaching of Billy Graham as well as in the newer Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

A different interpretation of revivalism appeared in Timothy L. Smith's *Revivalism and Social Reform* (1957). Far from being social laggards, in Smith's view the leading revivalists were a cultural vanguard "in the widespread attack upon slavery, poverty, and greed," preparing the way for what became known as the Social Gospel. They promoted interdenominational fellowship, gave priority to ethics over dogma, and democratized the

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[8] Leonard Bacon, *A History of American Christianity* (New York, 1901), 246–91.

[9] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1921), 2. The quotation derives from the reprinting of Turner's 1893 essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

[10] William Warren Sweet, *The American Churches* (New York, 1948), 34–5.

[11] Michael J. McClymond, "Issues and Explanations in the Study of North American Revivalism," in McClymond, ed., *Embodying the Spirit: New Perspectives on North American Revivalism* (Baltimore, 2004), 4–5.

practice of Christianity. In light of their social impact, one might say that the revivalists were the original progressives. Smith rejected Sweet's frontier hypothesis, claiming that the "vital center of American Protestantism was in the cities rather than the rural West."[12] Revivals were an urban, transatlantic phenomenon in the 1800s – as much at home in the cities as in the countryside. Like Smith, Nathan Hatch in *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989) placed Methodists in the foreground. The crucial distinction in the early 1800s, Hatch argued, was not between conservatives and liberals, but between elites and populists. The New England elite feared "barbarism" in the West, held to Calvinist theology, and sought to maintain ministerial privileges and a seminary-educated clergy. Yet Methodists and Baptists held raucous worship services, embraced Arminian theology, and believed that academic theology was less important than an ability to preach in plain, passionate language.

Beginning in the 1970s, mainline church leaders became increasingly concerned about membership losses registered in the 1960s in some larger Protestant denominations. Dean Kelley's *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (1972) fomented controversy with its claim that tolerant, open-minded, culturally engaging churchmanship correlated with decline rather than growth. Expanding churches, Kelley argued, demanded doctrinal conformity with their creed, enforced behavioral compliance, and imposed sanctions against rule breakers. Through a kind of reverse psychology, it was strictness and not leniency that attracted and held church members. More recent studies have confirmed Kelley's basic argument – notably, Roger Finke's and Rodney Stark's *The Churching of America, 1776–1990* (1992). Finke and Stark argued that America throughout its history has been a religious marketplace in which stricter, more demanding groups won the larger numbers of new members. "To the degree that denominations rejected traditional doctrines and ceased to make serious demands on their followers, they ceased to prosper. The churching of America was accomplished by aggressive churches committed to vivid otherworldliness."[13] Finke and Stark showed that the Congregationalists were well positioned for expansion at the end of the 1700s. Yet by 1820 or 1830 they had already lost substantial "market share" to the Methodists and Baptists.

Methodist history seems to confirm Finke and Stark's thesis. While the Methodists were an undignified and culturally marginal group in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the Methodist growth rate was phenomenal. Equally striking, however, is the leveling effect from 1900 to 1950, which

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[12] Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1957), 7–9.
[13] Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 1.

followed the gradual decline of the strict "class meetings," the embrace of a more liberal theology, and the bishops' rejection of the independent Holiness evangelists.[14] By the 1960s the Methodists showed a decline in total numbers. *The Churching of America* overturned a number of prevailing assumptions. Contrary to the "myth of urban irreligion," cities in general have been hospitable to religious practice and adherence. When different religious groups compete with one another, this generally raises the level of religious affiliation in a given region. Following the logic of the marketplace, a greater number of religious options means that the market will present specialized offerings to cover a range of religious preferences.

To summarize then, a century and a half of scholarship on American Protestantism suggests that its remarkable growth and vitality has much to do with its voluntary support system, its entrepreneurial ethos, and the high demands placed on church members. To a large extent, the leaders of American churches expected much more – and got much more – than their counterparts in the European state-supported churches. Because of the official disestablishment of religion (a process not completed in all states until the 1830s), America was a religious marketplace in which many different versions of Protestant Christianity were available to the public at large, churches competed with one another for members, and this competition encouraged exertion and innovation in the religious sphere. Paradoxically, it was the stricter and more demanding religious groups that have shown the highest growth rates during the last two centuries – the Methodists and the Baptists in the early 1800s, with the Southern Baptists continuing their expansion until recently, followed by the Holiness groups of the late 1800s, and then by the Pentecostals (after 1901), the Fundamentalists (after 1919), the Evangelicals (after 1942), the Charismatics in the mainline churches (after 1960), and the newer Neo-Charismatic or "Third Wave" churches (since the 1980s). Stricter quasi-Protestant groups such the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses have also grown rapidly.

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[14] On changes in nineteenth-century American Methodism, see David Francis Holsclaw, "The Demise of Disciplined Christian Fellowship: The Methodist Class Meeting in Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1979); Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism, 1790–1935* (New York, 1965); and A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington, 1993), and "A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp-meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness versus the Methodist Episcopal Church," *Church History* 66 (1997): 268–83.

TABLE 11.1. *Roman Catholics and*
Protestants in the United States[15]

Roman Catholics	Protestants
1800: <0.1 million	1800: 0.3 million
1840: 0.5 million	1840: 2 million
1880: 6 million	1880: 9 million
1900: 12 million	1900: 16 million
1920: 18 million	1920: 25 million
1940: 21 million	1940: 32 million
1950: 28 million	1950: 43 million

A STATISTICAL PICTURE OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM, 1800–1950

A nuanced portrait of American Protestantism emerges when we look at specific data. Table 11.1 shows the total figures for Roman Catholics and for major Protestant groups.

The total number included in the major Protestant groups remained higher than the numbers of Roman Catholics at all points. Yet the Roman Catholic Church by the mid-1800s – roughly the time of the Civil War – was larger than either the Methodists taken collectively or the Baptists taken collectively, and thus became the largest single religious community in the United States.

An interesting picture takes shape if we count not the number of members or affiliates but the numbers of *congregations* in the United States within various traditions, and then trace this across the decades. Such a comparison helps to assess the relative growth and vitality of differing traditions (see Table 11.2).

Some comments are in order. For the earliest year of reference – 1660 – one notes the preponderance of the Congregationalists, who had seventy-five congregations as compared with seventy-nine in all the other denominations listed. The Anglicans were the second strongest tradition in the 1600s. One is struck by the large increases in the number of congregations by the year 1780. While the numbers of congregations of Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Dutch Reformed have all grown by roughly a tenfold factor, the Baptists and the Presbyterians congregations have each increased almost

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[15] These are rounded or rough figures, taken from the graphs contained in Gaustad, *Historical Atlas*, 110–11. This study did not include Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses among the Protestant groups.

	1660	1780	1820	1860	1900	1950
Adventist	—	—	—	—	—	2,712
Anglican/Episcopal	41	406	600	2,145	6,264	7,784
Assemblies of God	—	—	—	—	—	5,950
Baptist	4	457	2,700	12,150	49,905	77,000
Christian Science	—	—	—	—	504	3,040
Church of the Brethren	—	—	—	—	—	1,029
Church of God (all groups)	—	—	—	—	—	6,972
Church of God in Christ	—	—	—	—	—	3,407
Church of the Nazarene	—	—	—	—	—	3,480
Churches of Christ	—	—	—	—	—	14,500
Congregational	75	749	1,100	2,234	5,604	5,679
Disciples	—	—	—	2,100	10,298	7,769
Dutch Reformed	13	127	180	440	619	763
Evangelical United Brethren	—	—	—	—	—	4,323
German Reformed (Evangelical and Reformed)	—	201	300	676	1,677	2,754
Greek Archdiocese of North and South America	—	—	—	—	—	320
Lutheran	4	240	800	2,128	10,787	16,403
Mennonite	—	—	—	—	—	1,201
Methodist	—	—	2,700	19,883	53,908	54,000
Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)	—	—	—	—	1,041	2,700
Pentecostal (all groups)[17]	—	—	—	—	—	3,682
Presbyterian	5	495	1,700	6,406	15,452	13,200
Quaker	—	—	350	726	1,031	654
Roman Catholic	12	56	124	2,250	10,339	15,533
Russian Orthodox	—	—	—	—	—	399
Salvation Army	—	—	—	—	—	1,380
Unitarian	—	—	150	264	455	357
Universalist	—	—	200	664	800	401

[16] Data compiled from *ibid.*, 3–4, 43–4, 54–5.

[17] "Pentecostal" is commonly used to designate a family of denominations and not a single group. The term, as Gaustad uses it, seems to refer to several smaller bodies and does not include the larger denominations listed elsewhere on the chart and often thought of as Pentecostal.

100-fold in this period of 120 years. The Lutheran congregations increased by a factor of sixty, and the Roman Catholic congregations five times over.

The Methodists seem to have come out of nowhere by the year 1820 – not being a part of the 1780 census – with 2,700 congregations in total. This is roughly equal to the number of the Congregational and Presbyterian congregations together. The Baptist growth is also striking, though not as dramatic as that of the Methodists. In the 1820 census one finds for the first time such groups as the Unitarians and Universalists, which did not exist as distinct religious bodies at the time of the 1780 census.

By the year 1860, the Methodists surpassed the Baptists with the largest number of congregations of any religious group. The number of Roman Catholic congregations grew eighteenfold from 1820 to 1860, in large part due to Irish and German Catholic immigration. Not surprisingly, the 1830s through the 1850s was a period of intense preoccupation with the Catholic "threat" to America's Protestant identity.

We see only flat or modest growth among the Quakers, Dutch Reformed, Unitarians, and Universalists by the year 1900. The Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians were all continuing their growth, and yet the growth rate for the Methodists was sharply tapering off. During the late 1800s, the rate of Catholic growth was more striking as compared with Protestant rates. Once again, immigration played a decisive role, with Italian, Polish, and Eastern European Catholics joining the earlier surge of Irish and German Catholics. The Christian Science church entered the tally in 1900, while the Mormons were continuing their growth.

By the year 1950, the Methodists for the first time were not growing at all in the number of congregations, thus putting an end to what once seemed an unstoppable expansion. The Dutch Reformed were not growing by this point, while both the Quakers and especially the Unitarians were losing congregations. The Presbyterians had a slight decrease in their number of congregations. The Disciples were significantly smaller, and yet this was related to a church division that led to the emergence of the Churches of Christ – a conservative offshoot that grew rapidly and was counted separately. Very striking in 1950 was the massive increase in the various Holiness and Pentecostal groups, and especially those that were not a part of the 1900 religious census, such as the Adventists, Assemblies of God, Church of the Brethren, Church of God (all groups), Church of God in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical United Brethren, Pentecostal, and Salvation Army. If we count together all the new Holiness and Pentecostal groups, then the total number of congregations comes to 32,935. This tally falls short of the 54,000 Methodist congregations in 1950. Yet one must consider that almost all of these congregations were established in about a half century's time. Thus the 1950 data show that

the spiritual dynamic by midcentury had shifted from the Methodists toward the newer Holiness and Pentecostal churches. The Baptists were continuing to grow through the first half of the 1900s, though at a lesser rate than in the 1800s.

Because of the circumstances of American slavery, it is not possible to give accurate statistics for black Americans who were church members during the colonial period and the pre–Civil War era. Speaking in generalities, the black population increased from about 1 million in 1800 to 3.5 million in 1860, 9 million in 1900, and 15 million by 1950. According to the 1936 religious census, of the 5.6 million black church members polled, 67 percent were Baptist, some 25 percent belonged to one of four Methodist bodies (African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal, or Methodist Episcopal), and only 2.5 percent were Roman Catholic. While this census may not have given full weight to the newer Holiness and Pentecostal groups, it showed the long-term predominance of Baptist and Methodist congregations among African Americans. A 1958 study showed that black church membership as a percentage of the black population exceeded the figure of 63 percent, the national average at this time.[18]

REVIVALS AND REVIVALISM IN PROTESTANT AMERICA

How did Protestantism grow? One of the distinctive features of American Protestantism was an ebb and flow in spiritual intensity. This meant that there were both rapid growth spurts and periods of relative stasis. The word generally used to describe the periods of growth or intensity is "revival," and its correlative term is "revivalism." While it is not always possible to tie a particular occurrence of religious revival to membership gains in the churches, in certain cases the correlation is clear. For example, in the aftermath of Charles Finney's preaching campaign in Rochester, New York, in 1830–31, church membership in the city doubled in six months. Paul Johnson described the revival's impact on the men of Rochester as follows: "In 1825 a northern businessman dominated his wife and children, worked irregular hours, consumed enormous amounts of alcohol, and seldom voted or went to church. Ten years later the same man went to church twice a week, treated his family with gentleness and love, drank nothing but water, worked steady hours ... and spent his spare time convincing others."[19] The nationwide 1857–58 revival led to striking increases

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[18] *Ibid.*, 148–51.
[19] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York, 1978), 4–5, 8.

in church membership within the first and second years after the revival, especially among Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.[20] In numerical terms, the greatest expansion was that of global Pentecostalism, which from its cradle in the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906–9 – and other points of dissemination – mushroomed to include some 524 million people around the world by the year 2000.[21]

Jerald Brauer claimed that "revivalism is the most important movement in the history of Protestantism in the United States."[22] William McLoughlin spoke of "revivals" and "awakenings" as the "shaping power of American culture from its inception," and he interpreted the whole of American history as a "millenarian movement" that included five major periods of cultural change and revitalization, stretching from the early 1600s to the late 1900s.[23] Religious revivals have affected almost every element of American society, including young and old, all races and ethnicities, the rich and poor, the college-educated and the working classes, urban and rural communities, and immigrants as well as natives.[24]

"Revivals" in American history were periods of renewed interest in religion – times of *intensified experience*. Participants in revivals often reported that old beliefs and doctrines suddenly came to life for them in new ways. Jonathan Edwards – colonial America's greatest intellectual – reported that on reading the Bible one day "there came into my soul … a sense of the glory of the divine being; a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before."[25] From this point onward, Edwards reported that he saw the world with a new pair of eyes. He perceived a glow of divine glory in the clouds, trees, and all of nature. As a revived person, Edwards went on to revive many others in the so-called Little Awakening of Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734–35, and the Great Awakening of 1740–41 that swept through the American colonies. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), Edwards' eyewitness account of the Northampton revival, is perhaps the most influential writing of its genre, even today.

[20] J. Edwin Orr, *The Event of the Century: The 1857–1858 Awakening* (Wheaton, IL, 1989), and Kathryn Long, "Revival of 1857–1858," in Michael J. McClymond, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*, 2 vols. (Westport, 2007) 1: 362–6, esp. 363.

[21] David B. Barrett, et al., eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York, 2000), 1: xx.

[22] Jerald C. Brauer, preface to Jonathan M. Butler, *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling: Heaven and Hell in American Protestantism, 1870–1920* (Brooklyn, 1991), xv.

[23] William J. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607–1977* (Chicago, 1978), 1, xiv.

[24] For a fuller account, see the essays and primary documents contained in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*.

[25] Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings: The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 16, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven, 1998), 792.

During religious revivals, whole communities were gripped by a powerful sense of the divine presence. Participants spoke of their great joy and faith, deep sorrow over sin, passionate desire to evangelize others, and heightened feelings of love for God and fellow human beings. Sometimes people publicly confessed their sins. Masses crowded into available buildings and filled them beyond capacity. Services might run until midnight. News of a revival traveled rapidly, and sometimes reports of revival – in person, print, or broadcast media – touched off revival in a different locality. Revivals were usually controversial, with proponents and opponents who vehemently criticized one another. Often in revivals there were bodily manifestations such as falling down, rolling on the ground, involuntary muscle movements, laughing, shouting, and dancing. Revivals involved reports of extraordinary occurrences, viewed by participants as "miracles" or "signs" of God's presence. These included such phenomena as dreams or visions. Beginning with the revivals of the late 1800s, there were reports of the healing of the sick. During revivals, conflicts broke out between ministers and laypeople, the latter believing that they were guided by God and not subject to ministerial authority.

American religious revivals are not spread equally throughout the decades and generations. Instead they were clumped into particular periods, including the 1730s–1740s, c.1800–c.1835, 1857–58, 1904–09, and 1949–50. A first major era of revivals was the 1730s and 1740s when the modern Evangelical movement began in Britain under the leadership of George Whitefield with John and Charles Wesley. On the American side, Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennent, and others took advantage of Whitefield's preaching expedition to America in 1740–41 to stir the embers of local revivals into a colonies-wide conflagration known as the Great Awakening. By contrast, the entire period from the late 1740s through the 1790s showed a dearth of revivals.

During the early 1800s, the Second Great Awakening was more diffuse. Differing regions and denominational traditions had their "seasons of grace" at varied times. Yet if the First Great Awakening set up a template for Evangelicalism in America, the Second Great Awakening was no less pervasive in its effects. This awakening was more theologically diverse than its predecessor. It included not only Calvinists, but Baptists and Methodists who embraced an Arminian stress on free will, challenged the authority of seminary-educated clergymen, and ignored the bookish, elite culture of New England. Charles Finney, beginning in the 1820s, embodied a brash new style of revival preaching. Using everyday language that some called coarse, Finney preached compelling sermons, prayed aloud for individuals by name, allowed women to pray aloud in mixed gatherings of men and

women, demanded immediate, public decisions for Christ, and summoned his converts to the "anxious bench" – a practice later referred to as the "altar call." Finney's "new measures" for evangelism caused controversies among the Presbyterians who had ordained him, and played a role in the 1837 Presbyterian split.

A key innovation in American revivals was the camp meeting, a days-long, outdoor, public religious gathering for evangelizing nonbelievers and for edifying the faithful. The most famous early camp meeting was held at Cane Ridge in Kentucky in August 1801, attended by some ten thousand people and noteworthy for the strange bodily manifestations (falling, weeping, and even animal-like sounds) among participants. The American Methodists by 1820 were holding about one thousand camp meetings in the United States every year.[26] Ellen Eslinger writes, "The camp meeting formed a world unto itself as rich and poor, man and woman, black and white, joined to pray together. For a few days and nights, participants inhabited a society ruled solely by Christian principles."[27] By the twentieth century, camp meetings had generally been replaced by tent meetings that offered protection from cold, hot, or rainy weather, but which like the camp meetings gave attenders an opportunity to inhabit temporarily a Christian enclave.

Yet the Second Great Awakening had an elite Calvinistic as well as a populist face. Alarmed by the spread of "French infidelity" (i.e., freethinking) during the 1780s–1790s, New England Congregationalists formed prayer networks on behalf of revival and denounced the skeptical philosophies that had become fashionable. Yale College president Timothy Dwight – Jonathan Edwards' grandson – gave public addresses that culminated in a revival in 1802–3 in which nearly a third of the Yale students professed conversion. Yale College underwent campus revivals of varied intensity in 1741, 1802, 1831, 1858, 1905, and 1962–63. A leading feature of the Second Great Awakening revivals, in both populist and elite forms, was a focus on missionary endeavors and social reforms, including abolitionism, temperance, foreign and domestic missions, Sabbath observance, and other causes.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, fewer than a quarter of all African Americans had been converted to Christianity. Yet revivalist Christianity was appealing because it resonated with an African emphasis on

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[26] Kenneth O. Brown, "Camp Meetings and Tent Meetings," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 75.

[27] Ellen Eslinger, "Cane Ridge Revival," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 88.

experiencing God's immediate presence. Throughout history, black Americans have maintained a revival tradition with distinctive characteristics.[28] Music, movement, rhythm, and dance were integral to black worship. Testimonials collected from former slaves during the early 1900s show the importance of revivalist religion in the daily lives of black Americans. Faced with agonizing life circumstances, blacks were able through their faith to maintain hope, dignity, and a sense of community. Often their spiritual narratives were dramatic, as in the account by an ex-slave who describes how "the power of God struck me" and "it seemed like something struck me in the top of my head and then went on out through the toes of my feet. I jumped, or rather, fell back against the back of my seat. I lay on the floor of the church. A voice said to me: 'You are no longer a sinner. Go and tell the world what I have done for you.'"[29] Conversion was a bodily experience and sometimes a drawn-out ordeal. Visionary elements were common – voices speaking or images appearing. The black intellectual W.E.B. DuBois grew up in New England and yet was awed by the spiritual power of the black revival services that he witnessed in the 1880s in Tennessee. DuBois lauded the beauty of "the Music" (i.e., black Spirituals) as a "most original and beautiful expression of human life and longing." He spoke of the revival's "Frenzy" – an emotional expression that had African as well as American and Christian roots.[30] Not all black leaders supported revivals. Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) called for better education of black ministers, viewed revivalist religion as vulgar, and regarded emotionalism in worship as a hindrance to social progress. Members of the black elite have expressed such views from the 1800s until the present time.

Women were conspicuous in the black revival tradition. Black preacher Jarena Lee, in her autobiography, noted that "though . . . there were lawyers, doctors and magistrates present to hear me speak, yet there was mourning and crying among sinners, for the Lord scattered fire . . . by the instrumentality of a poor coloured woman."[31] Amanda Smith, a self-described "washerwoman evangelist," was a female preacher during the 1870s–1890s in the AMEC, a missionary to England, India, and West Africa, and author

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[28] On black revivalism, see Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, 1979); and Glenn Hinson, *Fire in My Bones: Transcendence and the Holy Spirit in African American Gospel* (Philadelphia, 2000).

[29] Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and the Autobiographies of Ex-Slaves* (Philadelphia, 1969), 45.

[30] W.E.B. DuBois, "Of the Faith of the Fathers," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, 1903), 134–7.

[31] Jarena Lee, *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* (1836), cited in David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, 2005), 131.

of a five-hundred-page autobiography. She achieved all this despite birth into slavery, a lack of formal education, two unhappy marriages, the death in infancy of four of her five children, and lifelong opposition to her preaching from male ministers.[32] As blacks relocated from the rural South to major cities during the Great Migration of the early 1900s, revivalism persisted in an urban landscape of tenement apartments and storefront churches. Conversion occurred as penitents lay on the floor of the church, encircled by church mothers and praying saints, urging them to "come through" to a conscious experience of God's grace.[33]

The revival of 1857–58 – known as the Businessmen's Revival, the Layman's Revival, the Union Prayer Meeting Revival, or the Third Great Awakening – was a layman's movement. It may have been the closest thing to a truly national revival in U.S. history. Instead of centering on preachers and sermons, the 1857–58 revival revolved around prayer meetings in churches, auditoriums, and theaters in the downtown business districts. Starting in New York City, these "union" meetings occurred in hundreds of cities and towns across the nation, generally took place over the noon hour, and struck observers because of the numbers of males attending. Many women attended separate gatherings. Major Protestant denominations gained more than 474,000 new members during 1856–59, more than twice as many as were added in 1853–56. The revival brought new energy to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and showed what could be achieved through coordinated, interdenominational effort. It set the stage for revivals among both Confederate and Union troops during the Civil War.[34] In cultural terms it provided American males with an opportunity publicly to show their emotion – through public weeping – and thus established the display of emotion as a category of collective identity.[35]

During the closing decades of the 1800s, America experienced industrialization and urbanization, and the church faced new intellectual challenges. Yet during the 1870s Dwight L. Moody fashioned a new form of urban evangelism that blended forthright preaching, sentimental storytelling, altar calls, and a business-like efficiency in publicizing mass gatherings and gathering converts into cooperating churches. He was an evangelist that a Gilded Age capitalist might admire. Moody's approach to urban mass

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[32] McClymond, "Smith, Amanda Berry (1837–1915)," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 402–4.

[33] James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (New York, 1953), 167–8, 174–8 – the conversion of "John," the novel's protagonist.

[34] Long, "Revival of 1857–1858," 1: 362–6.

[35] John Corrigan, *Business of the Heart: Religion and Emotion in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 2002).

evangelism set a precedent for twentieth-century evangelists such as Billy Sunday, Aimee Semple McPherson, Francisco Olazábal, Oral Roberts, and Billy Graham. In the late 1800s the more exuberant forms of revivalism were relegated to the fringes of the respectable Protestant denominations. Holiness evangelists – preaching salvation, holiness or "sanctification," and, increasingly, a message of healing for the physical body – were no longer welcome in the Methodist Church, and so became largely independent of denominational control. The urban rescue mission, exemplified by the Salvation Army, grew out of the Holiness movement. The 1890s witnessed a surge of interest in the Holy Spirit, spiritual healing, and other manifestations of divine power. Some were waiting for a new "Pentecost" in the American church. By the century's end, the Holiness movement's earlier preoccupation with *purity* gave place to a concern for *power*. The stage was set for the twentieth-century emergence of Pentecostalism.

Tracing its origins, according to one account, to an experience of Spirit baptism and tongues speaking by Agnes Ozman in Topeka, Kansas, on 1 January 1901, Pentecostalism emerged out of diverse elements. Among these were revivalist evangelicalism, divine healing, prophetic "end-times" Bible conferences, expectations of Jesus' return, calls for increased missionary efforts, Methodist sanctificationism, Reformed "Keswick" or "Higher Life" teaching, and an informal network of independent "come-outer" Holiness groups. By midcentury one observer called Pentecostalism a "third force" alongside of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.[36] The Pentecostals were radical, rampant supernaturalists. They expected God not only to forgive sins, but to heal the sick, to give dreams and visions to instruct them, to provide money to send missionaries, and to give supernatural ability to speak languages they had not studied.

Another characteristic of Pentecostalism was its rapid diffusion. The three-year-long revival at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles during 1906–09 proved decisive for the emergence of world Pentecostalism. Visitors came from every corner of the globe, and many went to new places after their transformative experiences in California. Within twenty years the Azusa Street "alums" had reached some twenty-five to thirty nations with the Pentecostal message. The Pentecostal expansion in North America reflected a global upsurge in revivalist Christianity. Between 1904 and 1909 there were powerful spiritual stirrings first in Wales (1904–05), in parts of India (1905), in the city of Los Angeles (1906), in Korea (1907), in Chile (1908), and in the Manchurian region of China (1909). The Pentecostal movement was thus both a fruit of global revivalist culture and a contributor to this culture. Early Pentecostalism deemphasized racial, ethnic, and

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[36] Henry P. Van Dusen, "Third Force in Christendom," *Life*, 9 June 1958, 113–24.

gender distinctions. Photographs of the original leaders of the Azusa Street Mission show blacks and whites, women and men, working together on terms of intimacy and equality. Remarkably for the time – an era of exclusionary "Jim Crow" laws – white Christians accepted the African American William Seymour as their leader. Yet the harmony did not persist. Within a decade, the Azusa Mission leadership had fractured along racial lines, new policies blocked the recognition of women's leadership, and by 1914 the white Pentecostals had organized the Assemblies of God denomination, while Seymour reluctantly conceded that the Azusa Mission would be forced to rely on black – not multiracial – leadership. Latino Pentecostals founded separate denominations to escape the paternalism of Anglo leadership. Yet Frank Bartleman's utterance at the revival's outset, that "the color line was washed away in the Blood [of Christ]," was a reminder of what the Pentecostal tradition had once been and could aspire to become again.[37]

During World War II and in its aftermath, the Evangelical movement evolved out of early-twentieth-century Fundamentalism and brought back revivalism. Beginning at his 1949 Los Angeles revival, Billy Graham rocketed to national and then international prominence, where he has remained for sixty years – a symbol of the American revival tradition. College campuses became a focus for spiritual awakenings in 1949–50, and again in 1970 and 1995. The charismatic renewal movement burst into national awareness in 1960 when Episcopal minister Dennis Bennett acknowledged from the pulpit of his southern California pulpit that he had spoken in tongues. This event signaled a crossover of charismatic gifts, previously limited to the socially marginalized Pentecostals, to mainline Protestants. Articles on the charismatics soon followed in *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines.[38]

The unexpected revival among California hippies in the late 1960s and early 1970s had a long-term impact through the emergence of the Calvary Chapel and the Association of Vineyard Churches (both linked to the "Jesus people" of the 1970s), and, further afield, the spread of a relaxed, informal style of "contemporary" worship in a wide spectrum of American churches from the 1980s onward. Indeed, the subtle influences of Pentecostal-charismatic practices were widespread. Roman Catholic parishes offered "contemporary" masses while some Lutherans and Presbyterians ended services with "healing prayers" that had never previously been part of their worship tradition. Outbreaks of revival in 1994–95 in Toronto, Canada, and Pensacola, Florida, had a global impact, as both locations became pilgrimage sites for Pentecostal and charismatic Christians. The host congregation

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[37] Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern Pentecost* (South Plainfield, NJ, 1980), 54.
[38] See *Time*, 15 Aug. 1960, and *Newsweek*, 4 July 1960.

in Pensacola drew more than two million visitors in only three years. The revival in Toronto proved to be even more influential, though it aroused controversy with the appearance of "holy laughter" and other involuntarily bodily manifestations.[39]

RIVAL CLAIMS AND INTRA-PROTESTANT TENSIONS

Protestants in America during the 1800s and well into the 1900s were a contentious lot who argued among themselves and made conflicting claims. Congregationalists and Presbyterians upheld the ideal of a learned ministry, and so looked askance on the Methodists' and Baptists' practices of lay exhortation. Joseph Vail, a Congregationalist minister from Connecticut, commented in 1803 that he could not approve of "giving license for everybody to speak and to exhort." Such meetings opened the door for "the ignorant and inexperienced" to exhibit their "pride" and "self-importance."[40] Lyman Beecher's *A Plea for the West* (1834) captured the anxiety of New England ministers that the western United States would collapse into "barbarism." Their proposed remedy was to transplant northeastern religion and culture to frontier regions, and the Plan of Union (1801) linked Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the task of domestic mission. Meanwhile, the New England Congregationalists had to deal with schism in their midst when the Unitarians declared independence in 1819, and a Massachusetts court decision in 1833 allowed the Unitarians to sever ties with the Congregationalists and yet hold onto their church property.

From their origins in the 1740s, the Methodists were controversial because of their demonstrative services – what a British observer in 1744 called "those sudden Agonies, Roarings and Screamings, Tremblings, Droppings-down, Ravings and Madnesses."[41] As one might expect, the Methodists – like other enthusiastic groups – settled down within two or three generations. The phenomena mentioned would have been as embarrassing to upscale American Methodists in the 1840s as they had been to an educated Englishman in the 1740s. A great strength of the Methodists in the late 1700s and early 1800s lay in their dedicated, itinerant clergy who constituted a "brotherhood of poverty" in which all preachers, regardless

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[39] The Toronto revival was attacked in Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival* (Dallas, 1997), and given qualified affirmation in James A. Beverly, *Revival Wars: A Critique of Counterfeit Revival* (Pickering, Canada, 1997).

[40] Cited in Mark Noll, et al., ed., *Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity in America* (Grand Rapids, 1983), 168.

[41] Edmund Gibson, *Observations Upon the Conduct and Behaviour of … Methodists* (1744), cited in Hempton, *Methodism*, 33.

of social status, length of service, or talent, were expected to receive the same salary and to experience the same privations. In a 1798 message, Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury noted that "the lovers of this world will not long continue traveling preachers." Asbury himself never bought a house, never married, traveled 250,000 miles (mostly on horseback), and ate whatever food was given him.[42] The minimum Methodist clerical salary in 1800 of eighty dollars per year (raised to one hundred dollars in 1816) was about one-fifth of what Congregational preachers earned.[43] The Methodists sometimes referred to the Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers as "hireling" preachers. By contrast the Methodists offered "plain truth for plain people" and insisted that they were not afraid to offend the high and mighty with blunt talk about sin, worldliness, and repentance. Though the Baptist clergy did not itinerate to the same extent as the Methodists, they also in the 1800s were drawn from the people and often were not formally educated for ministry. Baptist congregations often had a bivocational minister – a farmer, blacksmith, or shopkeeper on weekdays, and a preacher on Sundays.

Baptists and Methodists, though sharing a similar cultural ethos, took opposing views on baptism. The Methodists baptized infants, while the Baptists insisted that only adults (or perhaps children) who could make a conscious profession of faith were proper recipients of baptism. What is more, the mode of baptism mattered to the Baptists. Methodist or Presbyterian "sprinkling" or "pouring" was inadequate. Only full immersion counted as baptism.[44] Baptist congregations installed "baptistries" at the front of their church sanctuaries so that immersion baptisms could be performed during worship. Moreover, the Baptists were not shy about propagating their views among those who had received only infant baptism. Baptist evangelists sometimes appeared at or near Methodist revival meetings to ask whether people wanted a real baptism – that is, by immersion in a pond or river. Yet the Baptists had internal as well as external debates. The Primitive or Antimission Baptists, led by Daniel Parker, took the Baptist principle of local, congregational governance to its logical limit. They rejected all denominational structures and mission agencies, withholding their financial support and withdrawing from affiliation. The twentieth-century Fundamentalist Baptists followed their example, emblazoning the word "Independent" as a badge of honor on placards outside their church buildings.

Yet the most interminable of the intra-Protestant theological debates was between Calvinists and Arminians. While the Presbyterians were

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[42] See John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (New York, 2009).
[43] Hempton, *Methodism*, 121.
[44] Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York, 2005), 142.

officially Calvinistic, and the Methodists officially Arminian, the Baptists in their earlier period were split down the middle with "Regular" and "Hardshell" Baptists holding to Calvinism, and "General" Baptists embracing Arminianism. Over time most Baptist groups gravitated toward Arminianism. The matter took on special urgency when two leading lights of British evangelicalism – George Whitefield and John Wesley – came down on opposite sides. Wesley's sermon "Free Grace" (1740) denounced Calvinistic predestination and asserted that this doctrine was a "blasphemy" against God.[45] Though Wesley eulogized Whitefield at his death, their theological spat remained unresolved. During the early 1800s Methodists claimed that Calvinism was an elitist faith inconsistent with the message of "free grace" for all. Methodist Peter Cartwright acknowledged the role of Presbyterians in the famous Cane Ridge Revival, but claimed that "they, almost to a man, gave up these points of high Calvinism, and preached a free salvation to all mankind."[46] Cartwright had a point – revivals did change people's theology. Yet participants in Cane Ridge went in several directions – some to the Methodists, others to Barton Stone's "Christian" movement (later to be termed Restorationist), and still others to the Shakers. The Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge, and his Princeton Seminary colleague B. B. Warfield, debated all comers – Arminianism, Unitarianism, the New Haven thinkers, Charles Finney, and German rationalism.[47] Judged by intellectual erudition, few could match Hodge and Warfield in their spirited defense of confessionalist Calvinism.

In the aftermath of the 1801 Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky, a new set of views – known in time as Restorationism – came gradually into focus. Among its leaders were Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell. One of their themes was unity. It would be best, they argued, to abandon all later denominational labels and rely solely on the term "Christian." Another theme was primitivism, a return to what was conceived as New Testament Christianity. Creeds and confessions, though dear to Lutherans and Presbyterians, were not helps but hindrances to faith. Stone and Campbell were ambivalent on revivalism too. Both believed that there had been too much emphasis on religious emotions and not enough on gospel truth. Stone-Campbellism had a rational element that set it against popular evangelicalism. Finally, there was a stress on proper baptism. Though rejecting Roman Catholicism, they held a view of baptism akin to a Catholic position. The physical act of baptism brought remission of sins and the

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[45] John Wesley, "Free Grace," in Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, 14 vols. (London, 1872), 7: 373–86.

[46] Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (New York, 1856), 46.

[47] See the compilation volume, Charles Hodge, *Essays and Reviews* (New York, 1857).

reception of the Holy Spirit, an idea traditionally known as "baptismal regeneration."[48] Alexander Campbell engaged in public debates with the skeptic Robert Owen, Roman Catholic Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Presbyterians W. L. McCalla and N. L. Rice. The published versions of these and other debates by Campbell ran to thousands of pages. He was a leading religious polemicist.

Restorationism created problems for the Baptists since they had long insisted that their views were based solely on the New Testament. Alexander Campbell had himself begun as a Baptist. Yet the Baptists did not leave the Restorationists unanswered. By the 1850s they developed a viewpoint known as Landmarkism, teaching that Baptists were "the only Christian community which has . . . preserved pure the doctrines of the gospel through all ages." Baptists did not need to restore the gospel since they had never lost it. Landmarkists argued that the earliest Christians were Baptists. Despite the claims of the Catholics, it was the Baptists who had continued in an unbroken succession through the centuries. Landmarkists went so far as to deny that non-Baptists groups were churches. They denied the validity of immersion when practiced outside of Baptist churches – so-called alien immersion.[49] Landmarkism's continuing influence became apparent when William Whitsett, professor and president of Southern Baptist Seminary, published *A Question in Baptist History* (1896), challenging the notion of an unbroken Baptist succession through the centuries. He could not find any evidence that British Baptists had immersed prior to 1641. In consequence, Whitsett was forced to resign from the seminary and teach elsewhere, though his historical research was later vindicated.

Adventist, Holiness, and Pentecostal Christians all made claims that set them apart from others. The Adventist movement took its beginning with William Miller's prediction of Jesus' return in 1843. Through the influence of Ellen White, whose abundant writings marked her as a "prophetess" in the eyes of her followers, the Adventists adopted the view that Saturday was the only legitimate day for Christian worship – hence the designation, *Seventh-day* Adventist. Another distinction was White's stress on proper diet for righteous living. John Kellogg, founder of the cereal company and progenitor of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, was among her disciples.[50] The Holiness people in the Methodist Church and in other denominations were

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[48] John Mark Hicks, "The Role of Faith in Conversion: Balancing Faith, Christian Experience, and Baptism," in William R. Baker, ed., *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Downers Grove, IL, 2002), 91–124.

[49] Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA, 2003), 182–5.

[50] See Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville, 2001).

also a breed apart. Their "second blessing" experience came subsequent to conversion and was thought to bring a higher level of spirituality. So also with the Pentecostals; most believed that they were an end-time remnant that Jesus Christ would soon take with him to heaven while worldly denominationalists were left behind. Spirit baptism was not merely about speaking in tongues; it sealed a person's identity as part of the true "Bride of Christ."[51]

Distinctions and rivalries among American Protestants in the 1800s and early 1900s had to do with behavior as well as belief. Historically, both Methodists and Baptists were generally "teetotalists" who rejected all consumption of alcohol. Among some nineteenth-century American Protestants – and perhaps for the first time in church history – fermented wine was banished from the Lord's Supper in favor of unfermented grape juice. Holiness and early Pentecostal groups maintained stringent behavioral standards. There were written or unwritten prohibitions against the consumption of alcohol, smoking, Sabbath breaking, card playing, pool shooting, theatergoing, film watching, and sometimes against necktie wearing, gum-chewing, and the eating of pork, catfish, or ice cream. Long hair on men, short hair on women, women's cosmetics, and fashionable female dresses, ribbons, and hats were also banned. With some exceptions, most of these cultural taboos disappeared in Pentecostal circles during the late twentieth century. The mainline charismatics of the 1960s and 1970s, who had never shared in the sectarian Pentecostal culture, drank their beer and wine with a clear conscience. By the late 1900s, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist congregations rarely stipulated whether their members should smoke or drink. Yet some Baptists, especially in the South, continued to be "teetotalist." In conservative churches, moreover, there was a stubborn taboo against tobacco. Lighting up a cigarette in the church parking lot was a sure mark of being a visitor or newcomer.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IMPACTS

As Protestantism expanded, so did its cultural influence. Various authors have seen a link between the Great Awakening of the 1740s and the democratic and republican ideologies propounded during the American Revolution. Mark Noll speaks of "Christian republicanism"

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[51] Mel Dieter's *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Metuchen, NJ, 1996) highlights the centrality of Methodism. Vinson Synan in *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, 1997), views the Holiness movement as a prologue to Pentecostalism.

as an American cultural creation.[52] In early modern Europe, republican political ideas were often associated with secular, anticlerical, and anti-church views, as evident during the French Revolution. The American Revolution, by contrast, was friendly to religion. It bequeathed to the American people a "Christian republicanism" that understood limited, constitutional government as a political system uniquely congruent with biblical principles. What Tocqueville in the early 1800s called a "democratic and republican Christianity" was a blending of seventeenth-century Calvinist political theories with eighteenth-century American revolutionary ideologies and populist, lay-oriented impulses emanating from the religious revivals.

Another cultural legacy of Protestantism lay in a sacred patriotism that distinguished America from other nations. In 1630, while yet on board ship and bound for Massachusetts Bay, John Winthop in "A Model of Christian Charity" announced that the eyes of all nations would be on the settlers in America. This theme continued. Ezra Stiles in *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor* (1783) declared, "This great American revolution, this recent political phenomenon of a new sovereignty arising among the sovereign powers of the earth, will be attended to and contemplated by all nations." Presbyterian Robert Smith preached that "the cause of America is the cause of Christ."[53] Around 1900, U.S. Senator Albert J. Beveridge stated that "of all our race He [God] has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the redemption of the world."[54] America's global reputation for humanitarianism had something to do with this ideology of the "redeemer nation." Yet while the notion of a noble calling could inspire people to unselfish and heroic deeds, it also could and did foment bigotry, xenophobia, and war against outsiders. The unconscionable treatment of Native Americans, African Americans, immigrant communities, and foreign nations (in imperialistic conflicts) reflected a shadow side of American Protestant patriotism.

American Protestantism during the 1800s was known for its reformist zeal. Charles Finney wrote that "the great business of the church is to reform the world – to put away every kind of sin.... The Christian

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[52] Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2002). For variations on this theme, see Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), and Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, 1977).

[53] Cited in Noll, et al., *Eerdmans Handbook to Christianity in America*, 168, 137.

[54] Cited in Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, 1980), vii. See also Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971).

Church was designed to make aggressive movements in every direction . . .
until every form of iniquity shall be driven from the earth."[55] The hymn,
"America, the Beautiful," exhibited a kind of millennialist dream in one
of its verses.

> O beautiful for patriot dream, that sees beyond the years
> Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears!
> America! America! God shed His grace on thee.

"Undimmed by human tears"? Only an American Protestant would likely
have penned these words. Charles Sheldon's novel *In His Steps* (1897) posed
the famous question, "What would Jesus do?" and ended with its protag-
onist having a vision of Jesus and pondering the impending "dawn of this
millennium of Christian history."[56] Nor were optimistic views limited
to conservative churchmen. Social Gospel pioneer Walter Rauschenbusch
declared spiritual victory in 1912 when he wrote that "the larger part of
the work of Christianizing the social order is already accomplished."[57]

The early 1800s witnessed the formation of "moral" and "Sabbath socie-
ties" to promote Protestant lifestyles.[58] This was a golden age for Protestant
print culture. Countless periodicals appeared, representing every conceiv-
able shade of opinion. American Protestants were among the world's most
intensive consumers of religious literature.[59] The American Bible Society
(est. 1816) and the American Tract Society (est. 1825) sought to put the
Bible and good Christian literature into every home. Schools in America
used *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*, which sold 122 million copies between 1826
and 1920, and enforced Protestant values with such lessons as "Respect for
the Sabbath Rewarded," "The Goodness of God," "No Excellence Without
Labor," and "Religion the Only Basis of Society."[60] Prior to the Civil War,
nearly all college presidents were clergymen, who typically taught courses
on "moral science" or "evidences of Christianity." Protestant Christianity
seemed to be in the water, food, and air of America. Roman Catholic objec-
tions generally fell on deaf ears. American Protestants failed to perceive
that the tax-supported public schools were offering a distinctly *Protestant*
education, or rather indoctrination.

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[55] Cited in H. Ray Dunning, ed., *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of Last Things* (Kansas City, 1995), 166.

[56] Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps: "What Would Jesus Do?"* (Chicago, 1897), 293.

[57] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York, 1912), 155.

[58] On Sabbath observance, see Alexis McCrossan, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (Ithaca, 2000).

[59] See Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill, 2004).

[60] Noll et al., eds., *Eerdmans Handbook*, 281.

Throughout the 1800s and 1900s Protestants pursued domestic and foreign missions, establishing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810) and the American Home Missionary Society (1826). The Student Volunteer Movement among American university students, beginning in 1886, recruited nearly twenty thousand new recruits for missionary service – referred to as the largest influx of new personnel for Christian missions in the history of Christianity. Throughout the 1800s, temperance societies sought to remove drunkenness and alcoholic beverages from American life. Women played a crucial role, especially through such organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, established 1874, headed by Frances Willard. Evangelical feminists lobbied for a greater place for women in the church's ministry and leadership. The abolitionist struggle was tied closely to the history of Protestant revivalism. Historian Gilbert Barnes, and more recently John Hammond, showed a direct correlation between involvement in Protestant revivals and abolitionist viewpoints.[61]

The energy of American Protestant social activism was diminished by a series of setbacks and disappointments in the early 1900s – the outbreak, events, and aftermath of World War I, the failure of Prohibition, the Great Depression, the rise of Fascism and Communism in Europe, and the lingering effects of the Fundamentalist-Modernist split. Nonetheless, the civil rights struggle of African Americans was largely centered in the black churches. The 1950s–1960s campaign for racial equality was an extension and adaptation of a Protestant revivalism that already permeated the lives of most black Americans – a form of "political evangelism," in the phrase of David D. Daniels III.[62]

In sum, then, American Protestantism exerted powerful social and cultural influences because it was expansive, evangelistic, energetic, activistic, progressive, optimistic, and millennialist and did its work through voluntary organizations of clergy and laypersons who acted independent of governmental supports and controls. Particularly during the early 1800s there was an ideal of self-reliance, self-denial, and hard work on behalf of lofty goals. From their earliest days Americans set their eyes not only on their own land, but on the entire world as their sphere of action and influence. It is not surprising that the United States first landed a man on the moon. On

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[61] Gilbert Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830–1844* (Washington, DC, 1933), and John L. Hammond, *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and American Voting Behavior* (Norwood, NJ, 1979).

[62] David D. Daniels III, "African American Revivals," in McClymond, *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals*, 1: 7. See David L. Chappell, "Religious Revivalism in the Civil Rights Movement," *African American Review* 36 (2002): 581–95.

the other hand, American Protestantism was often self-righteous, cocksure, jingoistic, meddlesome, anti-intellectualistic, flamboyant, imperialistic, war prone, and cruel toward racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the evil of slavery continued unabated while Protestant Christians argued among themselves over its legitimacy. Taking the measure of American Protestantism as a whole from 1800 to 1950, one might repeat what many non-Americans have said, namely, that the Americans seemed an optimistic bunch. They were unusually ready to take on grand and global causes. If there is a single, salient legacy of the Protestant movement in America, it may be an instinct and spirit of hope.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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AMERICAN CATHOLICS, 1800–1950

CHESTER L. GILLIS

From the founding of the first diocese in the United States in Baltimore in 1789 with only a few thousand Catholics, the population of Catholics grew rapidly until in 1850 Catholics made up the largest denomination in the United States. By 1962, Americans had elected a Catholic, John F. Kennedy, president of the United States. The nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century proved to be a time of growth yet marginalization for American Catholics. Catholics came to the United States from Europe in large numbers, creating immigrant ethnic church communities all over the country. There were Irish, Italian, and French Catholics in the Northeast, German and Polish Catholics in the Midwest, and Mexican and Latin American Catholics in the Southeast, Southwest, and West. They had all come as immigrants, putting them on the bottom economic and social rung of society. Being Catholic made them double outsiders in a society dominated by Protestants who had founded the country.

On 6 November 1789, Pope Pius VI appointed John Carroll the first bishop in the United States and established the Diocese of Baltimore, Maryland. When Carroll took office, only one church served the entire region. According to reports sent to Rome in 1780, Maryland was home to sixteen thousand Catholics served by only nineteen priests. By 1790 the entire United States counted only forty thousand Catholics among its citizens, fewer than 1 percent of the population. Carroll, who had been a Jesuit priest before becoming bishop, oversaw the expansion of the Catholic population until the time of his death in 1815, but by 1830 Catholics accounted for only 2 percent of the population. Catholics settled in Maryland because the colony was tolerant and allowed them to practice their faith, at least in private. In other colonies they were publicly persecuted. In all regions where they settled, such as Kentucky, New York, Massachusetts, and Illinois, they were outnumbered by the Protestant nativist population and treated as outsiders to the nascent American identity.

The church began small and faced many challenges. With no indigenous clergy, Bishop Carroll and colleagues in other early dioceses such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Bardstown, Kentucky, had to recruit priests from Europe. Eventually the bishops would send American candidates for the priesthood to European seminaries, a practice still maintained today at a select number of universities near the Vatican and in a few European countries. The presence of European clergy and European-trained American priests meant that the church in America kept the habits of the Old World. In places like the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, scores of Irish-born priests served in parishes and in administrative positions. Sometimes called the FBI (foreign-born Irish), these priests served faithfully in a setting far from their home.

Not all seminarians would be European-trained, however. Bishop Carroll chartered a school in 1789 from which he hoped to recruit candidates for the priesthood. In 1791 Carroll began Georgetown Academy (today Georgetown University) on the banks of the Potomac River, and in the same year he founded St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore run by priests from the Society of Saint Sulpice. These first American Catholic colleges served as models for subsequent dioceses to found and fund their own institutions in which to train future clergy. Eventually the system included seminary high schools, colleges, and graduate schools of theology with independent dioceses running one or more of these schools and keeping their priesthood candidates nearby where they could be under the watchful eye of diocesan clergy who staffed them. These seminaries run by diocesan bishops were complemented by a parallel structure of scores of seminaries, colleges, and universities operated by religious orders.

There were, after all, significant differences between the church of Europe and the emerging American church. One difference involved the political systems in which these churches were located. In Europe the church maintained ties to the state, relying upon the state for funding and having close ties to Catholic rulers who often played a role in church affairs. Pope Gregory XVI warned against the separation of church and state in his 1832 encyclical *Mirari Vos* (On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism). He wrote, "Nor can We predict happier times for religion and government from the plans of those who desire vehemently to separate the Church from the state, and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood. It is certain that that concord which always was favorable and beneficial for the sacred and the civil order is feared by the shameless lovers of liberty."[1]

The United States, founded with a principle of separation of church and state, represented a different political and financial landscape. Despite

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[1] Papal Encyclicals Online, http://www.papalencyclicals.net (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).

this formal separation, however, Protestantism dominated the landscape and often treated Catholicism as unwelcome competition. In fact, initially several states retained their state support for one church. Another difference was the frontier mentality of the Americans that drove them to found new communities farther west, enabling them to establish more dioceses. Because the church did not have many priests, the laity had significant control of the parishes and often had to function without the regular liturgical or sacramental services of the clergy. The historian James M. O'Toole noted that some lay Catholics were designated by missionary priests to conduct services in their absence.[2]

The American church was shaped by two major forces – European culture and American independence. For a long period it would move between these two worlds, sometimes resembling the Old World of Europe and sometimes appropriating or creating a new cultural, social, and educational character influenced by its experience in America. Bishop Carroll began his ministry with a vision of an American church untethered from European and even Vatican influence. For example, priests were encouraged to conduct services in English and leave behind the Latin of continental Catholicism. Unlike bishops in Europe who were exclusively selected by the pope, Carroll's peers chose him and Rome approved. Carroll had intended to emulate this democratic electoral process for recommending new bishops to Rome. However, circumstances countered his vision. By 1800, Carroll became the sole recommender of names for new bishops.[3]

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, the church looked increasingly to Europe as a model. A close alliance between the bishops and Rome took hold, and Latin replaced the English liturgy.[4] The early dependency on foreign-born clergy enhanced the European influence. Over 80 percent of clergy present at the first church synod in Baltimore in 1791 were foreign-born. All of the bishops of the young dioceses of New York, Boston, and Bardstown, Kentucky, were foreign-born. The nascent seminaries in the United States did not produce enough clergy, and it was not until 1800 that an American-born priest was ordained.[5]

Catholics constituted a minority among Christians in America early in the nineteenth century with a population of about 195,000 in 1820. By

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[2] James M. O'Toole, *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 32.

[3] Joseph Agnito, *The Building of an American Church: The Episcopacy of John Carroll* (New York, 1988).

[4] For more insight on why the American church looked increasingly to Europe as a model, see Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from the Colonial Times to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, 1992), 110–20.

[5] *Ibid.*, 118–24.

1850, however, they had grown to become the largest Christian denomination, counting over one and a half million among their numbers. That number doubled to over three million in just ten years due to huge numbers of Catholic immigrants from Europe. Many American Catholics who were immigrants did not speak English, had little or no education, and possessed only farming or working-class skills. Many had come to America for the adventure and opportunity, but many also came out of necessity. For example, the Irish potato famine in the 1840s and 1850s caused over one million Irish Catholics to board ships, often unsafe, for the perilous journey to the New World. They arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs and did not find a welcoming population. Their deep faith afforded them continuity of identity in a strange place, and they clung to it tenaciously. The first great wave of immigrants from Europe, which numbered 33.6 million between 1820 and 1920, would face the challenge of adopting American ways or clinging to their European roots. But those roots, while originating in Europe, represented diversity, nonetheless.

Not everyone was equal within this immigrant church. The Irish, since they did not have special language needs as did other Roman Catholic immigrant communities, treated their fellow Catholics as inferior. But that was just one reason for conflict among different ethnic groups. The Irish also sometimes conflicted with the established population because they perhaps too quickly presumed that America belonged to them since they spoke English. However, poor and for the most part unskilled, they encountered discrimination in employment and housing, and their adherence to Roman Catholicism made them unwelcome religiously as well. A sign that read, "No Irish Need Apply," became common in Boston shops. The Irish also competed for unskilled jobs with the free blacks who made their way north. While the Irish encountered the hardships of discrimination, they in turn harbored racial prejudice against the African American community.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century when Italian immigrants came to America, many Irish immigrants, forgetful of their own initial reception, treated the Italians as unwelcome outsiders. The religious habits of this immigrant community differed from the established Roman Catholic population. The Italians arrived accompanied by their own clergy. Men did not attend church regularly and often did not contribute financially to the support of the church. They were accustomed to the state paying the salaries of the clergy and caring for the maintenance of the church. In particular, the men in this community resented "seat money" collected at the door of the church on Sunday. The established Roman Catholic population generally treated these new immigrants with indifference or hostility.

The American church represented a mix of ethnic groups that reflected the growing pluralism of the American landscape. In addition to the Irish, others – Italians, Poles, Germans, and French Canadians – migrated into the nation from Europe and Canada, and Mexicans entered from south of the border. These and immigrants from other countries who came in smaller numbers constituted a church community that spoke many languages. As these groups settled areas of the country, they built churches where their own could worship. Many of the immigrant groups arrived accompanied by priests who could conduct services in their native languages. Thus ethnic national parishes arose alongside, sometimes literally next door to, territorial parishes where English was the language of operation and where the Irish clergy dominated.

Most immigrants settled in cities along the eastern seaboard. They maintained their language and many of the customs from their countries of origin. In order to meet their spiritual needs, the bishops permitted ethnic parishes that functioned in the languages of the immigrants. Therefore in cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, parishes serving various immigrant populations such as Germans, Poles, and Italians sometimes were established within blocks of each other. The parishioners came from different parts of Europe, spoke different languages, preferred different lines of work, but were united in their Catholicism and their desire to make it as newcomers to America. The national parish assured them of religious identity, helped them to preserve their language and traditions, and eased them into American society.

These national parishes conducted business in the language of the immigrants. Enclaves of Poles, Italians, French, Germans, and others could live in a neighborhood near their fellow immigrants, speak their language of origin, work in blue-collar jobs, and attend churches where the priests came from their home countries. Like everywhere around the world, priests celebrated mass in Latin, but they conducted the business of the parish in the native language of the congregation. This made for a complicated landscape in any given diocese with a bishop who was born in Europe (usually Ireland) overseeing parishes in which the priest and parishioners spoke a language other than English, and with non-English-speaking parish churches and schools practically on top of one another, often within a few city blocks.

The structures of parishes also proved a challenge for bishops. Many of these ethnic communities, in particular the Germans, managed their own finances and held ownership of church property. Lay trusteeism, as it came to be called, meant that a bishop had little authority over the business dealings of some parishes. In part because of the lack of priests, in part because American Catholics lived in a country that empowered ordinary

citizens with notions of democracy, and in part because of the practices of their country of origin, some congregations managed their own finances and claimed ownership of church properties. In some parishes, parishioners also wanted a say in which clergy would serve in the parish. The American church historian, Jay Dolan, noted, "Such struggles over power and authority were typically American and Catholic. In the United States, nineteenth-century Catholics, unlike their Protestant neighbors, did not go to battle over theological issues; they fought over power....."[6]

Canon law, the juridical governing code for the universal church, mandated that bishops be the holders of church property as the corporation sole. The practice of laypersons holding properties led to significant conflicts between parishes and bishops. The battle over the assignment of priests proved thornier still. In some parishes the people sought control, or at least veto power, over the assignment of priests. The bishop coveted the same control. When they disagreed, sometimes the bishop assigned a different priest who might be more sympathetic to the needs of a particular parish; at other times, when compromise did not work, the bishop threatened the people with excommunication if they did not accept his appointee. The bishops met in Baltimore in 1829 to address the issue of control over parishes. They ruled that property was to be held in the name of the bishop, but this did not end the practice of lay trusteeism. Some of the controversies became so heated that the Vatican had to step in to enforce the bishop's rights. In 1841 Pope Gregory XVI declared, "We wish all to know that the office of trustees is entirely dependent upon the authority of the bishop, and that consequently the trustees can undertake nothing except with the approval of the ordinary." These controversies persisted until well into the middle of the nineteenth century. The Councils of Baltimore (1852, 1866, and 1884) addressed the matter directly. The first council stated,

> Laymen are not to take any part in the administration of church affairs without the free consent of the bishop. If they usurp any such authority and divert church goods to their own use or in any way frustrate the will of the donors; or if they, even under cover of the civil law, endeavour to wrest from the bishop's hands what has been confided to his care, then such laymen by that very fact fall under the censures constituted by the Council of Trent against usurpers of ecclesiastical goods.
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> When the title to a church is in the bishop's name, pastors are warned not to appoint trustees or permit them to be elected without the bishop's authority.[7]

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[6] *Ibid.*, 167.

[7] Catholic Church, Plenary Council of Baltimore, "Pastoral Letter of the First National Council of the United States: Held at Baltimore, in May 1852" (Baltimore, 1852).

With the controversy lingering, the third council stated,

> The bishop is the guardian and supreme administrator of all diocesan property. Priests are diligently to guard parochial property under the direction of the bishop.... In choosing lay trustees only those members of the congregation have a voice, who, being twenty-one years of age, have fulfilled the paschal precept, have paid for a seat in the church during the past year, have sent their children to Catholic schools and belong to no prohibited society. The pastor is *ex officio* president of the board of trustees.[8]

These councilor documents, coupled with an increase in clergy and the growing power of bishops, settled the trusteeism controversy in favor of the church. The American church increasingly followed canon law and over time, at least in this regard, looked more like its counterparts in Europe.

Meanwhile, the church in Rome attempted to solidify its power. In 1870 the First Vatican Council convened at the insistence of Pope Pius IX and declared the pope infallible in matters of faith and morals. While Rome assumed greater powers over the cardinals and bishops, American bishops and priests consolidated their power over the laity. In 1907, an American bishop proclaimed, "The Church is not a republic or democracy, but a monarchy;... all her authority is from above and rests in her Hierarchy;... while the faithful of the laity have divinely given rights to receive all the blessed ministrations of the Church, they have absolutely no right whatever to rule and govern."[9]

Despite ongoing disputes involving laypeople, priests, and bishops, for the most part the church functioned as a cohesive unit in America. One exception to this cohesive unity led to the formation of the Polish National Catholic Church, a group of Polish-speaking churches who felt dissatisfied with central authority and at the turn of the twentieth century chose to separate from the main body of the church. They elected one of their own, Reverend Francis Hodur, to lead them, and he served as bishop until his death in 1953. The movement attracted only a small number of Polish-speaking churches, the vast majority of which remained faithful to Rome.

Ukrainian Catholics, who adhere to the Eastern rite, proved an exception to this pattern. Most Catholic immigrants arrived from Western Europe and followed the Latin rite, which meant that they obeyed all of the prescriptions of Rome. Eastern-rite Catholics came from Eastern Europe and recognized Rome's authority, but had a different liturgical style that separated them from Latin-rite Catholics. Moreover, their priests could

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[8] *Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii* (Baltimore, 1884), 163–5.
[9] As cited in *ibid.*, 180–1.

marry. The American bishops' desire to impose mandatory celibacy on the Ukrainian clergy led to a schism that began in 1891 in Archbishop John Ireland's Archdiocese of Minneapolis. Rather than succumb to the American bishops' demands, the Ukrainians forged new alliances with the Russian Orthodox Church that would allow them to continue their liturgical customs and a married priesthood. This schism represented two different visions of the church.

> One view advocated a congregational model of the church, which emphasized a democratic functioning of authority with an emphasis on local autonomy. According to this model, lay people and clergy would work together and share responsibility for the organization and government of the parish. The other view supported a hierarchical model of the church; championed by the hierarchy, this emphasized the authority of the clergy over the lay people, with the bishop exercising supreme authority over everyone, priests and lay people alike.[10]

The balance of power between laity and clergy eroded as the American church produced a greater number of priests and nuns from the immigrant population. The clergy's power and prestige grew as an immigrant church accorded them special status. Many Catholic families considered it an honor to have a brother, sister, or priest among their ranks. Families were large, so one child accepting celibacy certainly did not threaten the continuation of the family name. Besides, immigrant families were poor and ill-educated. Sending a boy off to the seminary, or a girl to the convent, meant that he or she would be well-educated and cared for and would end up in a highly respected profession, revered in the Catholic subculture of America.

The creation of ethnic national parishes kept the immigrant community divided: Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, Polish Catholics, and German Catholics did not interact extensively. Even though immigrant neighborhoods were ethnically diverse, ethnic national parishes permitted people to associate only with their own. In some areas of the Northeast, for example, Catholics considered an Irish boy marrying an Italian girl tantamount to a mixed marriage. Nor were the clergy well-integrated. They kept to their own as well among the parishioners they served and clerical friends with whom they associated.

For all of their internal differences, several factors united immigrant Catholics, not the least of which was their Catholic identity. Newly arrived in America, many were unskilled or semiskilled; most spoke a different language. They were social, economic, political, and religious outsiders

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[10] *Ibid.*, 189.

in America, and their Catholicism constituted an important part of their identity and a source of solidarity. In a society dominated by Protestant money and power, immigrant Catholics found strength and solace in their religion. At the same time, they were eager to fit in. Not only did they need to prove that they had severed political ties with their homelands, but they also wanted to confirm that they were really American. This meant overcoming suspicions that their first loyalty might be to Rome, perceived by many Americans as a foreign power that could undermine Catholics' commitment to their adopted homeland. Thus at every opportunity Catholics demonstrated their loyalty to America.

Between 1840 and 1890 the number of priests grew dramatically from about five hundred to nine thousand. Nuns experienced a similar increase. This meant new parishes and schools across the country. It also signaled increasing respect and influence for the religious orders and the clergy. The laity paid them reverence that afforded them social prestige (at least in Catholic circles) and attracted new recruits. By the 1920s and 1930s, parishes were staffed by several priests, often headed by a pastor who was a monsignor. They became part of the American landscape, and eventually famous actors played priests on the movie screen.

The bishops also wanted to demonstrate their loyalty to country. They expressed this clearly at the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884.

> We think we can claim to be acquainted with the laws, institutions, and spirit of the Catholic Church, and with the laws, institutions, and spirit of our country; and we emphatically declare that there is no antagonism between them. A Catholic finds himself at home in the United States; for the influence of his Church has constantly been exercised in behalf of individual rights and popular liberties. And the right-minded American nowhere finds himself more at home than in the Catholic Church, for nowhere else can he breathe more freely that atmosphere of Divine truth, which alone can make us free.[11]

Until 29 June 1908, Rome considered the American church a missionary territory because Catholicism had not been fully established, and the American church could continue only with the assistance of foreign clergy. Its status changed when Pope Pius X signed the apostolic constitution, *Sapienti Consilio* (On the Roman Curia). Until that time the American church had been under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith at the Vatican, an office that oversaw developing churches in foreign lands.

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[11] *Ibid.*, 163–5.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In the early nineteenth century, there was little distinction between Catholic and public schools – at least in terms of how they were treated by the state. Until 1825 Catholic schools in New York City received public funds, and as late as 1890 Catholic schools received aid for the teaching of nonreligious subjects in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. Nonetheless, fierce debates about the necessity for Catholic schools took place among the bishops who attended the three Plenary Councils of Baltimore held in 1852, 1866, and 1884. The councils recommended that schools be established in every parish in a diocese.

The Council of Baltimore stressed the need for Catholics to be educated in their own schools. The council pressed this issue for a number of reasons. The curriculum of the public schools in America fell under the control of the Protestant majority. References to Christianity in the classroom meant Protestant Christianity. Bible reading meant the King James version used by Protestants, but not by Catholics. The patriotism of Catholics came under suspicion because Catholics pledged allegiance not only to the United States but also to the pope. Not wanting to be subject to Protestant teachings, Catholics built a system of parochial schools that remains to this day second in size to the public schools in America. This network of schools included primary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions. As a result, a child could receive his or her education entirely within the Catholic system. Schools not only educated the generations, they also provided a tie to the parish and the larger church. This meant contact with the church six days a week (Monday to Friday for school and Sunday for mass). Such regular exposure, coupled with ethnic Catholic neighborhoods, created a Catholic world, sometimes referred to as a Catholic ghetto, in which all aspects of life – social, educational, and religious – revolved around the church. Children in grammar school learned under the watchful eye of nuns who brought religion and God into every subject. The rhythm of the day was punctuated with religious overtones – prayer before class, the Angelus at noon, the celebration of the saints, Marian feasts with special hymns, and visits from the parish priests or pastor.

Nuns were the backbone of the system. With vocations to the sisterhood robust, every school had legions of sisters who taught every subject from math to music, who enforced strong discipline, and who often knew generations of families who attended their school. Religious orders of priests and brothers also ran schools, mostly at the secondary and postsecondary levels. It was more than an education – it was a culture. Parents sacrificed to pay the modest fees associated with Catholic education, from school uniforms to money for daily milk. The experience formed these young Catholics

spiritually, intellectually, and socially. The church's teachings penetrated home life, shaped morals, and distinguished Catholics from non-Catholics in myriad ways. Families attended church together on Sundays, participated in parish as well as school activities, and clearly knew church teachings.

The influence of this extensive school system cannot be exaggerated. Uniforms, rituals, and textbooks created a culture of Catholic education that shaped the minds, hearts, and souls of millions of American children. The Catholic school became the identifier for these youth. The parish served a similar function for the parents. Together the schools and the parishes shaped generations of families that identified as much with their parish as with their city, state, and country.

The orders of women religious founded in America in the nineteenth century, like the immigrants whom they served, experienced conflicts between American habits and European ones. Sometimes bishops imprudently imposed disciplines upon orders that made sense in the cities of Europe, but did not readily translate to the American landscape. These orders, such as the Visitation Nuns founded at Georgetown and the Sisters of Loretto in Kentucky, had to live under rules devised in Europe involving fasting and self-denial, which in some cases were so severe that young sisters on the American frontier died.[12]

While theirs was a labor of love, it was also inexpensive labor. Most nuns lived in convents adjoining the schools they taught in and received little or no salary. Sometimes they had to earn a pittance of a salary twice: once by teaching, and again by selling Christmas cards, candy bars, and magazines, using their students as door-to-door salespersons, or by holding paper drives every few months – all to raise money that would allow the parish to keep school tuition affordable to a population of blue-collar families.

The influence of the Catholic education system was enormous. Catholic schools provided the opportunity for a private school education at a fraction of the cost of other private schools; they provided an identity to an immigrant population striving to be recognized. The schools ensured that Catholic teachings got a hearing, and they instilled loyalty to the church. They shaped generations of youngsters in a Catholic culture that included statues, candles, hymns, dogmas, rituals, penitential practices, prayers, sacrifice, nuns, priests, and popes. Schoolchildren went from classes at

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[12] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 121. For additional reading on this topic, see Joseph I. Dirvin, *Mrs. Seton, Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity* (New York, 1962); Mary Ewens, O.P., *The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1978); George Parsons Lathrop, *A Story of Courage: Annals of the Georgetown Convent of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, from the manuscript records by George Parsons Lathrop and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop (Cambridge, 1894); Eleanore C. Sullivan, *Georgetown Visitation Since 1799* (Baltimore, 1975).

the parish school back home to neighborhoods that were also exclusively Catholic. Ethnicity provided the only differentiation. Children (or their parents) spoke different languages, but they were all Catholic. The personal habits, values, and ambitions of Catholic schoolchildren were profoundly shaped by their experience in classrooms adorned with crucifixes and statues of saints.

ALL NOT EQUAL

African Americans have been part of the Catholic constituency in America since colonial times. While some Catholic ethnic groups discriminated against other Catholic groups, in general all treated blacks poorly. Slave masters regularly passed their religion on to their charges so that many black slaves practiced Catholicism following the religion of their slave owners. Well-to-do Catholic families and the Jesuits who settled in Maryland held slaves. The slaves helped provide economic stability to the nascent church in America. However, just as in the colonies and later in the country, they were not treated as equals in the church.[13]

Before the Civil War, freed slaves encountered prejudice from the American church hierarchy. Rome took a different view.[14] In 1839 Pope Gregory XVI condemned the slave trade in the apostolic letter, *In Supremo Apostolatus Fastigio* (Condemnation of the Slave Trade), which stated the following:

> [We] . . . admonish and adjure in the Lord all believers in Christ, of whatsoever condition, that no one hereafter may dare unjustly to molest Indians, Negroes, or other men of this sort; or to spoil them of their goods; or to reduce them to slavery; or to extend help or favour to others who perpetuate such things against them; or to exercise that inhuman trade by which Negroes, as if they were not men, but mere animals, howsoever reduced to slavery, are, without any distinction, contrary to the laws of justice and

[13] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 360. For additional reading, see Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York, 1991); Benjamin Blied, *Catholics and the Civil War* (Milwaukee, 1945); John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (New York, 1988); John Gillard, *The Catholic Church and the American Negro* (Baltimore, 1930); Randall Miller and Jon Wakelyn, eds., *Catholics in the Old South: Essays on Church and Culture* (Macon, GA, 1983).

[14] For more background on the relationship between the Vatican and American bishops on the slavery issue, see Robert Emmett Curran, "Rome, the American Church, and Slavery," in Joseph C. Linck and Raymond J. Kupke, eds., *Building the Church in America*, (Washington, DC, 1999), 30–49.

humanity, bought, sold, and doomed sometimes to the most severe and exhausting labours.[15]

The attitude toward African Americans did not change as a result of Vatican pressure. Regardless of these attitudes, significant communities of black Catholics sprang up in New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. Some parishes served blacks exclusively, though securing black clergy presented a difficulty since seminaries refused admission to blacks and thereby prevented them from obtaining ordination. Other parishes that included blacks segregated them physically in back pews or the choir loft and institutionally by keeping separate parish registers for blacks and whites. Religious orders founded to minister exclusively to the African American community eventually attracted black members. These orders, for example, the Josephite Fathers and Brothers, represented another sign of the segregation within the church. In New Orleans, Henriette Delille's Community of the Holy Family, a community of black sisters established in 1842, was prohibited from wearing their religious habits in public.[16]

While many Catholics fought on the side of the North in the Civil War to abolish slavery, they still held deep-seated racist views. The North supported segregation, and for a long time the church did little to resist or change this social pattern. After the Civil War, the majority of blacks were in the South where Protestant churches dominated the religious landscape. As such, the Catholic Church did not make much of an effort to convert the African American population.[17] As blacks began to migrate north to the cities, this began to change, however. In 1900, most blacks lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line and only 20 percent lived in the cities. By 1960, about half of the black population in the United States lived in the North and over three-quarters lived in the cities.[18] With this migration to the North, the black population interrupted the pattern of neighborhoods dominated by European ethnicity. Yet it had neither the numbers nor the ties to clergy and hierarchy that the ethnic communities had. African

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[15] Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York, 1991), 39–40.

[16] For details, see Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 596.

[17] New Orleans stands as an exception with its sizable Catholic population. Xavier University of New Orleans testifies to this. Founded in 1915 by Katherine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, it became the first Roman Catholic university for African Americans. St. Louis and Baltimore also had longstanding African American Catholic populations.

[18] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 358.

Americans, looking for work in the factories and industries that required skilled and unskilled labor, found themselves outsiders and unwelcome. Many parishioners feared that an encroaching black population would change the character of their neighborhoods and, as many argued, lower the value of their homes. Many white Catholics rationalized that the segregation of races was natural and that people wanted to associate only with their own race. The Catholic community ignored morality and enforced the segregation laws.

AMERICAN CULTURE VERSUS VATICAN AUTHORITY

In the late nineteenth century, Pope Leo XIII became increasingly distressed by the independence of some leaders within the American church. The pope would have liked the Catholic Church in America to enjoy the same legal status as the church in most of Europe where Catholicism was the state religion. This relationship meant government support for churches and Catholic institutions such as universities and hospitals. The American separation of church and state afforded no such relationship. Leo XIII preferred that the church be treated differently, as he expressed in his 1895 encyclical to the U.S. Catholic Church, *Longinqua* (To the Bishops of the United States), which in part declared, "[The U.S. Church] would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority." This encyclical was one of a series in which Leo XIII decried the secularization of governments and attempted to assert his authority in Europe and America as his political influence and secular authority were eroding, even in his own backyard. If the church accommodated democracy, the pope feared that there would be those who would want to introduce democracy into the church.[19]

Some among the American hierarchy preferred that the church be separate from the state. Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore and Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul were two of the leaders of the "Americanists," as they came to be called. America was a religiously pluralistic environment, and many thought it unwise to attempt to influence the state to prefer one religion over another in its laws or customs. As the historian of American Catholicism David O'Brien wrote, "Religious freedom, separation of church and state, and religious pluralism, the three basic elements of this new religious culture, were bound to shape a new form of public Catholicism."[20]

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[19] Papal Encyclicals Online, http://www.papalencyclicals.net (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).
[20] David O'Brien, *Public Catholicism* (New York, 1989), 9–10.

Rome took a different view, however. On 22 January 1899, Pope Leo XIII issued *Testem Benevolentiae* (A Testament of Esteem), an encyclical directed at the American church. In it the pope criticized those who wanted greater liberty in the American church. "There are some among you who conceive of and desire a Church in America different from that which is in the rest of the world. One in unity of doctrine as in the unity of government, such is the Catholic Church, and since God has established its center and foundation in the Chair of St. Peter, one which is rightly called Rome, for where Peter is, there is the Church." The pope held that temporal power derives from God and that the church represents God's presence in the world.[21]

The pope was not without supporters among the American hierarchy. Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester believed that the American church should not stray far from Rome, even though McQuaid initially opposed the definition of papal infallibility introduced at Vatican I.[22] The 1899 encyclical put a stop to the disputes between Americanists and their more traditional opponents. It also allowed the Americanists to reassert their fidelity to Rome.

And submit they did. The American hierarchy did not want to jeopardize its relationship with Rome or sacrifice the unity of the church. At the same time, however, the conditions that gave birth to Americanism did not evaporate, and the church would revisit the issues raised at the turn of the twentieth century in the second half of the century after Vatican II when tensions between Rome and America increased.

A second demonstration of Rome's authority occurred shortly after the Americanist controversy. In 1907, Leo XIII's successor, Pius X, fearing that the church's teachings were jeopardized by contemporary intellectual trends, issued the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (On the Doctrine of the Modernists), warning that the church should not adopt the ways of the modern world.[23] This warning applied particularly to Europe and America. A number of prominent European theologians such as the French biblical scholar Alfred Loisy, who studied the Bible as a historical document like other historical documents, and the English theologian George Tyrell, who criticized Neo-Scholasticism, increasingly appropriated modern scholarly methods in their work. Another of the offenders, in the pope's view, was the American Isaac Thomas Hecker, the founder of the Paulists, who attempted to translate Catholic teachings into distinctly American

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[21] Papal Encyclicals Online, http://www.papalencyclicals.net (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).
[22] See George Weigel, "Telling the American Catholic Story," *First Things* 7 (Nov. 1990): 43–9.
[23] Papal Encyclicals Online, http://www.papalencyclicals.net (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).

formulations.[24] Rome's authority over the American church further tightened when Pius X required priests to take an oath against modernism. The result, according to political scientist Richard Gelm, was that "[f]ear of Rome killed any intellectual spirit that resided in seminaries and Catholic institutions of higher learning. American Catholicism entered a dark age of conservatism, and strict obedience to Rome overshadowed free intellectual inquiry."[25]

The Americanist controversy and the oath against modernism involved the hierarchy and clergy of the church.[26] Catholic laity, who were mostly immigrants, were anxious to prove their loyalty to America. At the time of the First World War, many Catholics had emigrated from countries that eventually became embroiled in anti-American wars. This fact, coupled with their connections to Rome, made them easy targets for anti-Catholic bigotry, and there was no shortage of that within the Protestant-dominated United States. Institutional expressions of this bigotry began with the Know-Nothings in the South before the Civil War, were manifest by the American Protective Association in the Midwest at the end of the nineteenth century, and peaked with the Ku Klux Klan in the early twentieth century.[27]

Even the 1928 presidential nomination of Al Smith, a Catholic Democrat who was then governor of New York, did not quell anti-Catholicism in America. Smith's loss to the Quaker Herbert Hoover was due to a number of factors, but there is little doubt that his Catholicism hurt him with many constituencies in the election. Mainstream Protestants were leery of Vatican control, and postelection folklore had Smith sending a one-word telegram to the pope – "Unpack."

When Woodrow Wilson committed America to World War I, Catholics signed up for the military in droves. In 1917 James Flaherty, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, an organization for Catholic men, successfully petitioned the government to have the Knights approved as a service organization for Catholic soldiers, until then an exclusive function

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[24] David J. O'Brien's biography, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic Ecker* (Mahwah, NJ, 1992), chronicles Hecker's disputes with the Vatican and with some among the American hierarchy.

[25] Richard J. Gelm, *Religious Authority: American Catholics since the Second Vatican Council* (Westport, 1994), 21.

[26] R. Scott Appleby has chronicled the intellectual development and the subsequent ecclesial conflicts of several American priests involved in the modernist movement in *Church and Age Unite! The Modernist Impulse in American Catholicism* (Notre Dame, 1992).

[27] Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York, 1992); Donald Louis Kinzer, *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* (Seattle, 1964); Rory McVeigh, *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Right-Wing Movements and National Politics* (Minneapolis, 2009).

of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The bishops created the National Catholic War Council (NCWC) to support the war effort in general, and Catholic troops in particular. The creation of this body under episcopal control usurped the authority of the Knights, a lay organization in existence since 1882. This was another instance of the solidification of episcopal authority over the laity, even though prominent industrialists like Patrick Henry Callaghan of Louisville, Kentucky, himself a Knight, helped to shape the NCWC.[28]

Some bishops preferred to take their orders from Rome, and others thought the new organization interfered with their independence. However, the NCWC promoted conversation among the bishops and provided a mechanism for them to speak to the American people, Catholic and non-Catholic, with a unified voice. Or so it seemed. In 1919 the committee issued a document with a blueprint for postwar reconstruction. The document relied on the strategies of Monsignor John A. Ryan, a moral theology professor at Catholic University, known for his support for the working person and his liberal views on the economy and social justice.[29] It called for higher wages and a voice for the workers in the operation of industries. Business leaders decried it, labeling it socialism. Nonetheless, the bishops rewarded Ryan by appointing him director of the council's Social Action Department. Many saw the council as a chance for the church to influence national policy.

The intrigue of behind-the-scenes episcopal machinations hardly affected ordinary Catholics, who continued to look to the church for cohesion, spiritual reinforcement, and moral guidance. Charles Morris recounts an example of this piety when over a million Catholics attended the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago during a week in June 1926.[30] They came from all over America to pray, sing, worship, and bond together in a spiritual event that underscored their Catholic identity. The mystery of the Eucharist, the pomp of the prelates, and the ethnic diversity of the crowds characterized Catholic culture; and this was a chance to assert their loyalty and their uniqueness in America. It did not matter that the bishops were at odds with one another, or even that some were corrupt. These princes of the church, with their distinctive garb and public recognition, made the laity proud to be Catholic. They were happy to pray, pay, and obey. Men would tip their hats when they passed by a church, women would wear hats or scarves on their heads when entering a church, children would vie to be

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[28] Cf. Patrick Henry Callaghan Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives CCLN, 1/1.

[29] Cf. Douglas J. Slawson, *The Foundation and First Decade of the National Catholic Welfare Council* (Washington, DC, 1992), 22–69.

[30] Charles R. Morris, *American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners Who Built America's Most Powerful Church* (New York, 1997), 135–8.

chosen to crown the statute of the Blessed Virgin Mary at a May procession. They lived in a thick Catholic culture that informed their work, their play, and their prayer. They associated socially mostly with other Catholics, supported the local parish and its parochial school, and learned their ethics and politics from the pulpit of the church and the chalkboard of the parish school.

The 1930s in America offered a stark contrast to the 1920s. The Depression leveled the rich and wiped out the savings of the working class. It left a trail of social needs from New York to California. The Vatican took the lead on social ethics when Pius XI proclaimed the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order), which commemorated and advanced the ideas of Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor).[31] These were the heart of Catholic social teaching. These encyclicals articulated a theology and a program of social justice that were championed by a group of bishops, priests, and laity. In light of the encyclicals, clergy defended the rights of the American worker and supported the formation of labor unions. The hierarchy of the American church also supported many of the reforms initiated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the New Deal, such as social security, minimum wage, and the National Labor Relations Act. Not all Catholics, clerical and lay, looked favorably upon this kind of activism in the church, however. Some refrained from active participation, and others distanced themselves from church teaching that seemed too much like socialism.

In the same period, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement, a lay initiative designed to address the needs of the poor. The endeavor eventually led to the foundation of a newspaper, a soup kitchen, and a shelter that has served as a model of social action for millions of Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic. Together, Day and Maurin attempted to put the papal encyclicals into practice, to create places where "the Works of Mercy could be practiced."[32]

For much of his life Thomas Merton, arguably the most influential monk of the twentieth century in America, lived the quiet life of a hermit on the grounds of Our Lady of Gethsemani Trappist monastery in Kentucky. That solitude disguised a whirlwind of intensity, controversy, and contribution to the American and world church. Like Dorothy Day, he acknowledged no strong attachment to religion in his youth. Born in France in 1915, he grew up in that country, in England, and on Long Island, New York. In his early years Merton led the unfettered life of a student among intellectuals at Cambridge and Columbia universities. He fathered a child but did not

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[31] Papal Encyclicals Online, http://www.papalencyclicals.net (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).
[32] William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (San Francisco, 1982), 252.

marry, flirted with Communism, converted to Catholicism at age twenty-three, and joined the Trappists at age twenty-six.[33] Early in his monastic life he published *The Seven Storey Mountain*, a best-selling autobiography.[34] His life as a monk was never as peaceful as his surroundings. Conflicted about his relationship with the abbot, about the pull of the world despite the desire for solitude, about his genius sometimes tainted with pride, about his popularity as an author, and about his passion for justice, he led a complicated existence, far afield from the simple monastic life he initially desired. His celebrity provided a glimpse into monastic life for millions of Americans who read his books and noted his activities. He made the contemplative life more than respected: he made it attractive. Numbers increased at Gethsemani, and no doubt the presence of Merton was responsible. Merton was famous, but fame was not a welcomed commodity in the monastery. His notoriety and talent made his monastic life all the more difficult, partly due to the expectations the world now had for him, and partly because, even in the monastery, the side effect of fame outside the monastery was jealousy and envy inside.

The monastery remained home for Merton, but he traveled regularly to confer with others of like mind and to participate in conferences on a variety of topics. He also changed his lifestyle, retreating to a hermitage in the forest near the monastery. There he found the solitude that had eluded him in the larger community. Nevertheless, he frequently entertained visitors at his retreat – including longstanding friends, monks, and often well-known personalities like Daniel Berrigan from the antiwar movement. He continued to publish scholarly works, poetry, fiction, and spiritual tracts. Ironically, his life ended outside of the quiet monastic world of Kentucky. He died in an accident in Bangkok on 10 December 1968, while attending a conference of world religions.

WORLD WAR II CATHOLICS

World War II interrupted everyone's life in some fashion or another. Although the church maintained neutrality as long as it could, after the attack on Pearl Harbor Catholics enlisted in the military in large numbers even though there was less pressure to prove their patriotism as their numbers and influence grew. Priests signed on to be chaplains to accompany soldiers in battle. The church supported the troops and the country and was as patriotic as any organization in America. From 1940 to 1960, aided by the postwar baby boom, the Catholic population doubled. The

[33] Monica Furlong, *Merton: A Biography* (Liguori, MO, 1995).
[34] Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (Fort Washington, PA, 1999).

1950s saw the largest expansion of schools and churches since the Council of Baltimore. As the population moved to the suburbs, bishops and pastors expanded their land holdings, physical plants, and programs, delving into the pockets of Catholics to pay for them. The GI Bill paved the way to higher education for a generation of veterans, including those matriculating at Catholic colleges and universities in unprecedented numbers. Catholics continued to relish the mystery of the Latin Mass, revere the clergy and sisters, fear punishment for sin, and act in a xenophobic manner toward other Christians and non-Christians alike. Catholic culture reached its apex.

In the 1940s and 1950s, real estate advertisements mentioned in which parish a house was located. The reputation and stability of the parish became a selling point. The residents themselves described where they lived by parish name and not street name or neighborhood. In many cases the population of sections of the city was overwhelmingly Catholic, so that Jews and Protestants found themselves outsiders in their own neighborhoods. Gradually, African Americans moved in replacing the Polish, Irish, and Italian Americans; the vast majority of them were not Catholic.

The implications for the parish were enormous. The decline in parish income marked the most obvious consequence, but perhaps not the most important. It began a radical social change. For decades Catholics had the run of the neighborhoods. Feast days were celebrated publicly with streets blocked off to accommodate long processions of priests, religious, and parishioners.[35] May processions, filled with hundreds of girls in white dresses and boys in school uniforms, were annual events that bestowed an identity on the neighborhood. For Corpus Christi processions (parades through the streets on the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ celebrated in the spring), police and fire departments cooperated in cordoning off sections of the neighborhood and in setting up temporary wooden structures that served as altars. Parishioners scrubbed porches, steps, curbs, and streets in preparation for the Benediction Service that would take place. Flowers, ribbons, and banners festooned the area, and people talked about the event all summer. These celebrations made up a part of the rhythm of the neighborhood. The parish school was *the* school. Sports teams, socials, dances, novenas, funerals, missions, weddings, Lent, and Advent set the calendar and created a place in which people found a common identity. People walked to church. Children walked to the parish school, came home for lunch, went to mass as a group on first Fridays, and

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[35] An excellent study of this phenomenon is Robert A. Orsi's *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem* (New Haven, 1985).

wore uniforms as had their brothers and sisters before them in the school. There was continuity and cohesion.

There was also xenophobia. Catholics were told from the pulpit and in the classroom that they must not enter a Protestant church or a Jewish synagogue. "Mixed marriages" between a Catholic and a non-Catholic were discouraged, though not forbidden in canon law. Catholics who did choose to marry Protestants were not permitted to be married in the sanctuary of the church. They were relegated to the rectory in a quiet and brief ceremony or were allowed to have a ceremony outside of the altar rail in the church. Those who wished to marry non-Christians had an even more difficult task. Children born of a Protestant and a Catholic parent were said to be "the product" of a mixed marriage. In any case, the church ensured that the children would be brought up Catholic by requiring the non-Catholic party to sign a document promising such.[36] In many neighborhoods the words "Catholic ghetto" were not a misnomer.

The answer to the question of whether or not a person could be a good Catholic and a good American was a resounding "Yes." The 1956 nomination hearings for the appointment of William J. Brennan, Jr. to the Supreme Court are an example of a prominent Catholic's unhesitating willingness to support the country. When asked if he might follow the pronouncements of the pope by which he was bound as a Catholic over the requirements of his oath to uphold the Constitution, Brennan responded, "[W]hat shall control me is the oath that I took to support the Constitution and laws of the United States and so act upon the cases that come before me for decision that it is that oath and that alone which governs."[37]

At the same time that Catholic culture was so embedded, its foundations were stirring. Catholics were assimilating into American society, becoming wealthier, better educated, and geographically diversified. The majority were no longer immigrants. Opportunities in business, government, entertainment, education, and industry became available to Catholics in increasing numbers. Catholics did not hold sway on the top echelons of the professions, but doors were opening that would change the economic, professional, and social status of the rising generation. Along with Georgetown, Notre Dame, Boston College, and Holy Cross, they matriculated at Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. The gap between Protestants

[36] This practice was changed in the revised Code of Canon Law in 1983 to require the Catholic party "to do all in his or her power" to share the Catholic faith with the children.

[37] Samuel A. Mills, "Parochiaid and the Abortion Decisions: Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. versus the U.S. Catholic Hierarchy," *Journal of Church and State* 34:4 (1992): 753.

and Catholics was narrowing, though there remained a large segment of Catholic parents who viewed the traditionally elite universities as dangerous to the faith. They preferred a pastorally nurturing environment rather than prestige.

American Catholics began to come of age after World War II. No longer outsiders to the culture, they assumed key roles in government and business in unprecedented numbers. They were increasingly well educated and upwardly mobile. The 1950s ended the heyday of the Catholic subculture as Catholics appropriated the larger American culture and the culture absorbed them.

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AMERICAN JUDAISM, 1820–1945

HASIA R. DINER

The history of Judaism in America from the 1820s through the end of World War II falls into two unequal time periods. The long century from the 1820s through the middle of the 1920s took its basic shape from the fact that three million European Jews immigrated to the United States. The second, much shorter, from the end of mass migration until 1945, reflected the increasing American nativity of the Jewish people as well as their steady journey into the educated middle classes.

In the 1820s and before, Jews constituted a tiny fraction of the American population, limited in their settlement to a few eastern seaboard cities as well as to a number of emerging inland communities like Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. They maintained a relatively invisible persona and did not seek to impress the American landscape with markers of their presence. They did little to make other Americans aware of their presence, and their religious institutions constituted the dominant forms of Jewish communal life. In most places they maintained only one synagogue, and it constituted the only functioning center of Jewish life, taking care of the Jews' religious, educational, and charitable needs.

By 1945, while Jews still constituted a minority in a predominantly Christian populace, never making up more than 4 or 5 percent of the population, they assumed a prominent place in American society. They drew attention to themselves as Jews. Synagogues and other kinds of Jewish edifices appeared visibly wherever Jews lived, and on a local and national level they asserted that they saw themselves as members of a distinct religious-ethnic community. Awash in an array of institutions of every kind, religion no longer constituted the predominant way to be Jewish. The Jewish element in their communities lived in tandem with other modes of Jewish expression.

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RELIGION AND RACE

Despite these shifts, certain continuities ran across time. Jews took advantage of two key aspects of American political and social culture, those involving religion and race.

Evolving patterns of religious freedom impacted upon Jews in two ways. The fact that no state or the nation impeded them meant that Jewish life could thrive with no fear of repression. Synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, and other religious institutions received the same privileges in terms of tax-exempt status as their Christian counterparts, and Jews could freely and without any state restrictions have access to kosher food, matzah (unleavened bread) for Passover, and whatever other material items and services they desired. The expansion of rights for all regardless of religion benefited Jews and Judaism. In the 1820s, the last of the original states, Massachusetts and Connecticut, which had maintained elements of religious establishment, disestablished; and in that decade, the last notable place, Maryland, which limited Jews' access to political equality, removed all obstacles to Jewish civic rights.

During these twelve decades Jews, at times, had to argue for the right of Judaism to share the benefits of Christianity, Protestantism in particular. During the Civil War, Jews effectively lobbied with President Lincoln to allow Jewish chaplains to minister to the Union troops no differently than Christian clergymen. Nearly always Jews successfully pleaded their case.

Equally significant, the fact that under the Constitution religion and state existed independent of each other meant that ordinary people, Jews, could fashion their preferred religious institutions. The clergy, rabbis, had no power beyond that given them by the dues-paying members of the congregations that employed them. Clergy could only use rhetorical arguments and could not enlist the government to assist them. Not the province of the clergy or the learned, synagogues came to reflect the will of those who chose to affiliate, giving them wide latitude in controlling religious life.

Additionally, the profound antipathy of most Americans toward Catholicism, particularly until the 1920s, also left its mark on Jewish life. While anti-Jewish sentiment existed and in a variety of sectors including housing, employment, recreation, and even education, Jews met discrimination, Americans never evinced toward Judaism the kind of hatred, and at times violence, they did toward Catholics and Catholicism. Judaism as a religious tradition indeed benefited from the high levels of anti-Catholicism that periodically swept the United States and pervaded its basic culture.

On the matter of race, Jews as individuals and as members of an ethnic community likewise could take advantage of the fact that in the eyes of the

state they fell into the category of "white." In a society in which skin color functioned as *the* most crucial factor to determine rights, the privileges of whiteness constituted a powerful force for gaining access to opportunities, legitimacy, safety, and respectability. Jews endured discrimination at various points in time, but that discrimination did not emanate from the state and existed in much milder form than Jews experienced elsewhere or by people defined as nonwhite in the United States. This, too, impacted their religious lives inasmuch as they could, in America, create the kinds of institutions and practices they chose without fear of inspiring violence and other negative repercussions.

1820S–1920S: THE IMMIGRANT ERA

The transplantation of one-third of Europe's Jews to America underlay all of the developments internal to the formation and growth of Jewish religious life in America. Beginning in the 1820s, Jews, young people mainly, began to abandon Europe under the pressure of economic modernization that destroyed the basic modes of Jewish life. That migration commenced in Bavaria, the Rhineland, and other regions of what would in 1871 become Germany. Over the course of the 1840s and 1850s, the migration, sometimes referred to as "America fever," reflecting the positive draw of the United States, shifted eastward and northward and began to encompass Bohemia, Moravia, and a region of Prussia known as Posen, or Poznan, a Polish province that had been incorporated into the future German state. Jewish immigration from Alsace constituted the only substantial inflow from Western Europe.

By the 1860s Jews began to flow to the United States from Lithuania and other parts of western Russia. By the 1880s when the tidal emigration from Eastern Europe, from the czarist and the Austro-Hungarian empires, began in earnest, about one-sixth of American Jews had already hailed from east of the Elbe River, the conventional line of demarcation between Eastern and Central Europe. After the 1880s the bulk of the Jewish immigrants made their way from Eastern Europe, with a shift in the 1910s from Lithuania and other parts of northwestern Russia to the Ukraine and adjacent southeastern parts of the czarist lands. A sizable number of Jews also hailed from Rumania, Galicia, which lay within the Austro-Hungarian empire, with some coming from the Ottoman Empire, namely, from Greece. The Jewish migration of this century encompassed much of Europe, and the immigrants brought a mix of languages, regional styles of worship, and familial connections. Between 1820 and 1880, about 250,000 Jews came to the United States, while between 1880 and the imposition of immigration restriction in 1924, the number surpassed 2.5 million. These immigrants

came to the United States on a permanent basis and recognized the need to accommodate to their new home.

RELIGION

In this century American Jewish communities witnessed unending debates raged over the nature of Jewish practice, the authority of texts inherited from the past, and the meaning of Judaism in the modern world. The participants in these debates represented ever-shifting definitions of tradition, what constituted legitimate tinkering with that tradition, and how to fend off challenges to past practice. The partisans of each variant of Judaism saw themselves as those best able to address the problems of a normative religion in a land of choice. Each movement, faction, or party considered its solution to the lure of American culture to be the most potent, whether it stood to the "left," the "right," or the "center." The synagogues, seminaries, denominations, and other religious bodies that existed on the American Jewish scene by the 1920s would have been unrecognizable to an American Jew of 1820. But in all the changes that ensued from 1820 through 1920, American Jews, in the public and private practice of their Judaism, understood that their religion set them apart from other Americans, and they wanted that, to some degree, to be the case.[1]

All also recognized that they must accommodate to America, regardless if they called themselves Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, or just Jewish. For some Jews, doing so meant reluctantly agreeing that modifications had to be made, whereas for others, this constituted an enthusiastic embrace of new elements and idioms, many of them imported from the Protestant American culture.[2]

FIRST RABBIS

In 1820 no rabbis lived in America. Ordinary Jewish men directed the synagogues, and *hazzinim*, cantors, led services, functioning as quasi-rabbis, leading religious services, arranging and performing marriages, and even officiating at the rare conversion ceremony. When Jews settled in new neighborhoods, towns, and regions, without the assistance of trained clergy they created the basic institutions necessary for Jewish life: cemeteries and

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[1] No scholar has yet written a history of Jewish conversion to Christianity in America. Hints in the literature, however, indicate that it did not compare to the rate or scope of conversion that went on in Europe.

[2] The concept, "resisters and accommodators," was coined by Jeffrey Gurock, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983," *American Jewish Archives* 35:2 (Oct. 1983): 120–30.

congregations, in particular. They found ways to get kosher meat, *matzah*, for the spring holiday of Passover, and they located *mohelim* to perform the rite of circumcision for their newborn sons, readers to chant the prayers, and teachers to instruct the young. At times, the most knowledgeable among them served as "rabbi" despite the lack of training or ordination. Yet all congregations conformed to traditional Jewish practice, and where they splintered off among themselves, they did so because of their European places of origin or personality clashes between members.

Rabbis started to arrive in America in the 1840s. The earliest, like Abraham Rice who came to Baltimore in 1840 and Bernard Illowy who showed up in New York in 1848, attempted in the congregations that hired them to control what they considered the anarchic state of American Judaism and to restrain the laity. These early rabbis considered themselves traditionalists, obliged to follow a normative system encoded in the Talmud.[3] They found an ally in Isaac Leeser, the *hazzan* of Philadelphia's Mikveh Israel, a congregation founded in the late colonial era. He shared their fears as to the precarious fate of Judaism in America. He, like they, skirmished often with congregants who viewed rabbis (or cantors) as employees, hired to do their bidding. The chasm between the traditional rabbis, Leeser included, and the membership, reflected the reality that few Jews observed Jewish law, particularly in matters of diet and Sabbath observance, with the punctiliousness the rabbis considered appropriate.

Leeser, Rice, Illoway, and subsequent traditionalist rabbis not just worried about the laxity of the rank-and-file Jews, but fretted over how democracy had insinuated itself into congregational life. They saw that to convince the members to follow Jewish law more stringently, the clergy first had to acquiesce to the wishes of the laity on matters that seemed ancillary to the core of tradition. Leeser acceded to the wishes of Mikve Israel's members that he deliver a weekly Sabbath sermon, that he face them, rather than the Ark, when chanting the service, and that he robe himself in a gown like that of a Protestant minister.[4]

Partly Leeser gave in because he feared the vigor of the evangelical Protestant mission that sought to convert the Jews. The American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews had been founded in 1820. Never particularly successful, this organization and other evangelical groups labored assiduously to bring the truth of the Gospels to the Jews, organizing schools and orphanages designed to attract Jewish children and the Jewish poor among this immigrant population. Worried about this, Leeser

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[3] Harold I. Sharfman, *The First Rabbi: Origins of Conflict between Orthodox and Reform: Jewish Polemic Warfare in Pre-Civil War America* (Malibu, 1988).

[4] Lance Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit, 1995).

believed that the leaders of American Jewry had to be proactive. He aided his congregant Rebecca Gratz who conceived of the idea of Jewish Sunday school as a bulwark against the evangelical onslaught, and he tried not to offend the ordinary Jews whom the missionaries targeted.[5]

This then led Leeser to publish the first didactic books for Jewish children, *Instruction in the Mosaic Law* (1830), a ten-volume set of *Discourses* about Judaism in 1837, 1841, and 1867, and a six-volume bilingual prayer book and commentary, *The Form of Prayer According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, which appeared in 1837 and 1838. He published the first American translation of the Torah in 1845 and the first American edited prayer book, this one focusing on the newest immigrants to America, those from Germany and Poland. He hoped these would stem the drift away from meaningful religious practice and would keep Jews from being alienated from Judaism.[6]

REFORM'S AMERICAN ORIGINS

Leeser, Rice, Illowy, and the small but growing number of other European rabbis in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s faced another, more ominous threat. American Jews, like those in Central Europe, had begun to challenge some core elements of Judaism. In Germany, particularly in Berlin and Hamburg, commencing in the second decade of the nineteenth century, groups of laypeople and a growing number of university-educated rabbis launched the Reform movement.[7] Some rabbis like David Einhorn, Leo Merzbacher, Max Lillienthal, and Samuel Adler who came to America starting in the 1840s had already experienced the stirring of Reform in Europe. They brought it to America and to the congregations they served. Einhorn, a Bavarian-born reformer, came to the United States in 1855 to serve Baltimore's Har Sinai Congregation. He launched a German-language newspaper, *Sinai*, and published his prayer book, *Olat Tamid*, in 1856, which in its liturgy espoused thoroughgoing reform. Einhorn represented the radical wing of American Reform. He valorized German as the language most able to ennoble Judaism and believed that Judaism had to cleanse itself of ideas and practices antithetical to modernity and rationalism. He considered that much of Jewish law, the dietary restriction and Sabbath limitations, and such ideas as a hoped-for Messianic age when the Jews would be restored to Palestine to a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem,

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[5] Yaakov S. Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People: Missions to the Jews in America, 1880–2000* (Chapel Hill, 2000).
[6] Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism*.
[7] Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of Reform Judaism* (New York, 1988), 225–95.

and when the dead would be bodily revived, could not be reconciled with life in a modern society. Einhorn sought to present Judaism as a religion based on ethical principles that would, or should, foster progress of all of humankind, seeking to expunge the tribal, or ethnic, components of the tradition, which he believed handicapped the Jews as they integrated into the modern world. He abhorred the condition of Jewish women within Judaism, considering it dysfunctional in America where he witnessed women expanding their educational and legal options. While state legislatures in the United States began to extend women's civil status and some women discussed their right to the vote, within Judaism, Einhorn and other Reformers asserted, women remained passive and mute objects rather than active players. Einhorn did not see his reforms as a break with the past, but rather a tool to preserve Judaism in a new age. Until his death in 1879 he wanted Reform to invigorate the religion. He opposed marriages between Jews and Christians.[8]

The year that Einhorn arrived in the United States he joined the other rabbis in America at a conference in Cleveland, dominated in large measure by his soon-to-be arch rival for the leadership of American Judaism, Isaac Mayer Wise. Wise, unlike Einhorn, discovered Reform only in America. Arriving in 1846 from Bohemia, he quickly succumbed to the spirit of the age in America, characterized by the creation of hundreds of new denominations and based on the truth that Americans could create the religious practices they wanted.[9] Wise instituted reforms in his first congregation, Beth El, in Albany, New York, first by adding a mixed choir. When his lay board fired him in 1850, he and a group of followers founded an explicitly reform-inflected congregation, Anshe Emeth, the first one in America to abolish sex-segregated seating.

In a geographically momentous move, in 1854 Wise accepted the pulpit in Cincinnati's Bene Yeshurun (B'nai Jeshurun) congregation. He remained there until his death in 1900, and in this city he orchestrated much of the institutional development of Reform in America, organizing the first lasting seminary to train American rabbis (Hebrew Union College), the first organized body of congregations (Union of American Hebrew Congregations), and the first association of rabbis (Central Conference of American Rabbis). He made Cincinnati the seat of the movement, although he expected that Reform would unite all American Jews. In this he failed. This became

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[8] Alan Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation: The Response of Reform Judaism to American Culture, 1840–1930* (Hanover, NH, 1994); and Isaac Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry, 1773–1920* (Philadelphia, 1971), 56–7, 98.

[9] Peter N. Williams, *Popular Religion in America: Symbolic Change and the Modernization Process in Historical Perspective* (Urbana, IL, 1989).

clear in 1855 when Wise called together the rabbinical conference in Cleveland where he clashed with Einhorn, who thought Wise's vision too timid. In Cleveland, Wise also sparred with Leeser, who feared the slide toward reform.

The history of American Judaism from 1855 and the Cleveland Conference until the 1880s might best be thought of as the "age of Wise." Wise triumphed over Einhorn and Leeser. Leeser had hoped his Maimonides College in Philadelphia, founded in 1867, would prepare young men for a traditionalist rabbinate, but it lasted just a few years and produced no graduates. Wise, on the other hand, created Hebrew Union College in 1875, and at the start of the twenty-first century it still graduates rabbis, cantors, and educators. Leeser wanted to unite all American Jews under a common traditional liturgy, but Wise authored the most widely used prayer book in America, *Minhag America*, the American rite, and he, not Leeser, founded the first – and still functioning – rabbinical body, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) in 1873, which began with thirty-four congregations, mostly from the Middle West. By 1875 the number had jumped to seventy-two. In 1880 only twelve synagogues in America, out of two hundred, had not affiliated with the union.

CHALLENGES TO REFORM: LEFT AND RIGHT

By the 1880s the "age of Wise" began to decline, assaulted from "left" and "right." The Einhorn faction continued, surviving Einhorn's death, led by his son-in-law Kaufman Kohler, who in 1885 formulated and promulgated the *Pittsburgh Platform*, a statement of essential Reform principles. Kohler, like Einhorn, envisioned his bold changes as a way to save Judaism, and like his predecessor he believed that if the rabbis of the age did not take bold steps, the increasingly comfortable, integrated Jews of America would drift away, possibly over to Christianity. Kohler had to face a more radical challenge, the rise of Ethical Culture in 1876. Created by Felix Adler, the son of a rabbi and an ordained Reform rabbi himself, Ethical Culture rejected Judaism, including its Reform variant, because of its continued insistence of the existence of God and its fusion of ethnic particularism with religion. Adler left Judaism because, he charged, Reform had not really divorced itself from rabbinic Judaism or Jewish ethnicity. Kohler wanted the exodus of the educated, affluent Jews to this new "church."

Kohler correctly perceived that new demographic realities threatened Reform. The massive influx of Jews from Eastern Europe commenced in the 1870s, and Jewish communities across America saw increases in the number of more observant Jewish newcomers who demanded that congregations stifle or roll back reforms. When and where congregations turned

down their demands, the newly arrived traditionalists seceded, fashioning their own institutions outside UAHC. For example, three dozen members of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, many recent arrivals from Posen, withdrew from the city's only synagogue when it installed an organ in 1869. They vigorously objected to the new English-only ritual and to the elimination of the Kiddush, the prayer ushering in the Sabbath. The secessionists formed themselves into Adas Israel, the capital's second congregation. The exodus of the traditionalists gave the bolder reformers license to proceed even further in their quest for change.[10] At the same time, Jewish communities witnessed the sprouting of multiple congregations based on European places of origin – Russia, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, and Poland. Some existed as small storefronts, but all representing the specter of east European traditionalism on American soil which the reformers feared.

Simultaneously, a number of learned but modernly educated rabbis who represented the "positive-historical school" in Germany also began to arrive in the United States. They considered Judaism capable of modernization, but only under the rabbinic system. Emancipation, science, modernity, and western ideas, they considered, could coexist with Judaism, even enhance it. Judaism, which they claimed had always evolved, could in America of the late nineteenth century continue to do so. Alexander Kohut played a crucial role among these advocates of the Science of Judaism, the *wissenschaft des Judentums.* A Hungarian rabbi who debated Kohler in the pages of the Jewish press and from the pulpits of their respective New York congregations in the early 1880s, Kohut declared that "Reform is a Deformity" by rejecting Jewish law.[11]

Kohler sought a compromise between the two extremes challenging Reform. He convened a conference of Reform rabbis in Pittsburgh to issue Reform's declaration of principles. The document then offended the more traditional elements among American Jews, represented by Kohut and by Philadelphia's Sabato Morais, as it jettisoned customs "not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization." It declared that Jews of the nineteenth century "no longer" constituted "a nation, but a religious community," while differentiating itself from Ethical Culture by affirming its belief in the "God-idea." Jews, the document said, had a mission, the establishment of ethical monotheism.[12]

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[10] Stanley Rabinowitz, *The Assembly: A Century in the Life of the Adas Israel Hebrew Congregation of Washington, D.C.* (Hoboken, NJ, 1993).

[11] Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1963).

[12] Walter Jacob, ed., *The Changing World of Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect* (Pittsburgh, 1985).

These words threw down a gauntlet to the more traditionally oriented rabbis, some of whom had been personally and deeply offended just three years earlier when Isaac Meyer Wise invited them to the first graduation of the Hebrew Union College. The celebratory dinner held to mark this event included on its menu an array of nonkosher dishes. This famous "*trefah* [unkosher] banquet" played a small part in galvanizing the traditionalists who in 1886 established the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. When they formed this school, they intended it to train traditional rabbis to serve traditional congregations, but with English-language sermons and decorum as integral elements of the worship. They did not think their seminary would produce another denomination, although that happened. The seminary began clumsily, plagued by poor funding and only a vague idea as to what distinguished it from the religious and educational developments among the Eastern European masses flowing to the United States.[13]

Simultaneous with the seminary's founding, other traditionalists gathered around Rabbi Abraham Ash at the Beth Ha-Madresh Hagadol Congregation and in 1889 formed the short-lived Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Another group of the observant, representing a handful of congregations on New York's Lower East Side, the heart of the East European Jewish presence in America, decided that American Jewry needed a chief rabbi, akin to the kind of state-sanctioned chief rabbis common in Europe. Hoping to end the anarchy of Jewish practice, particularly in the supervision of kosher slaughtering, they brought Rabbi Jacob Joseph from Vilna in 1888. His short reign demonstrated the incompatibility of American conditions with authoritative Judaism orchestrated from the top down.

The traditionalists hoped that education would stem what they saw as the pernicious drift of Jews away from authentic Judaism in America. Individuals within that community created the Machazikai Talmud Torah in 1883 and Etz Chaim Yeshiva in 1886. The year 1897 saw the opening of the Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Seminary named for the chief rabbi of Kovno, Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor, who died in 1896. In 1902 some of the major financial backers of the seminary, Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall, themselves members of Reform, brought Solomon Schechter, a renowned Semitics scholar at Cambridge University, to lead a reorganized seminary. The institution, which had previously enrolled young students, most recent immigrants themselves from poor East European homes, under

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[13] Hasia R. Diner, "'Like the Antelope and the Badger': The Founding and Early Years of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1886–1902," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (New York, 1997), 1: 1–42.

Schechter's leadership accepted only college graduates ready to study for the rabbinate.

In the years that followed Schechter's arrival in the United States, the seminary moved to establish itself as the center of a second movement, to challenge Reform as standard bearer for American Judaism. In 1913 seminary graduates serving in congregations across the country, some belonging to the UAHC, created the United Synagogue of America. Shortly thereafter, the rabbis trained at the seminary formed the Rabbinical Assembly. These made up the Conservative movement, which emphasized the binding nature of Jewish law, but it also declared that under certain circumstances the law could change. It hoped to marry Western ideas about democracy, modernity, and rationality and middle-class standards of decorum with rabbinic Judaism.

This helped galvanize those within the traditional community who considered the seminary's project too quick to make concessions with American values. This group came to be called "Orthodox," although it never had the same institutional unity as the other two.

The aborted plan of having a chief rabbi for America may have failed,[14] but Jacob Joseph's coming to the United States made it possible for a number of other East European rabbis to also immigrate. Enough of them were in the United States by 1902 for them to form the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States. In 1908 students at the small Rabbi Yitzhak Elhanan Theological Seminary protested the narrowness of their curriculum and persuaded the school's leaders to broaden the curriculum to include American subjects. In 1915 it merged with the older Etz Hayim Yeshiva under the presidency of Bernard Revel, and in 1929 after various innovations and expansions it was chartered Yeshiva College.

LOCAL HISTORIES

The history of American Judaism actually played itself out congregation by congregation, city by city. No national developments would have taken place had not the ferment bubbled up from the local, grass-roots actions. In 1824, fifty members of Charleston's venerable K. K. Beth Elohim petitioned the synagogue's board for the right to have a weekly "discourse" in English. They also wanted some prayers to be recited in English. They hoped for greater decorum during prayers, and they wanted to tone down the boisterous fund raising – the selling of honors – during religious services. The

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[14] Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 44:3 (March 1954): 129–98.

board refused, and the dissidents seceded, organizing the Reformed Society of Israelites. Led by Isaac Harby, a journalist, drama critic, and educator, the Reformed Society existed until 1833 according to a liturgy and along the lines they preferred.[15]

The society could not, however, survive the death of Isaac Harby, and in 1833 the seceders rejoined with Beth Elohim, still the only synagogue in South Carolina. But the cause of reforming Jewish worship could not be stopped in the Palmetto state or elsewhere. In the end of the 1830s, as Beth Elohim moved into its grand Greek Revival–style edifice, questions of religious ritual once again split the congregation. Abraham Moise, a member, had been a follower of Harby and, indeed, edited Harby's memoirs. He continued to push for the cause of reform even after his mentor's death. He persuaded the hazan, Gustav Poznanski, a Polish-born lover of America, who dubbed his new country "our Zion," to agree to install an organ in the new building. This now agitated the traditionalists in Charleston. After a protracted legal battle between the two factions over who had custody of the building, the remnant who opposed the innovations now seceded and founded a congregation of their own, appropriately named, Shearith Israel, the remnant of Israel. Yet another fissure tore apart Beth Elohim in 1851 when yet another group opposed to change left and founded B'rith Sholom. It was one of the first congregations to join the newly created Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America in 1898.[16]

Calls for change, as embodied in both the actions of the 1824 innovators and the 1838 traditionalists, came from the bottom up. Ordinary Jews who did not like what they saw in the congregations they belonged to demanded the right to make change, regardless in which direction those changes pointed. When the institutional structure failed to respond to their needs, they went off and created the kinds of congregations that did. Those congregations themselves then spawned secessions which reflected the will of new groups of members.

EVERYDAY LIFE

More central to the history of American Judaism than schisms and fissures over matters of public ritual, the wording of liturgies, or discussions about doctrinal matters was the quotidian behavior of most American Jews. Most

[15] Robert Liberles, "Conflict over Reforms: The Case of Congregation Beth Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (Hanover, NH, 1987), 274–96.

[16] Barnett Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Philadelphia, 1905); and Charles Reznikoff and Uriah Z. Engelman, *The Jews of Charleston* (Philadelphia, 1950).

never belonged or paid dues to synagogues, yet maintained practices that spoke to them. They might rarely go to synagogue, but when Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur arrived, the women and men who had no connection to synagogue life felt obliged to join their fellow Jews in worship and solidarity. In large cities sprouted "mushroom congregations," makeshift services in rented halls that overflowed with the ordinarily non–synagogue goers who felt the call to participate in this annual ritual. So too home-based rituals, a rich Sabbath meal, lighting candles at Hanukkah, and observing the Passover united Jews.

Labels meant little. Members of Orthodox congregations violated the Sabbath and consumed unkosher food outside of their kosher homes. Through the 1870s, congregations affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations supported ritual baths and paid for a *shochet* to provide kosher meat. Individuals at different times maintained and, indeed, insisted upon the retention of some practices and not on others, including lighting Sabbath candles, seeing to the circumcisions of their sons, and supporting the institutions of the Jewish community as a form of obligatory charity.

Yet some Jews refrained from working on the Sabbath, attended to the laws of ritual purity, and insisted on eating only according to the dietary laws. People exhibited different levels of observance at different times of their lives, and the circumstances in which they found themselves and not deep ideological concern shaped their behaviors.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, vast numbers of American Jews made a living in small business, and Americans shopped on Saturdays. Most states banned Sunday shopping. So in their homes, families, as described in memoirs and autobiographies, on Friday nights ate a festive meal to welcome the Sabbath, after mothers had kindled candles and fathers blessed the wine. But Saturday mornings, the men opened their stores. This held in small towns in the Middle West in the 1860s and in the large Jewish neighborhoods of the big cities in the early twentieth century, among Jews who had come from Germany, and just as likely among those who had immigrated from Russia.[17]

Women, who also worked in the stores on weekdays, seemed to have given themselves the Sabbath off, and the American Sabbath in the synagogue became heavily a women's affair. Some memoirists told of fathers who went to synagogue in the morning, but in the afternoon donned the shopkeeper's apron. The same person who sold goods across the counter of his store during the day on Saturday went home and made *havdallah*, the

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[17] Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 146–7.

ceremony marking the end of the Sabbath. Work alone did not lure Jews from Sabbath observance. American cities throbbed with popular entertainment, and Jews, like others, rushed to consume the pleasures of urban life. The Yiddish theaters of the Lower East Side commonly filled the house on Friday night and Saturday matinees.[18]

Jews in America picked and chose from familiar practices remembered from childhood, cobbled together inconsistently with American innovations and contextualized around their need to work and make a living. At the core of this, however, lay their firm belief in themselves as Jews. That was beyond contestation, and however tenuously they adhered to traditional Judaism, they resisted vigorously efforts from the outside to win them over to Christianity.

The synagogues after the 1820s faced another challenge, perhaps more formidable than the schisms over theology and the waning of practice. After the 1820s a range of institutions developed which provided Jewish services – charitable, social, cultural, educational, even religious – which destroyed the monopoly that each of the early synagogues enjoyed. After the 1820s it became increasingly possible for an American Jew to live a full Jewish life with no synagogue connection.

In the prenational period, for example, the *shochtim* had been hired by the congregations, and to get kosher meat required synagogue membership. By the 1820s, slaughterers and butchers no longer served at the pleasure of the congregations. *Anyone* could buy kosher meat if so desired, and access to kosher meat became a matter of personal choice and the realities of the marketplace.[19]

SOCIAL SERVICES

Similarly, in the earlier era Jewish charity pivoted around the synagogue as *the* center of Jewish life. But this changed in the 1820s. In New York in 1822, some of the recent Ashkenazic Jewish immigrants who belonged to Shearith Israel created the Hebrew Benevolent Society, or Meshibat Nefesh. They wrote a constitution for their organization that made clear that, although it had a linkage to the synagogue, it existed as an independent body.[20] The disassociation of the synagogues, not just in New York, but all over the United States, from Jewish welfare proved momentous.

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[18] Hutchins Hapgood, *Spirit of the Ghetto: Studies of the Immigrant Quarter of New York* (New York, 1902), 125–6; and Andrew Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption and the Search for American Identity* (New York, 1990).

[19] See Hyman Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860* (Philadelphia, 1947), 404–5.

[20] *Ibid.*, 145–7.

From then on individual Jews, from the very wealthiest to those of modest means, created a vast enterprise of social service, including caring for the sick, the elderly, orphans, those without work or in prison, the hungry, and the destitute. The size of the service network came to be, by the 1920s, a hallmark of American Jewry and one of its characteristics that Americans, non-Jews, admired most.[21]

Communal service came to be the common denominator of American Jewry, and where Jews could not agree upon matters religious, they could, in thousands of community organizations primarily on the local level, concur upon the urgency of the Talmudic dictate, "all of Israel are responsible one for the other." Their concern with helping their own needy had a defensive dimension. Until the twentieth century, almost all American charity derived from sectarian sources. For Jews to rely upon either overtly Christian institutions or subtly sectarian institutions was out of the question, as they made no provisions for Jewish practice, including dietary laws or the Sabbath. Equally important, these charitable enterprises reflected the evangelical fervor of American Protestantism. For a Jewish child, for example, to enter an American orphanage meant that the child would likely come out a Christian. So Jewish orphanages, a high communal priority, both assisted parentless children and kept them Jewish.[22]

The charitable infrastructure of American Jewish life went from the local to the national. While the basic institutions functioned on the local level, and in these places most Jews who needed assistance received it, as early as the 1870s national Jewish bodies developed to give coherence to Jewish charity. That year the individuals involved in the United Hebrew Relief Association of St. Louis suggested that a National Association of Jewish Charities be formed. It took until 1899 for this to happen, and that year saw the formation of the National Conference of Jewish Charities. It, as well as other national and international bodies, like the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the Jewish Agricultural Society, the Industrial Removal Office, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, the National Desertion Bureau, chief among many, linked American Jews together, regardless of where they lived and regardless if they were givers or takers of charity.

Family circles, or clubs, provided free-interest loans to kin people down on their luck. *Landsmanshaftn*, or hometown associations, reflected European places of origin, and these hundreds of societies provided

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[21] Quoted in Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore, 1992), 102.

[22] Reena Friedman Sigmund, *These Are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880–1925* (Hanover, NH, 1994).

insurance, assistance, and sociability to their members. Women's burial societies, known in America as Hebrew Female Benevolent Associations, fulfilled the religious obligations associated with death and burial, but they also extended loans to women in need, prepared dowries for poor brides, helped orphans, and generally looked after the welfare of Jewish women and children.

Each communal enterprise, large or small, going from the top down or flowing laterally within the ranks of the relatively poor, provided American Jews, starting in the 1820s, with a way of acting out their Jewishness without synagogues. Each enterprise allowed them to feel that they were fulfilling some basic Jewish obligations and brought them together with other Jews in meetings and in recreational activities, often to raise money.

No organization better exemplified the fusion of the charitable and the social and the challenge to the synagogues than the B'nai B'rith, the oldest of America's permanent Jewish organizations. In 1843 twelve young Jewish men, all immigrants from Central Europe living in New York's *Kleindeutchland* neighborhood, had been rejected for membership in a local Masonic lodge. They decided to unite for mutual assistance and created the *Bundes Bruder*, or a band of brothers. Shortly thereafter they opted for the Hebrew B'nai B'rith, the sons of the covenant. They borrowed liberally from the Masons, the Odd Fellows, and the other fraternal orders so immensely popular with nineteenth-century American men. They greeted each other with secret rituals and secret handshakes, donning special regalia for meetings. Their secret handshake was accompanied by the words *shalom aleichem* – peace unto you – and the costume included the *arba kanfot*, the four-cornered fringed prayer undergarments of traditional Judaism. Lodges took Hebrew names: Emes, B'er Chayim, Ramah, Ebn Ezra, and the like. They offered members tangible benefits, particularly, sickness and death insurance. The B'nai B'rith allowed members to carry their package of benefits from lodge to lodge as they moved across America in search of new opportunities. The B'nai B'rith started its first chapter outside of New York in 1850, becoming the first nationally unifying American Jewish institution.

The Jewishness of B'nai B'rith manifested itself in the organization's activities. In Albany, New York, the Shiloh Lodge briefly supported a Jewish all-day school, while the Champaign, Illinois, Grand Prairie Lodge provided instruction for Jewish children on Sunday mornings. B'nai B'rith lodges sponsored religious services at times, and often provided a venue for lectures by visiting rabbis and other learned men. In Philadelphia, New York, and Cincinnati, the B'nai B'rith established

Jewish libraries to make available to the Jewish public books and magazines of a Jewish nature.[23]

JEWISH EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Belonging to a lodge, to a Jewish literary society, or to a Young Men's Hebrew Association, a product of the 1870s, became in and of itself a Jewish act, a way, in the eyes of members, to fulfill their Jewish obligations.[24] These motives informed the ways American Jews fulfilled the Jewish obligation to teach their children. The decisions they made were based on a voluntary reading of a behavior they believed to be obligatory. In the century after 1820 Jewish education moved away from the control of the individual congregations. Rather Jews, representing different classes and ideologies, sought to create Jewish educational institutions that reflected their ideas of what American Jewish children needed in order to become responsible American Jewish adults. Choice rather than compulsion became the hallmark of the Jewish school enterprise.

Before the 1820s, education had been a function of the individual congregation, but in that decade several Jewish schools, starting with the Polonies Talmud Torah of 1821 in New York, broke out of the congregational orbit. Likewise the new congregations founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century experimented with new educational formats. In 1824 New York's first Ashkenazic congregation, B'nai Jeshurun, created an all-day school for the children of its members, ushering in an era in American Jewish education based on the Jewish parochial school that taught both Judaic and secular subjects to the children of members.

The Jewish all-day school achieved its popularity because parents hoped to transmit Jewish knowledge to children, but also because of the virtual absence of schools, acceptable to Jewish parents, for teaching general subjects. Most government-supported schools had a decidedly Protestant agenda to them. Until well into the 1850s, public school children read from the King James Version of the Bible, sang Christian hymns, intoned Protestant prayers, and studied from textbooks that considered Christianity the highest achievement of civilization.[25]

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[23] Deborah Dash Moore, *The B'nai B'rith: The Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany, 1981).

[24] On the Young Men's Hebrew Associations, see Benjamin Rabinowitz, "The Young Men's Hebrew Associations (1854–1913)," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 37 (1947): 222–323.

[25] Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, 1964).

By the late 1840s some schools functioned independent of congregations, sustained by student fees. These Jewish schools tended to serve the better off among the immigrant population. Rebecca Gratz's creation of the Jewish Sunday School as a form of communal charity reflected the fact that many Jewish parents could not afford the tuition, and evangelicals precisely targeted the children of the Jewish poor.[26] Gratz's model caught on and spread around the country. Jewish women made up the cadre of teachers who provided instruction in the Sunday schools. When the Hebrew Free School No. 1 was opened up in 1865 in New York's immigrant Jewish neighborhood, just a year after a Protestant mission school opened its doors nearby, it employed Jewish women to provide the educational antidote to the evangelical enterprise.

The all-day Jewish schools survived into the late 1850s. In large measure because of the political pressure exerted by the Catholic Church whose adherents rapidly became New York's numerical majority, the public schools began to decouple general learning from the propagation of Protestant religion. As the schools in New York and elsewhere in America became increasingly secular, Jewish parents had less need for the Jewish academies. Likewise, as the pace of Jewish immigration picked up and most of the Jewish population of America consisted of new immigrants who could ill afford the tuition of the day schools, the public schools represented the best chance for their children, at least as long as the children did not have to work. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, Jews in America embraced the public schools.[27]

Some American Jews committed themselves to extensive Judaic learning, despite the overwhelming tendency of the community in the opposite direction. In 1857 Rabbi Pesach Rosenthal opened a Talmud Torah in New York in which the language of instruction was in Yiddish and in which the texts deviated little from what was being taught at that time in his native Poland. In 1883 Rosenthal's school evolved into a more substantial institution, Machazikai Talmud Torah. In 1886 it was joined by the Etz Chaim Yeshivah to provide a small number of East European Jewish youngsters in New York a decidedly non-American-style education.[28]

But as children now attended public schools, synagogues offered some kind of educational program for the children of its congregants. Particularly

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[26] Diane Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit, 1997).

[27] Stephan F. Brumberg, *Going to America, Going to School: The Jewish Immigrant Public School Encounter in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (New York, 1986).

[28] Jeremiah H. Berman, "Jewish Education in New York City, 1860–1900," *YIVO Annual of the Jewish Social Science* 9 (1954); Jeffrey Gurock, *The Men and Women of Yeshiva: Higher Education, Orthodoxy and American Judaism* (New York, 1988), 12–13; and Gilbert Klaperman, *The Story of Yeshiva University* (London, 1969).

in smaller communities, the synagogues functioned as the locus for Jewish education. Mostly, congregations followed the Sunday school model, offering one day a week of instruction, although no longer for the poor. Congregational schools enrolled both boys and girls, and most instituted the confirmation ceremony, an American innovation. Typically taking place during the teenage years, they staged the confirmation on Shavuot, the springtime holiday marking the giving of the Ten Commandments. At these religious exercises, the girls and boys demonstrated what they had learned and helped lead the service.

In communities increasingly made up of immigrants and their children, synagogue membership was a luxury very few partook of, and therefore whatever congregational educational programs existed, served better-off, American-born Jews. Most Jewish children received no Jewish education. The boys among them might briefly study privately so that they could recite the blessings over the Torah for their bar mitzvah at thirteen. Others might spend some period of time in an after-school Jewish setting, perhaps during good economic times, when their families did not need the income derived from a part-time job. When they attended a Jewish afternoon school, they did so in one of the many *chedarim*, single-room supplementary schools, which met in basements and storefronts. *Melamdim*, teachers usually newly arrived from Europe, set up classrooms and taught Jewish boys the basics of Hebrew letters, prayers, some Bible, some Talmud, after school.

Some Jewish children learned the basics of Judaica in larger, more professional institutions formed in part out of charitable impulses. The Hebrew Free School in New York educated thousands of youngsters until it closed in 1899. So, too, the Downtown Sabbath School founded by women from Temple Emanu-El, particularly Minnie Louis, taught Jewish subjects and American uplift.[29]

By the 1910s Jewish education changed. As ideological splinterings within the Jewish communities became more pronounced, and as the institutional apparatus of each faction grew, organizations founded schools to teach Jewish knowledge and their particular ideologies. In 1892 East European Jewish socialist immigrants created the Arbeiter Ring, or Workmen's Circle. Believing that Yiddish functioned as the authentic language of the people, the AR in 1918 created Yiddish schools in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Newark, Baltimore, Rochester, Denver, and elsewhere. In 1919 ten such schools existed. A year later, the number had climbed to thirty, and forty-seven in 1922. The children in the

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[29] Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Aspiring Women: A History of the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women* (New York, 1996).

AR schools grew up in Yiddish-speaking homes, and the schools provided systematic instruction in a language the children picked up in everyday life. The schools exposed them to Yiddish literature, Jewish folk music, Jewish history, and the history of the working class.[30]

The Labor Zionist movement had a different agenda, but followed along the same script. In 1905 the Poale Zion came into being in America, and in 1910 with the creation of the Farband, or the Jewish National Workers Alliance, American Labor Zionism joined the communal structure. It conjoined the two great revolutions in the Jewish polity of the modern age, socialism and Zionism, stressing the importance of labor as a liberating force for the Jewish communities in Palestine and the need for socialism in the Diaspora. The Poale Zion turned to the education of its members' children to propagate its ideology, creating a network of schools and summer camps, which emphasized Hebrew and Yiddish as living languages, Jewish history, socialism, and those aspects of Judaism – as a religion – that could be translated into nationalist and socialist idioms.[31]

No communal bodies had responsibility to oversee Jewish education. Schools existed independent of each other, and parents interested in securing a Jewish education for their children had no guide as to where to look. The problem of Jewish education and its high level of disorganization prompted New York Jewish leaders of both the immigrant world of "downtown" and the American world of "uptown" to get together in 1908 to create the Kehillah, an overarching body for communal self-governance. Among its earliest acts, the Kehillah in 1910 formed a Bureau of Jewish Education and invited Samson Benderly, a physician dedicated to Jewish education, to head the bureau. Benderly brought together a group of young women and men, the "Benderly boys," whom he trained and sent to Jewish communities across the United States. While New York's Kehillah did not survive, the young people taught and influenced by Benderly ventured out of New York and created community-wide schools in numerous cities, playing instrumental roles in forming boards (or bureaus) of Jewish education in many cities by the middle of the 1920s.

AN EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS: 1920S–1945

By the 1920s with the end of mass immigration, an evolving American Jewish homogeneity, untrammeled by differences in place of origin, gave Jewry its basic character. The ethnic divisions of the immigrant era,

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[30] Sh. Niger, *The Struggle for a New Education* (New York, 1940).
[31] C. Bezalel Sherman, *Labor Zionism in America: Its History, Growth and Programs* (New York, 1957); and Mark Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York, 1998).

congregations representing European origins, fell by the wayside, replaced by middle-class, or incipiently middle-class, synagogues catering to an American-born majority, primarily professionals and business people.

Synagogues recognized that only about one-third of American Jews belonged anywhere. Even those who did join attended sporadically, showing up for the High Holidays, the anniversary of the death of a beloved to recite *kaddish*, or life-cycle events of family and friends. Most Jews, including synagogue members, did not mark off the Sabbath as a sacred time disconnected from the workaday world, nor did they consume only kosher food.

Rabbis recognized that synagogues competed with the attractions and demands of the larger society. Competition pervaded Jewish religious life. Jewish community centers rivaled the synagogues. Having evolved in the 1920s out of the old Young Men's Hebrew Associations of the 1880s, and now coordinated by the Jewish Welfare Board, they along with B'nai B'rith lodges, Hadassah chapters, Zionist organizations, and a panoply of venues where Jews could interact comfortably with other Jews, challenged the synagogues.[32]

The denominations competed with each other. Until the 1920s a rough division marked them off as different. Most of the descendants of the nineteenth-century immigrants from Central Europe belonged to Reform, and until the end of the nineteenth century not only did immigration continue from Central Europe, but high fertility rates made for a steady stream of congregants to fill the pews of Reform temples. Traditional congregations, labeled Orthodox, served the needs of those East European Jews who had not been converted to socialism. Conservative Judaism, the product of the early twentieth century, remained too small to have any natural constituency.

This changed by the 1920s. The majority of American Jews, whether inclined toward Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox Judaism, were the children and grandchildren of the East European immigrants. Reform had either to attract them or die out. By 1930 the number of Reform congregations began to decline; it had 285 congregations with sixty thousand members. In 1931 a movement survey found that the proportion of members of "German parentage and of East European parentage" stood at equal number.[33] The Reform rabbinate itself came from the sons of immigrants from Poland, Russia, and Lithuania. The best known Reform rabbi of this era, Abba Hillel Silver, had been born in Lithuania and grew up on the

[32] Rabinowitz, "Young Men's Hebrew Associations."
[33] Union of American Hebrew Congregations, *Reform Judaism in the Large Cities* (New York, 1931), 10.

Lower East Side, but attracted to Reform, he received his ordination at Hebrew Union College. Reform Judaism's need to woo this new constituency pushed it to change. Congregations that had once acknowledged the importance of class hierarchies abolished family pews. Some revived the bar mitzvah ceremony which had been abandoned and added more Hebrew to the liturgy.[34]

For the children and grandchildren of the East European immigrants who saw Judaism as a dense social experience, the temple as a grand palace of religion may not have felt comfortable. So Reform congregations tinkered with novel forms to enhance synagogue sociability. Youth groups, for example, were founded on a congregation by congregation basis in these years, and by 1939 enough Reform congregations had added on organized clubs for young people to lead to the founding of the National Federation of Temple Youth.

These innovations in Reform coincided with the growing crisis in Europe. In the 1930s Reform shed much of its disdain for Zionism as a political movement. The path toward change had been paved by the many individual Reform rabbis and laypeople who had been long sympathetic to the Zionist idea. Stephen Wise, Abba Hillel Silver, and James Heller were all Reform rabbis, and Julian Mack was a layperson affiliated with Reform. In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s they played prominent roles in the leadership of American Zionism. They had, throughout the 1920s, been chipping away at the anti-Zionist core of Reform. In 1930, as a small but telling example, the Zionist anthem, "Hatikvah," was added to the movement's official hymnal. In 1935 an outspoken Zionist, Felix Levy, was elected president of the CCAR. All of these early steps made possible the sharp break with Reform's past. In 1937 the annual meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, held in Columbus, Ohio, issued a statement of principles that rewrote the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform and expressed support for the idea of a Jewish homeland.[35]

The Conservative movement began to grow in the 1920s. From then through the end of World War II, the movement assumed its basic identity. In 1919, twenty-two congregations were affiliated with Conservative Judaism. Ten years later that number reached 229, almost equal to Reform. By the time America entered the war, Conservatism emerged as the largest Jewish denomination. It sought members among those immigrants from Eastern Europe who had moved out of the original neighborhoods and had

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[34] Leon Jick, "The Reform Synagogue," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (Hanover, NH, 1987), 98–9.

[35] For a text of the Columbus Platform, see Mark Lee Raphael, *Jews and Judaism in the United States: A Documentary History* (New York, 1983), 205–7.

Americanized enough to be uncomfortable with Orthodox synagogues, particularly with the segregation of women and men during services, and the somewhat chaotic atmosphere.

Conservative rabbis at the seminary and in the pulpits considered themselves to be traditional vis-à-vis Jewish law. *Halachah* mattered to them. The Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law, between 1928 and 1948, debated how far they could mold Jewish law to fit American times. Throughout these two decades, the "conservative" Conservatives, particularly Louis Ginsberg and Boaz Cohen, dominated, and the movement made few decisions that deviated from traditional practice. It hesitated to discuss publicly its beliefs or principles. It published a *Festival Prayerbook* in 1927 to be used on Passover, Succoth, Shevuot, times when few congregants attended, but it did not publish a High Holiday or Sabbath prayer book until after World War II. Its reticence to tackle matters of ideology and liturgy reflected its desire to offend neither the traditionalists nor the innovators among potential recruits, not wanting to alienate the majority of American Jews who had little interest in theology and who did not consider Jewish law as determining how they should lead their daily lives, but who cherished their identities as Jews. In these Conservative congregations they hoped to keep their American children committed to Jewish life in ways that would not jeopardize their ascendancy into the middle class.[36]

Competition as the driving force in American Judaism emerged as the essential theme in the most important book to come out of the Conservative movement, and probably *the* key text in the entire history of American Judaism, Mordecai Kaplan's 1934 *Judaism as a Civilization*. In it Kaplan posed the dilemma of American Jews. Kaplan had been born in Eastern Europe. He came to America young, and he was among the early graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He began his rabbinical career as an Orthodox rabbi, but increasingly could not reconcile traditional Judaism with American ideals. In *Judaism as a Civilization* and in the synagogue he created, the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, and in his long career teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary, he spoke about his crisis, which he considered the crisis of most educated American Jews.

Kaplan argued that American Jews lived in two competing civilizations, the Jewish and the American. These two worlds had to be in harmony with each other for Judaism to hold the loyalty of its American daughters and sons. Judaism would surely lose unless it accommodated itself to America.

[36] David Kaufman, *Shul with a Pool: The "Synagogue-Center" in American Jewish History* (Hanover, NH, 1999).

American Jews had the right to massage tradition to make it fit American democratic values, and they could alter Jewish rituals and principles to make them consistent with America and yet still serve a Jewish purpose. The Judaic principle of chosenness bothered him as did the basic inequality of women in Judaism. Kaplan asserted that in the competition between American and Jewish loyalties, Judaism had to provide for the social and cultural needs of American Jews, who would otherwise seek fulfilling them elsewhere. His call for creating an "organic Jewish community" lay at the heart of his prescription for the future. Jewish communities should develop elaborate recreational, artistic, political, and educational activities that could vie with the richness of American society.

Consistent with his overriding concern with creating and sustaining community, Kaplan saw great power in the Zionist movement. In the growing settlements in Palestine, Jews were actually creating Jewish civilization. He believed, as did other Zionists like Henrietta Szold, that the example of Jews building a new, vibrant, and modern society in Palestine would give American Jews a positive example, which would enhance their Jewish loyalties.

As a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Kaplan influenced many of his students. Some joined him to create a kind of movement within a movement, Reconstructionism. In 1935 they launched a magazine, *The Reconstructionist*, and in 1940 they created the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation. Shortly thereafter Kaplan and his band issued a *New Haggadah* in 1941 and a Sabbath prayer book in 1945 that embodied Kaplan's rejection of chosenness, the idea of the resurrection of the dead and the inevitable coming of the messiah. Both texts launched a controversy, as a group of Orthodox rabbis held a public ceremony in 1945 at which they issued a *herem*, a ban of excommunication against Kaplan.

Despite this dramatic event, Orthodox congregations, rabbis, and institutions of learning competed with the other branches for the rising generation of American-born Jews of East European parents. As compared to its more organized rivals, Orthodoxy's inner divisions fostered less consensus over how to relate to America, and internal Orthodox competition limited its ability to compete with the other denominations, particularly Conservatism.

Some within Orthodoxy found room for modernization and had no problem including individual Jews who did not follow *halachah* in their personal behavior. American-born, English-speaking, university-trained Orthodox rabbis, particularly the graduates of Yeshiva University founded in 1929 under Bernard Revel, went into congregations that could just as easily have hired graduates of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Likewise,

graduates of the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago, founded in 1922 by Rabbi Saul Silver, served synagogues that might have handily joined United Synagogue. Most of the members of the National Council of Young Israel (1924), the Rabbinical Council of America organized in 1935, and the Union of Orthodox Congregations (OU) founded at the end of the nineteenth century expressed tremendous frustration with the fact that they had to compete with the other branches, but acknowledged the reality.[37]

Orthodox synagogues in the areas of second and third settlement and in smaller cities would better be described as heterodox. Not all separated men and women, and some allowed men known not to be observant to hold office and share in ritual honors. Members of Orthodox congregations sent their children to public schools. Orthodox rabbis found ways locally and nationally to cooperate with Reform and Conservative congregations, and some of these modern Orthodox rabbis founded coeducational day schools. Additionally Orthodox congregations added many of the same ancillary programs for young families, women, and children that the Conservative and Reform congregations were developing to enhance synagogue life and help them in the competitive world of American Judaism.[38] Under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, who was appointed to the Talmud faculty of Yeshiva University in 1939, American Orthodoxy proclaimed, if reluctantly, its modern credentials.

But not all Orthodox institutions saw themselves as competing with the liberal denominations; rather they believed that the real struggle pitted them against the more compromising elements within Orthodoxy. This traditionalist critique of American modern Orthodoxy emanated first from a number of *yeshivot*, or academies of higher learning. The first founded in 1921 in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood by Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz, the Mesifta Torah V'daath Yeshiva, was followed in 1933 by the Ner Israel Yeshiva in Baltimore, Yeshiva Tifferth Jerusalem in 1937 in Manhattan, and Yeshivah Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn in 1939. These institutions served as beachheads for a traditionalist, educationally oriented assault on Orthodox flirtations with the lures of secular American society.[39] The transplantation of the Breuer community

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[37] Jeffrey S. Gurock, *From Fluidity to Rigidity: The Religious Worlds of Conservative and Orthodox Jews in Twentieth-Century America* (Ann Arbor, 1998), 5–11.

[38] Jenna Weissman Joselit, *New York's "Jewish Jews": The Orthodox Community in the Interwar Years* (Bloomington, 1990).

[39] Jeffrey S. Gurock, "Resistors and Accommodators, Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983," *American Jewish Archives* 35 (Nov. 1983), 100–87; Gershon

from Germany to Washington Heights in the 1930s also complicated American Orthodoxy. They built a full, largely self-sufficient Orthodox community, organized around the rabbinic leadership of the group known as Khal Adas Jeshurun.

In the years leading up to World War II, during the war itself, and in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, a stream of European Orthodox congregations and rabbis made their way to America. Rabbis, heads of *yeshivot*, Hasidic *rebbes* and their followers from Hungary in particular, but also Lithuania, arrived in America. In 1941, for example, Rabbi Aaron Kotler of Kletzk, Poland, reorganized his *yeshiva* and his community in Lakewood, New Jersey. Unlike the American Orthodox rabbis and lay-people who filled the ranks of Young Israel or who joined the congregations affiliated with the OU or the Rabbinical Council of America, these "yeshiva world" Orthodox defined themselves emphatically as self-segregating. They came to the United States under duress and sought specifically to re-create as much as possible the world of European tradition. In later decades the institutions these last arrivals founded would shake up the American, modern Orthodox consensus.[40]

By the end of the 1940s, parents' and grandparents' places of birth in Europe may have been interesting matters of family history, but they revealed nothing about the education, income, residence, politics, or nature of Jewish participation of their American-born descendants. Indeed, immigration had so profoundly faded in significance that it had reentered Jewish life as a subject of nostalgia and of historical scholarship. As the decade of the Holocaust drew to a close, the *American Jewish Yearbook* offered its readers an article on "A Century of Jewish Immigration to the United States," written by historians Oscar and Mary Handlin. "The events of the Second World War," they wrote, "left the United States the center of world Judaism."[41]

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[40] Oscar and Mary Handlin, "A Century of Jewish Immigration to the United States," in *American Jewish Yearbook: 1948–1949* (Philadelphia, 1949), 1–84.

[41] *Ibid.*, 56.

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FORMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, 1865–1945

DENNIS C. DICKERSON

The persistence of racial inequality and cultural derision toward black religion within white denominations, whether based in the North or South, convinced African Americans to maintain and establish their own separate and autonomous religious communities. Whether these entities existed outside of white religious structures or within white majority organizations, African Americans declared their right to govern their own institutional affairs and to define the content of black belief, ritual, and practice. Though these activities mainly occurred in innumerable Afro-Christian communities, significant segments of the black population developed faith identities through Judaism, Islam, and African religious retentions. Within these black religious bodies, gender, class, and culture played major roles in shaping their institutional identities. Moreover, there was vigorous discourse among religious leaders and grassroots constituencies about their relationship to Africa, initiatives for overcoming racial barriers, and whether belief and practice should emphasize interracial interactions and black nationalist objectives. Major developments in the American and African American experience between 1865 and 1945 – namely, legalized segregation, urbanization, industrialization, migration, depression, two world wars, and the flowering of the arts and music – were reflected and debated in black religious communities. Hence, African religious history became a microcosm of the black experience and an arena in which broad currents in American history were confronted and challenged.

Foundational to organized black religion, as it developed in the postbellum period, were its roots in innumerable slave gatherings in "brush arbors" and praise houses, and in affiliations with white churches in which blacks occupied a subordinate status. Scholars frequently refer to the "invisible institution" of the black church and correctly note that most slaves practiced Christianity in secret settings. Slave preachers emerged out of these plantation parishes and became liaisons with denominational representatives and delivered these unofficial congregations to various black and

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white religious bodies based primarily in the North. Grassroots members, hearing entreaties from these same missionaries, chose among the several organizations presented to them. Other former slaves maintained affinity with southern whites and established derivative structures, albeit autonomous, that sustained their regional identity. Though former slaves selected Christianity as their official affiliation, some retained beliefs, rituals, and practices derived from their African heritage. Islam, while present among a small remnant of slaves, did not significantly influence the religious identity of postbellum blacks.

Freed African Americans usually chose either to remain or become Baptists or Methodists. Religious bodies had been organized already in the North and in some areas in the South prior to the Civil War. Moreover, missionaries from black and white organizations eagerly sought converts from among the four million newly emancipated slaves. The Baptists, by far, had the greatest success in the postbellum South. At the forefront were the all-black American Baptist Missionary Convention, founded in 1840 in New York City, and the Northwestern and Southern Baptist Convention, started in 1864 in St. Louis, Missouri. Established in 1832, the largest of the mainly Caucasian groups, the American Baptist Home Mission Society joined regional, local, and individual black Baptist initiatives to evangelize former slaves. Many freed men and women themselves decided to withdraw from southern white churches and constitute independent black Baptist congregations. They had as models antebellum black churches in Savannah and Augusta, Georgia, in Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia, and in a few other locations in the South. By 1890 there were 1,348,989 black Baptists in 11,987 churches.[1]

African American Methodist bodies similarly started in the North and spread, during the antebellum period, to a few southern locales. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion), established as denominations respectively in 1816 and 1821, expanded throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and Canada. The AME Church thrived for a short time in Charleston, South Carolina, from 1818 to 1822 and became permanently anchored in New Orleans, Louisiana, beginning in 1848. African Methodists in these two organizations and their black counterparts in the Methodist Episcopal Church arrived in the former Confederacy and competed for ex-slaves who belonged previously either to unaffiliated chattel congregations or to the

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[1] James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA, 1986), 11–14, 39, 44, 54, 73–81; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States at the Eleventh Census* (1890), 171.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South. These denominations successfully recruited slave preachers into the Methodist ministries of various Wesleyan bodies. In Augusta, Georgia, for example, Samuel Drayton, an eloquent ex-slave minister, developed into a well-known AME pastor. Therefore, by 1890 the AME Church had grown to include 452,725 members in 2,481 churches, and the AME Zion Church had expanded to 349,788 members in 1,704 churches.[2]

Northern white bodies competed with black Baptists and Methodists for the religious loyalty of ex-slaves. Several special agencies deployed preachers of both racial groups to attract black members to their respective denominations. Among the leading organizations were the American Missionary Association, which was a Congregational group; the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the American Baptist Home Mission Society; and the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. A number of black clergy in these denominations had been associated with separate congregations, mainly in the Northeast, that had been founded prior to the Civil War. Their missionary efforts also yielded segregated jurisdictional and congregational structures that essentially functioned as black denominations. The Presbyterians, for example, had long been involved with African Americans. John Gloucester, the earliest black Calvinist clergyman, founded the First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1807. After the Civil War, white ministers spearheaded black congregations in the Southeast stretching from Virginia through the Carolinas, spilling over into Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. Despite a vision for an integrated denomination, southern racial realities mandated separate bodies for black converts. In most cases, black Presbyterians established judicatories that they structured into larger white bodies. William H. Franklin, for example, served as a black pastor throughout eastern Tennessee. He started the Birmingham Presbytery, which included black congregations in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. In 1913 he organized four black presbyteries into the Synod of East Tennessee. Though Calvinist blacks outside of the South belonged to integrated presbyteries and synods, they founded in 1893 the Afro-American Presbyterian Council to advance issues special to their constituents.

Southern white denominations, jealous and resentful of northern religious incursions among former slaves, either spearheaded or supported separate black organizations. Sharp decreases in black membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for example, lay behind the founding of the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church in Jackson, Tennessee,

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[2] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Report on Statistics of Churches*, xxii.

in 1870. Though the first two bishops, William H. Miles and Richard Vanderhorst, had been ministers in the AME Zion and AME denominations, respectively, the new Wesleyan group proudly maintained fiscal and identity ties to southern white benefactors. Similarly, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church launched in 1874 the Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Like the CME Church, the new Cumberland group evolved as a separate body, but one with ongoing relationships with the white organization out of which it came. In 1869, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. considered setting black members into a separate body. Instead, five independent black presbyteries were established over the next two decades. Two of them merged in 1898 and became the Afro-American Presbyterian Church. This short-lived group lasted until 1915. Therefore, in 1916 the Snedecor Memorial Synod was founded and embraced all of the black presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. The synod became a segregated structure within this southern white body. The Episcopal Church, alone among the major national denominations, did not split along sectional lines. Though the organization never placed African American congregations into black dioceses, black clergy and churches were marginalized and disfranchised in southern jurisdictions. Later, black Episcopalians formed formal networks to advance their vocational and missional interests. Hence, the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People was founded in 1883. In 1907, however, the General Convention permitted the election of "Negro suffragan bishops" to supervise black Episcopal congregations. In 1918 Edward Thomas Demby and Henry B. Delany, respectively in Tennessee and North Carolina, ascended to this special bishopric for "colored work."

How the Roman Catholic Church related to African Americans fitted the same antebellum pattern as that of Protestant Christianity. The scattering of black Catholics during the period provided a weak foundation for any mass effort to evangelize ex-slaves. Despite their presence in St. Augustine, Florida, and New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, and Baltimore, African American Catholics were not served by black priests until after the Civil War. There were orders of black religious women established during the antebellum period, but they and the few black priests were not active in the South among freed people. The first black priests, the Healy brothers (James, Alexander, and Patrick), ordained in 1854, 1858, and 1864, respectively, functioned outside of the South. Augustus Tolton did not follow them into the priesthood until 1886. Perhaps the greatest growth among black Catholics occurred in New Orleans, where both black and mixed parishes thrived in the postbellum period. After 1900, mostly all-black churches became the pattern among Catholics with such churches being established in various southern cities. The same practice extended

to some northern areas starting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because there were so few black priests, the black Catholic laity filled the void of leadership on racial issues. Hence, the convening of Afro-American Catholic Congresses in 1889, 1890, and 1892 demonstrated a heightened consciousness among laypersons for racial equity within the church.[3]

Religious leaders, both black and white, envisaged education as intrinsic to their evangelistic efforts. Although the Freedmen's Bureau and other federal initiatives established schools to combat illiteracy among ex-slaves, churches also tackled the issue with zeal. Hence, several white and black religious bodies, sometimes cooperatively, founded educational institutions to provide instruction from primary to professional training. Education was necessary not only to enable former slaves to function economically and politically, but also to supply this peasant population with teachers, preachers, and doctors. Hence, in every state in the former Confederacy innumerable institutions were founded to serve these purposes. Many offered courses at every educational level, sometimes proficiently and at other times superficially. These grandiose endeavors, often sponsored by northern-based missionary groups, showed the breadth of educational needs that confronted the freed people. The American Missionary Association, for example, established Fisk University in Nashville, Atlanta University in Atlanta, Straight University in New Orleans, and Howard University in Washington, D.C., all exemplary especially at the baccalaureate level. The black Wesleyan denominations, mainly the AME, AME Zion, and CME bodies, outdistanced their black Baptist counterparts in starting schools. The AME Church between 1865 and 1900 claimed sixteen institutions with locations in every southern state in addition to Wilberforce University in Ohio, and schools in some border states. The major southern schools included Allen in South Carolina, Morris Brown in Georgia, Edward Waters in Florida, and Paul Quinn in Texas. The Zion Church, although it supported schools in several areas, focused resources upon Livingstone College and its attached theological seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina. The CME Church established Lane in Jackson, Tennessee, and Texas College in Tyler, Texas, and cosponsored Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, cooperatively with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Black clergy also viewed politics as integral to their effectiveness as religious leaders. The "gospel of freedom," a term that historian Reginald F.

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[3] Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York, 1990), 67–97, 163–94, 261–2; James B. Bennett, *Religion and the Rise of Jim Crow in New Orleans* (Princeton, 2005), 136–61, 163.

Hildebrand used to describe the civic career of Richard H. Cain, posited that God "would restore the victims of slavery to full personhood and carry them to their rightful, equal place in the affairs of the nation."[4] Politics, especially during the Reconstruction era, was an important vehicle by which to realize concrete benefits for ex-slaves. Cain, for example, the pastor of Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, supported strong civil rights statutes, land for black peasants, public schools, and business opportunities for African American entrepreneurs. Also, Cain was a delegate to the South Carolina Colored People's Convention and the Constitutional Convention in 1865 and 1868, respectively, and he later served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. James W. Hood, like Cain among the AMEs in South Carolina, spearheaded the growth of the AME Zion Church in North Carolina. Moreover, he served as president of the state's Colored Convention and functioned as assistant superintendent of education, magistrate, deputy customs collector, and delegate to the 1872 Republican National Convention. Another 235 black ministers in the AME, AME Zion, ME, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Episcopal denominations shared Cain's and Hood's civic consciousness and belief in the "gospel of freedom." They held a variety of public offices throughout the former Confederacy.[5]

Whether the clergy were black or white, they approached freed people with attitudes that affirmed their dignity as human beings. At the same time these ministers and missionaries derided what they perceived as heathenish elements of black religiosity. Daniel A. Payne's well-known derision of the "cornfield ditties" that slaves and ex-slaves sang provided a subtext to a sermon he preached to the newly emancipated in Washington, D.C. The Lutheran-trained bishop of the AME admonished them to be sober, honest, thrifty, and willing to work. He also told them to "rest not till you have learned to read the Bible." Only then would they "be morally prepared to recognize and respond to all the relations of civilized and christianized life."[6] Payne, however, remained perennially frustrated that African Americans, especially in the South, ignored his instructions on restrained and pietistic religious practices. Rather than the "ring shout" that some described as a "voudoo dance" and other seeming displays of sacrilegious worship, he preferred that they sing traditional hymns and utter solemn scriptural readings. Payne thought it offensive when those with

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[4] Reginald F. Hildebrand, "Richard H. Cain, African Methodism, and the Gospel of Freedom in South Carolina," *A.M.E. Church Review* 67:381 (Jan.–Mar. 2001): 42.

[5] *Ibid.*, 39; Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction* (New York, 1993), xxi, 108–9.

[6] Daniel A. Payne, "Welcome to the Ransomed," in Milton C. Sernett, ed., *African American Religious History,* 2nd ed. (Durham, 1999), 235.

"the most powerful pairs of lungs" prayed in place of those who exercised reverence in petitioning the Creator.[7]

Booker T. Washington and Francis J. Grimke, both mulatto ex-slaves and prominent as an educator and minister, respectively, echoed Payne's perspectives. Washington's widely discussed article in 1890, "The Colored Ministry: Its Defects and Needs," blamed unlettered black clergy for failing to provide African Americans with "moral and intellectual training." Though he exempted black Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal ministers from scathing assessments, the principal of Alabama's Tuskegee Institute described most Baptist and Methodist preachers as "unfit." Because of inept clergy, Washington believed most black churchgoers were "just as ignorant of true Christianity, as taught by Christ, as any people in Africa or Japan, and just as much in need of missionary efforts as those in foreign lands."[8] Grimke, the pastor of the prestigious Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., agreed that too many black preachers were "ignorant," "ungodly," and without any "moral standing." He believed their negative attributes, often on full display in their pulpits, included "emotionalism, levity or frivolity, and a greed for money." Because of these characteristics, "there will be a low state of spirituality." Moreover, these practices showed that "the measure of one's piety is made to depend upon the strength and the amount of [their] emotions."[9]

Payne, Washington, and Grimke, all southerners born before the Civil War, viewed black religion as defective. Its physicality, emotionalism, and folk beliefs seemed unyielding to Euro-American standards of decorum, restraint, and solemnity stressed in Protestant culture that the three observers esteemed. W.E.B. DuBois, the rising Harvard-trained scholar, however, offered a far different perspective from the one articulated by these recognized black leaders. He argued that "the Music of Negro religion is . . . the one true expression of a people's sorrow, despair, and hope." Moreover, DuBois believed the shouting of black worshipers showed a "supernatural joy," and constituted "the last essential of Negro religion." He described it as

> varied in expression from the silent rapt countenance or the low murmur and moan to the mad abandon of physical fervor – the stamping, shrieking, and shouting, the rushing to and fro and wild waving of arms, the

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[7] Quoted in Dennis C. Dickerson, *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage: Reflections on A.M.E. Church History* (Nashville, 2009), 51.

[8] Booker T. Washington, "The Colored Ministry: Its Defects and Needs," in Louis R. Harlan, ed., *Booker T. Washington Papers* (Urbana, 1974) 3: 72–3.

[9] Francis J. Grimke, "The Afro-American Pulpit in Relation to Race Elevation," in Carter G. Woodson, ed., *The Works of Francis James Grimke* (Washington, DC, 1942), 228–31.

weeping and laughing, the vision and the trance. All this is nothing new in the world, but old as religion, as Delphi and Endor. And so firm a hold did it have on the Negro, that many generations firmly believed that without this visible manifestation of the God there could be no communion with the Invisible.[10]

These practices, according to DuBois, derived from the African religious background, and they composed the intrinsic characteristics of black religion. Whatever the truth of DuBois' analysis, Payne, Washington, and Grimke surely bemoaned these characteristics in black belief and practice.

Notwithstanding the debate about the content of black religion, fissures emerged about their relationship to race and ideology. This discourse revolved around the relationship between African Americans and Africa and what obligations black Christianity required from its adherents. African Americans during the antebellum period believed they were obligated to Christianize and civilize Africa. Some, like many white missionaries, argued that God allowed the enslavement of blacks so their exposure to Christianity and Western culture could be transmitted by them back to Africa. Lott Carey, a Baptist, Daniel Coker, an AME, and Edward Jones, an Episcopalian, adhered to some version of this providential premise. The content of this debate changed very little after the Civil War. Disappointed with the end of Reconstruction in 1877 as well as with deteriorating race relations and increased violence against blacks, numerous African American religious leaders were convinced to revive discussions about African emigration. Some, such as Henry M. Turner, a Reconstruction politician in Georgia and an AME bishop elected in 1880, promoted a back-to-Africa movement and pressed his denomination to expand to the "mother" continent. Hence, in 1891 he established the AME's jurisdictions in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. In response to entreaties from the Ethiopian Church in South Africa, Turner led AMEs to merge in 1896 with this indigenous religious movement. Levi J. Coppin, who in 1900 became the region's first resident bishop, consolidated the merger between these two black religious bodies.

Turner's interest in Africa reflected a broader focus salient among other black Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian clergy and laity. Andrew Cartwright in the AME Zion Church arrived in Liberia in 1876. He organized a congregation in Brewerville and at Clay Ashland in 1878 and a third church in Antherton around 1880. Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church also gave special attention to Liberia. Alexander P. Camphor and his wife, Mamie Weather Camphor, stayed in Monrovia from 1897 to 1918, and J. A. Simpson ministered in Greenville from 1899 to 1908.

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[10] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1989), 134–5.

Also in Liberia were significant numbers from the all-black Baptist Foreign Mission Convention of the U.S.A. Harrison N. Boney preached among the Gola from 1879 to 1881, while several others remained among the Vai.[11]

These missionary activities did not mean that African Americans in Africa advocated repatriation. Although Turner believed exodus could be a remedy for racial oppression in the United States, embattled black farmers thought they could find virgin land to cultivate and own. Moreover, emigration would affirm the dignity of African Americans who were tired of white racism manifested in restrictive laws and vigilante violence. Turner's Episcopal colleague, Benjamin T. Tanner, however, disagreed. He was more optimistic about the possibilities of racial integration in American society. One day, he believed, race would become irrelevant, and an amalgamation of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth would occur. Blacks also would be more prosperous by staying in the United States, and their racial destiny lay in the land of their birth.[12]

Although black religious leaders articulated divergent views about exodus to Africa, there was remarkable unanimity about "millennial Ethiopianism," a term that religious studies scholar Timothy E. Fulop defines as "a pan-African millennium" and "a golden age continuous with a glorious African past accompanied by God's judgment of white society and Western civilization." Three AME bishops during the 1890s provided loud endorsements of the idea that a glorious future lay ahead for blacks based on their understanding of their illustrious African heritage and their belief in a black Bible and a Black Theology. Benjamin W. Arnett at the World's Congress of Religions in 1893 discussed "Christianity and the Negro." He proposed that blacks played crucial roles in biblical history including Luke, the author of one of the gospels; Simon, the Cyrenian who helped Jesus carry the cross to Calvary; and Rufus and Alexander, two other important New Testament figures. Tanner in 1895 published *The Color of Solomon-What?* He challenged those who contended that this son of David was white. Solomon was descended from a Hamitic line, Ham's descendants, who were surely people of color. Moreover, Solomon preferred women who were "dark complexioned." Lastly, in 1898 Turner proclaimed that "God is a Negro." Blacks had as much a right to say that God looked like them as whites to assert that the Creator resembled them. Turner said that no hope existed "for a race of people who do not believe that they look

[11] William J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte, NC, 1974), 229–30; Walter L. Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877–1900* (Madison, WI, 1982), 184–5.
[12] Stephen W. Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African American Religion in the South* (Knoxville, TN, 1992), 133–8; William Seraile, *Fire in His Heart: Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner* (Knoxville, TN, 1998), 87–90.

like God." These perspectives showed that racial pride drew from challenges to conventional white interpretations of the Bible and theology. While Africa was foundational to these views, emigration to the "mother" continent was not required in order to validate these assertions.[13]

Although black Baptists far outnumbered African Americans in other religious bodies, they did not attain denominational stature until 1895. Prior to that year those in other denominations, especially the black Methodists, possessed a cohesive national presence that commanded more attention than did the Baptists in their various fragmented associations and congregations. The establishment of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. challenged the intellectual and institutional dominance of the AME Church and a few other religious bodies. A promising start toward a union of black Baptists occurred in 1866 with the founding of the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention. Richard DeBaptiste, pastor of Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago, was elected as the first president at the initial meeting in 1867 in Nashville. The association's purpose lay in sponsoring black missionaries to evangelize and start Sunday schools among ex-slaves.[14]

Failed cooperative efforts with the white American Baptist Home Mission Society over control of the National Theological Institute in Washington, D.C., and funding of black missionaries reinforced the need for the autonomy of the Consolidated group. Yet there were various forces that undermined the black Baptist association. Its condemnation of ex-slave religious practices drew opposition from former slave preachers who affiliated with Consolidated-funded congregations. Worship services characterized by heightened emotionalism demonstrated the kind of defective religiosity that Payne, Washington, and Grimke denounced. Also, sectional tensions within the organization surfaced. Suspicion of northern black Baptists mirrored the perspectives of some southern black Methodists who were, at times, distrustful of northern-born AME clergy whom they accused of dominating their branch of the denomination. Black Baptists were not immune to these same sentiments, which stressed the superior education of northern black clergy in comparison with their southern counterparts. Money problems also plagued the Consolidated Convention. Support from constituent congregations failed to materialize. Despite these difficulties, the convention between 1861 and 1872 claimed 209 missionaries working

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[13] Timothy E. Fulop, "'The Future Golden Day of the Race': Millennialism and Black Americans in the Nadir, 1877–1901," in Timothy E. Fulop and Albert Raboteau, eds., *African American Religion: Interpretive Essays in Religion and Culture* (New York, 1997), 231; and Dennis C. Dickerson, *A Liberated Past: Explorations in A.M.E. Church History* (Nashville, 2003), 37, 45–7.

[14] Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 78–80.

in twenty-four states and that ninety-five churches and forty-six schools had been organized. The gradual reduction in contributions ultimately led to the decline of the organization in 1879.[15]

The rise of Holiness and Pentecostal groups, despite differences in doctrinal emphasis from other black Protestants and Catholics, built on the organizational presence of earlier African American religious bodies. Recruits from the pulpit and pew of existing black denominations enabled black Holiness and Pentecostal adherents to seed new organizations. Charles P. Jones and William Seymour proved crucial to these developments. Jones espoused holiness and attracted adherents mainly in Mississippi. Though born in Georgia in 1865, Jones had been converted and baptized as a Baptist in Arkansas. He graduated from Arkansas Baptist College, edited the denomination's *Baptist Vanguard*, and served Tabernacle Baptist Church in Selma, Alabama. A sanctification experience convinced him that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit enabled believers to overcome sin and to heal the sick. After he became the pastor of Mt. Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, Jones organized Holiness conventions in 1896 and 1897. His emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit drew doubts from traditional Baptists. Moreover, he challenged the use of the term "Baptist" as a denominational name. "Baptist" referred to John the Baptist, a precursor to Jesus Christ. The name "Church of Christ," therefore, better reflected the core of Christian belief. Jones continued to teach holiness and founded the Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.[16]

William Seymour complemented Jones's initiative in the Holiness movement, but built on it to spearhead Pentecostalism and glossolalia. Seymour was born probably around 1855. He may have been successively Baptist and AME, but his core religious commitment lay with a Holiness group, the Evening Light Saints. Later he met Lucy Farrar, a black woman, who exposed him to the gift of speaking in tongues. Although his Holiness associates rejected glossolalia, Seymour did not. He moved instead to Topeka, Kansas, to learn more about this doctrine from Charles Parham. Parham's spiritual teachings were attractive, but his racism, permissive attitudes toward sex, and doubts about "entire sanctification" offended Seymour. A black female friend in California invited Seymour to Los Angeles to serve as pastor to a black Nazarene congregation. Seymour's insistence on linking holiness and glossolalia stirred opposition from Nazarene officials. Subsequently, he conducted services at the home of friends. His preaching

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[15] *Ibid.*, 87–95, 104–5, 109–12, 122–3, 127–8.
[16] Dale T. Irvin, "Charles Price Jones: Image of Holiness," and David Daniels, "Charles Harrison Mason: The Interracial Impulse of Early Pentecostalism," in James R. Goff and Grant Wacker, eds., *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders* (Fayetteville, NC 2002), 7–41, 260.

abilities seemed to reach full fruition as people came and overcrowded a friend's small dwelling. The former site of First AME Church on Azusa Street became the venue for a marathon of revivals that Seymour conducted. Throughout 1906, as word spread, whites and blacks nationwide converged on Azusa Street to receive the Holy Spirit with the gift of speaking in tongues. Seymour became the conduit for multiple Holiness/Pentecostal movements that culminated in several white and black religious bodies. In the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), for example, blacks remained a minority. Blacks were present in the denomination starting with a convert in the Bahamas in 1909. About eleven African American ministers were affiliated with the body in 1913. The first black congregations appeared in Jacksonville and Miami, and a separate jurisdiction was developed for African Americans in 1922 with Thomas J. Richardson as the First Overseer. The first all-black assembly convened in 1925.[17]

Separate and autonomous denominations, however, became the norm. Perhaps Charles Harrison Mason embodied most the new initiatives in black religion that Jones and Seymour spearheaded. His exposure to these two "founding fathers" provided doctrinal foundations for his new and expansive denomination, which, over time, became one of the largest religious bodies in the United States. Born in 1862 near Memphis, Tennessee, Mason, like Jones, was converted and baptized as a Baptist. These religious beginnings started at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Arkansas where his stepbrother, I. S. Nelson, served as pastor. Holiness, however, attracted Mason, and in 1893 he experienced sanctification. William Christian, formerly a black Baptist, tutored him in Holiness belief in his Church of the Living God, founded in 1888 in Wrightsville, Arkansas. Christian's sanctification message blended with restorationist themes and convinced Mason to abandon denominational labels in favor of the unadorned title of New Testament Church. This group grew to ninety churches in eleven states by 1900.[18]

Again, like Jones, Mason matriculated at Arkansas Baptist College. Later, he joined Jones and others in 1895 to inaugurate a black Holiness movement. The two eventually parted because of disagreements over speaking in tongues. Mason, a believer in glossolalia, sought this gift at Seymour's Azusa Street revivals in 1906. Mason, grounded in the doctrines of Holiness and speaking in tongues, settled in Memphis to launch the Church of

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[17] James S. Tinney, "William Seymour: Father of Modern-Day Pentecostalism," in Randall K. Burkett and Richard Newman, eds., *Black Apostles: Afro-American Clergy Confront the Twentieth Century* (Boston, 1978), 213–25; Joseph E. Jackson, *Reclaiming Our Heritage: History of Blacks in the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN, 1993), 33–5, 38–9.

[18] Daniels, "Charles Harrison Mason," in Goff and Wacker, *Portraits of a Generation*, 255–70.

God in Christ (COGIC). His naming of his church, originally in 1897, may reflect some of the restorationist teachings from his mentor, William Christian. Moreover, several white Holiness and Pentecostal preachers and parishes, many of them influenced by the Azusa experiences, affiliated with Mason's denomination and received ordination from him. This interracial fellowship predated the founding of a majority white denomination, the Assembly of God, which started in 1914. Though Mason persisted in his interracial outreach in the manner of Seymour's Azusa meetings, the Church of God in Christ, because of racism among white Holiness and Pentecostal adherents, developed into a largely black denomination. Nonetheless, the COGIC, however, significantly broadened the doctrinal boundaries of the established African American religious bodies and reinforced Holiness and Pentecostal beliefs within these denominations.

Though the establishment of black organizations owed as much to the concerted efforts of women as to the work of men, females faced barriers of gender exclusion and subordination in the same communities that they joined in establishing. They pressed male officials in several religious bodies to acknowledge their abilities in preaching, missionary activities, and intellectual discourse. As they confronted various patterns of governance, women insisted on inclusion into the mainstream activities of their denominations. Amanda Berry Smith, an evangelist in the AME Church and a Holiness adherent, traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the 1872 General Conference. The male ministers whom she encountered chided her because they wrongly concluded that she had come to agitate for female ordination. Nonetheless, Smith was one of an expanding number of AME women evangelists who eventually would seek full ministerial status. Though they had been authorized to preach since Bishop Richard Allen gave verbal license to Jarena Lee in 1817, some felt shortchanged because they were denied full recognition as clergy. Bishop Henry M. Turner intensified the debate in 1885 when, in the North Carolina Annual Conference, he ordained Sarah Ann Hughes as an itinerant deacon in the AME Church. His outraged successor, Bishop Jabaz P. Campbell, rescinded Hughes' ordination in 1887. The 1888 General Conference in Indianapolis upheld Campbell's ruling, but affirmed women in their subordinate status as evangelists. Though this position permitted them to preach, serve as pastors, and function as missionaries, they remained subservient to ordained male clergy. They founded congregations, built edifices, conducted camp meetings and revivals, and raised impressive sums to support denominational operations. In the early 1900s in the Rocky Mountain region, for example, they braved rugged terrain to serve churches in the mining areas of Colorado, in desert locations in Arizona and New Mexico, and in the flat lands of Montana. Others in the Midwest radiated out of Chicago

in the 1930s and labored with congregations in rural Iowa and in faraway Manitoba. Martha Jayne Keys, who fought for women's ordination starting in the 1930s, became a popular preacher, Kentucky pastor, and protégé of several AME officials.

Women in the AME Zion Church emulated those in the AME Church by ordaining Julia Foote and Mary Small as itinerant deacons in 1894. Unlike the AMEs, who nullified Hughes' ordination, Foote and Small's status was never challenged. Moreover, Bishop Charles Pettey in 1898 at the Philadelphia-Baltimore Annual Conference conferred upon Small full ordination as an itinerant elder. As the wife of Bishop John Bryan Small, she drew support from her husband's Episcopal colleagues. The ordination of Jane Guinn in 1899 as an itinerant deacon and Mary Taylor and Florence Spearing Randolph as itinerant elders in 1900 and 1903, respectively, demonstrated the denomination's permanent commitment to women's ordination. Randolph became a pastor to various AME Zion congregations in New Jersey and founded the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women. Though the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church allowed female evangelists from other religious bodies to preach in their churches, the denomination denied ordination to women within the CME fold. There was a modest reversal in 1918 when women were allowed to be local preachers, but these irregularities persisted for decades.[19]

Holiness and Pentecostal women, depending on the denomination, exercised varying degrees of ministerial authority. In some religious communities females attained the bishopric, and in others they were restricted to the office of evangelist. Mary Magdalena L. Tate, born in 1871 in Tennessee, founded in 1903 the House of God, Which Is the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth Without Controversy. With her sons, Walter Tate and Feliz Lewis Tate, she espoused Holiness and validated a familiar description of herself as "Miss Do Right." She spread the denomination through evangelistic tours mainly within the American South. She was named Chief Apostle Elder and later Bishop in 1908. Eventually, the denomination expanded throughout most of the United States and Jamaica.[20]

Ida B. Robinson, born in 1891 in Georgia, was another female founder of a Holiness denomination in 1924, which was named the Mount Sinai

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[19] Martha Jones, "'Too Much Useless Male Timber': The 'Man Question' in the Women's Ordination Debate in the A.M.E. Zion Church, 1890–1900," *A.M.E. Church Review* (Jan.–March 2002): 58–9; Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York, 2010), 94, 99, 103, 329.

[20] F. Dovie Shuford, "Mother Mary Magdalena L. Tate (1871–1930)," http://www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/tate.htm; Dennis C. Dickerson, *Out of the Crucible: Black Steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania, 1875–1980* (Albany, 1986), 72.

Holy Church in America. Originally, she belonged to a Pentecostal congregation in Pensacola, Florida, before she shifted to a Holiness congregation in Philadelphia after 1917. She began to preach and became the pastor of Mount Olive Holy Church, a congregation in the United Holy Church of America. In reaction to restrictions that her denomination imposed upon women ministers, she established her breakaway denomination. The Mount Sinai organization grew to 124 congregations by the 1940s. The Church of God in Christ, however, followed a different direction from the religious bodies that Tate and Robinson founded. Women could be only evangelists and were restricted to street preaching and other preaching assignments that male clergy eschewed.[21]

Women gained clerical authority either when male ministers consented or when they founded their own religious bodies. Most women, however, were empowered through organizations they established within existing denominations. These missionary societies and women's departments, jealous of their fiscal and missional autonomy, developed leaders whom male clergy were compelled to respect and leave alone. The oldest of these groups was the Women's Parent Mite Missionary Society (WPMMS) of the AME Church. The wives of bishops dominated the organization, founded in 1874. Mary Handy, the first president, was a minister's wife whose husband was elected to the episcopacy in 1892, and like other founders she was northern born. The women held power in the organization and exchanged offices within their elite enclave. Though their influence drew from the innumerable WPMMS branches at regional and local levels, these female leaders were different with respect to class and culture from the mass of AME women whom they presumably represented. They identified Mary and Reverend Charles Mossell and their ministry in Haiti as the focus of their missionary support.[22]

Bishop Turner and Secretary of Missions William B. Derrick, who was elected a bishop in 1896, organized a competing organization in 1893, the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society (WHFMS). The new group differed from the older society because it targeted women in the South and West and vested authority in women with no marital ties to the episcopacy. Hence, the first president, Lillian Thurman, although the sister of a future bishop, developed her own persona as an evangelist. Sarah Duncan, her successor, was married to an Alabama businessman and layman. Turner, though forbidden to ordain women, never abandoned his

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[21] Harold Dean Trulear, "Ida B. Robinson: The Mother as Symbolic Presence," in Goff and Wacker, *Portraits of a Generation,* 310–13; Anthea Butler, *Women in the Church of God in Christ: Making a Sanctified World* (Chapel Hill, 2007), 70, 82.

[22] Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice,* 151–4.

interest in promoting female clergy. Thurman, of course, agreed with him. Hence, the WHFMS became a receptive venue where women preachers exercised their preaching gifts and worked to organize and lead WHFMS regional and local branches. Turner, who presided in Georgia from 1896 to 1908, supported women clergy within the restricted parameters of their nonordained status. In providing places for them as preachers and worship leaders on the programs of his annual conferences and assignments as pastors at his smaller congregations, Turner sealed their loyalty to the WHFMS and to his missionary projects in Africa.[23]

The WHFMS of the AME Zion Church began in 1880. Like their counterparts in the WPMMS of the AME Church, the early leaders were the wives of bishops, though an influential woman unconnected to the episcopacy, Eliza Gardner, played a significant role as vice president. By 1910 more women like Gardner displaced the wives of bishops as leaders. Like the AME/WHFMS, the Zion group elected a female minister, Florence S. Randolph, to the presidency in 1916. The difference with the AME Church lay in Thurman's status as an unordained AME evangelist, whereas Randolph was a fully ordained minister. The CME Church women did not organize a connectional missionary body during the same period as females in the other two black Methodist denominations. They started in 1886 with annual conference organizations and did not establish the Women's Connectional Council until 1918. Mattie E. Coleman, a physician and a pastor's wife, was elected as the first president.[24]

Though black Methodist women's groups mainly directed their energies to raising money to support congregations and schools in the Caribbean and Africa, women's departments in the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. and in the Church of God in Christ inserted mission activities into a broader agenda. Nannie H. Burroughs and other middle-class women who founded in 1900 the Women's Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., according to Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, enlarged the purpose of black female power. The Auxiliary's emergence out of several statewide women's organizations provided it with an infrastructure that strengthened the national group. Educated in such Baptist institutions as Spelman in Atlanta and Hartshorne in Richmond, Auxiliary leaders, though anxious to support home and foreign missions, pursued a "politics of respectability" that would benefit all black females. Support of the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C., instructed black females on how to insert thrift, morality, and pride into public and private spheres of home, church, and community. Within the spread of

[23] Dickerson, *A Liberated Past,* 123–33.
[24] Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, 144–7, 180, 182–3.

these characteristics among women lay the salvation of African Americans in a racist and sexist American society.[25] The Women's Department of the Church of God in Christ differed hardly at all from its female Baptist counterparts. Charles Harrison Mason in 1917 chose Lizzie Robinson of Arkansas as COGIC's General Overseer of Women's Work. The group's activities, according to Anthea Butler, embraced missions, teaching, and evangelism. Robinson built on exciting women's Prayer and Bible Bands and affirming the congregational authority of "church mothers." All these women embodied "sanctified" living and pointed a way for female behavior toward holiness and respectability.[26]

The emergence of the black Social Gospel, the rise of the gospel blues, the growing diversity of African American religious communities, and efforts toward black ecumenism characterized the decades between 1900 and 1945. The Social Gospel became an integral part of religious discourse as preachers and parishes addressed the social and economic needs of black newcomers to the city. Social Gospel practitioners believed the employment, family, civic, and public health conditions of African Americans required the reflection and response of black churches. Starting in the 1900s, as blacks slowly settled in southern and northern cities, some black clergy transformed their churches to include social service centers. Matthew Anderson at Berean Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Hutchins Chew Bishop at St. Philip Episcopal Church in Harlem in New York City, and Hugh Proctor at First Congregational Church in Atlanta pioneered the Social Gospel within black religious communities. Anderson's church, for example, established an industrial school that taught vocational skills, and his wife, Caroline Still Wiley, a physician, operated a clinic. Reverdy C. Ransom's founding of the Institutional Church and Social Settlement in Chicago in 1904 dramatically demonstrated this turn toward a holistic religious witness beyond worship and orthodox belief. With the permission of his bishop, Ransom resigned his productive pastorate at Bethel AME Church to move into another neighborhood to inaugurate this new ministry in the old Railroad Chapel. That his denomination funded the purchase of the facility indicated high-level receptivity to this departure in AME ministry.

As African Americans populated the industrial areas of the Northeast and Midwest, employers enlisted cooperation from black churches that recommended their members for industrial jobs and to aid their adjustment to their new environs. In western Pennsylvania, for example, steel industry

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[25] See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1994).
[26] Butler, *Women in the Church of God,* 30, 39, 41–4, 47.

officials believed that preachers and parishes, in return for financial support, would encourage Social Gospel objectives congruent with their economic interests. Corporate executives wanted reliable employees who were loyal, sober, and nonunion. This motivated employers to back black churches that instilled and reinforced these ideas. In Homestead, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, the Carnegie Steel Company helped Clark Memorial Baptist Church to build a new edifice. The firm also employed Rev. Grover Nelson, a Baptist minister, as a welfare officer to operate a mill-funded community center for black employees. Nelson, like black social workers at other area plants, recruited black workers in the South and cooperated with black clergy to help socialize them once they arrived in the North. Henry Ford, the owner of the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, employed a job agent and financially supported the official's congregation, St. Matthew Episcopal Church, and relied on the rector to recommend suitable employees. The pastors at Second Baptist Church and Bethel AME Church played similar roles. Though it commenced as an altruistic initiative, the Social Gospel was sufficiently malleable for employers to manipulate black religious communities into cooperation with them.

The cultural consequences of the black migration lay in religious expression. Charles Albert Tindley, a Philadelphia Methodist Episcopal pastor of mostly Maryland migrants, for example, developed hymnody that spoke to the socioeconomic circumstances of his parishioners. They arrived in the Quaker City in search of industrial jobs and encountered employment discrimination and poor prospects for occupational advancement. Tindley's hymns, "Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There," "We Are Tossed and Driven," and "Beams of Heaven as I Go," are sample songs that resonated with workers and their families. Thomas Andrew Dorsey, a blues pianist from Georgia and transplanted to Chicago, respected Tindley's popular hymnody. Dorsey, however, vacillated between the blues and religious music and blended their secular and sacred styles and lyrics. Though such well-known singers such as Bessie Smith sang songs of sorrow stemming from frustrated romances and economic hardships, Dorsey wrote in 1932, in the same meter and tempo, about the death of his wife and child in "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." This example of the gospel blues influenced a new generation of black religious composers and performers who gathered around Dorsey's National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. Numerous singing groups, some of lasting national note, emerged. Mainline black Baptist and Methodist churches, though reluctant to accept Dorsey's seemingly secular songs, eventually incorporated gospel choirs into their music departments.

The growing diversity of black religious communities included the expansion of traditional African American Baptist and Methodist churches

and the proliferation of black Holiness, Pentecostal, and Spiritualist bodies. At other end of the spectrum was Father Divine's Peace Mission movement. George Baker, a product of several religious influences including his Methodist background in Maryland, Pentecostalism, and New Age thought, developed an interracial cultic following with himself identified as a Supreme Being. From New Age thinking Baker posited that divine power and identity resided within individuals who could, in turn, ascend to powerful levels of being beyond conventional human capacities. Baker, transposed into Father Divine, inaugurated an insular community in which all relinquished their material possessions to the Peace movement, a heaven on earth, in return for spiritual and financial security. Celibacy and total devotion and obedience to Baker seemed a small price for a concrete earthy and eternal existence in the company of a god. Between the poles of Presbyterians and the Peace Mission members lay a broad spectrum of black belief and practice showing the diversity of African American religious communities in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Additionally, Afro-centric perspectives persisted as powerful influences in African American religion. Early in the twentieth century Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa movement through the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the 1910s and 1920s affiliated with the African Orthodox Church. Black images of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and other biblical figures adorned religious ceremonies and icons. These ideas also inspired the formation of black Jewish and Muslim communities. They, like their Christian counterparts, believed in their chosenness and that God would sacralize their suffering in slavery by delivering them to a new Canaan or promised land. Despite sharp differences in religious precepts, black Jews and Muslims shared with black Christians the same history of subservience to Euro-American exploiters. Just as there were numerous black Christian bodies, black Jews organized at various places and times as disparate Hebrew sects. The Church of God and Saints of Christ, later renamed the Church of God Temple Beth El, started in Kansas in 1896. The Sabbath and traditional holy days were observed, though members eschewed "legalistic Judaism." F. S. Cherry, who mastered Hebrew and Yiddish, established the Church of God or the Black Jews. Only Jews of African descent were considered authentic. God and Jesus were black, and the first human beings also were black. The Commandment Keepers Congregation of the Living God, founded in 1924 in Harlem in New York City, had as its leader Arnold J. Ford, a former follower of Marcus Garvey. They identified with the black Jews of Ethiopia, the Falashas. They also developed as Orthodox Jews who studied Hebrew and observed a kosher

eating practice. About eight Jewish groups existed among Harlem blacks between 1919 and 1931.[27]

One follower of the Mount Horeb Temple of the Commandment Keepers, Maude McLeod, who arrived in Harlem from Montserrat at age nineteen, testified that her parents, though nominally Christian, were "particular about what they did." They avoided pork, and her uncles were all circumcised. They ate challah bread on Friday nights and were careful about eating animals that had not been killed according to Jewish customs. These religious practices, she argued, derived from their West African background in Ghana where her ancestors had been Hebrews. In Harlem in 1927 McLeod met Rabbi Matthew, who taught that Christianity was not the true religion of African Americans. Rather, they were "the lost house of Israel." After affiliating with a Hebrew temple, McLeod contended that she "returned" to the faith of her forebears who believed that Jacob, Samuel, David, Solomon, and Jeremiah were black. "That's where I come from," she declared.[28]

One scholar has argued that the rise of black Muslims grew out of the founding of various Jewish sects among African Americans. The Afro-centric thrust of Garveyism energized black Jews and black Muslims to focus on black Zionist objectives and black nationalism. The black Muslims, like the black Jews, celebrated the ancient authenticity of blackness because it was rooted in God's creation of humankind in black flesh. Some black slaves arrived in British North America as practicing Muslims, and a remnant maintained allegiance to Islam during the antebellum period. It was not until the twentieth century, however, that African American Muslims appeared in organized religious bodies. In 1921, for example, the Almadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc. started in Chicago. Though derived in India, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, while focused on immigrants, inadvertently attracted African Americans. The Moorish Science Temple of America, however, was unambiguously black. Founded in 1913 by Noble Drew Ali, it taught that blacks were Asiatic and that Islam was their original religion. Moreover, "Jesus ... tried to redeem black Moabites, but was executed by white Romans."[29]

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[27] Wardell J. Payne, ed., *Directory of African American Religious Bodies: A Compendium by the Howard University School of Divinity* (Washington, DC, 1991), 131–2, 136. See also Howard Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem: Negro Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Negro Leadership* (New York, 1964).

[28] David Isay, "I Did Not Join the Hebrew Faith – I Returned," *New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 26, 1999): 116.

[29] Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem*, 123; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1978), 46; Payne, *Directory of African American Religious Bodies*, 137–8, 142.

The Nation of Islam (NOI), the largest of black Muslim groups, owed its existence mainly to Elijah Muhammad (1897–1975) who led them for about four decades. Muhammad, originally named Elijah Poole, was born to sharecropping parents in rural Georgia. His father, an unlettered Baptist preacher, did not satisfy his son's religious curiosity and did little to explain why African Americans suffered such deprivation and violence in the Jim Crow South. Hence, like thousands of black southerners, Poole migrated to the North and settled in Detroit. There he met W. D. Fard, a mysterious man whom Garvey and Ali had influenced. Fard preached that he was a messiah, a "Christ figure to displace the old Christ that Christianity gave black people." Fard taught that blacks were the original people and were superior to whites. This doctrine of racial superiority drew from an extraordinary myth of the evil Yacob who created white people. Moreover, Islam was the religion of blacks, and Christianity became the religion of whites. Fard took Afro-centricism, which affirmed the humanity of blacks as a part of a common humanity, and transposed it into an ideology of racial superiority. Poole changed his name to Elijah Karriem and later took another surname, Muhammad. He had imbibed Fard's teachings and assumed control of this Muslim movement when the founder disappeared in 1934. Muhammad, a former Garveyite, expanded the mosques in Detroit and Chicago to other major cities. Despite incarceration during World War II for a seeming lack of patriotism, Muhammad drew upon Afro-centric ideas of racial solidarity and economic self-sufficiency and blended them with Fard's vision of a black Islam.[30]

Whatever their doctrinal differences or belief preferences and practices, African American religious communities focused on strategies to lift the black population and on how their bodies could aid in this objective. Cooperative and united black church organizations, some observers believed, were indispensable to this process. Hence, black Methodists led the way in proposing a merger of the AME, AME Zion, and CME bodies. Their bishops agreed in 1918 on a Birmingham Plan to form the United Methodist Episcopal Church. Advocates argued that the impressive institutional resources of the three black Wesleyan groups, if combined, could bring immeasurable benefits to black people. Some CMEs, however, feared absorption by the larger AME Church. Hence, several opponents convinced various annual conferences to reject the Birmingham Plan. The remaining two African Methodist bodies resumed the effort in the Pittsburgh

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[30] Claude Andrew Clegg, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York, 1997), 5–8, 14–17, 51–2, 56, 58, 61–2, 65, 67, 110; Steven Tsoukalas, *The Nation of Islam: Understanding the "Black Muslims"* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 2001), 18, 20, 29, 37, 39, 41.

Proposals of 1927, which maintained what the Birmingham Plan had originally advanced. Bishop Archibald J. Carey, Sr. of the AME Church and Bishop George C. Clement of the AME Zion Church, both active in the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively, became the strongest proponents of the merger. They thought that blacks could speak with a more forceful political voice and exercise greater leverage through a merged Methodism. Because all three denominations valued their institutional identities and properties over black objectives, neither the Birmingham nor the Pittsburgh initiatives succeeded.

Carter G. Woodson, the distinguished historian, blamed black churches for promoting pointless sectarianism and duplicate programs that could be better pursued cooperatively. Hence, in 1931 he proposed the establishment of a United Negro Church because he believed that doctrinal differences were minor compared with the urgency of lifting the black population.[31] Perhaps Woodson was pleased when Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom spearheaded the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches in 1934. The group included a broad cross section of black religious bodies and aimed to address the most pressing issues confronting African Americans. Bishop George C. Clement, an officer in the Federal Council of Churches, thought that this majority white federation could be moved toward active advocacy of black interests. Ransom endorsed the Fraternal Council, in part, because the Federal group seemed too tepid in its support of African American advancement.

The most pressing issue that confronted African American religious communities during the Great Depression and World War II concerned the condition of black workers. How the religious communities addressed the labor question indicated if they were major power centers within the African American population or whether they functioned exclusively as venues for religious and cultural expression. A. Philip Randolph, more than any other African American leader, issued black churches their most daunting challenge. This socialist son of an AME pastor in Florida became head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925 and tried for twelve years to gain recognition of this all-black labor union. Until success came in 1937, Randolph found that most black clergy, fearful of corporate power unions and exceedingly grateful for industrial philanthropy, closed their churches to Randolph rallies. Hence, black ministers, especially those who served proletarian parishes in the Northeast and Midwest, were not in the forefront of organizing black workers in the mass production industries. When Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 and the

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[31] Barbara Savage, "Carter G. Woodson and the Struggle for a 'United Black Church,'" *A.M.E. Church Review* 67: 379–80 (Fall 2000): 13–20.

National Labor Relations Act of 1935 spearheaded industrial unions in the steel, auto, rubber, and electrical manufacturing mills and plants, black clergy and black churches were marginal players. Two types of ministers were present on the scene. There were either those who served as denominational officials or those who served as pastors of large urban churches and tended to be more independent of corporate control. In Pittsburgh, for example, Bishop William J. Walls, who presided in the Allegheny Annual Conference of the AME Zion Church, and Reverend T. J. King, the pastor of the populous Ebenezer Baptist Church, supported the Congress of Industrial Organizations' organizing drives in 1936 and 1937. Some but not all black steelworkers who were pastors provided public support to unionization. The unions were successful mainly because black workers themselves, many of them active church members, became working-class leaders and persuaded fellow laborers to join independent unions. As a result, their tolerance of pastors in pursuit of corporate favors disappeared, and company clergy either became or were replaced with pastors who stood with their proletarian parishioners.

Randolph, just before the American entry into World War II, determined that African Americans should share fully in defense employment. Moreover, he joined with other African Americans in the Double V campaign to fight racism, Fascism, and Nazism abroad and to continue the fight against segregation and discrimination at home. Hence, he inaugurated a March on Washington movement (MOWM) to persuade President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue an executive order to outlaw racial and religious bias in the nation's defense industries. FDR yielded to Randolph's threat to mobilize one hundred thousand marchers to come to Washington, D.C., to demonstrate in behalf of this objective. The president's Executive Order 8802 banned discrimination and established the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to enforce antidiscrimination in federal defense contracts. Randolph, however, maintained the MOWM to keep pressure on federal authorities. An influential cadre of progressive preachers joined him in this effort. Randolph drew crucial support from Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., successor to his father and namesake as pastor at the huge Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem; Archibald J. Carey, Jr., the pastor at Woodlawn AME Church in Chicago; and William Stuart Nelson, dean of the School of Religion at Howard University. In the Pittsburgh area Benjamin McLinn, pastor at St. Paul AME Church in Washington, Pennsylvania, and Dwight V. Kyle, pastor of Avery AME Church in Memphis, were publicly involved as advocates of the FEPC. What came out of the World War II experience was an acceptance of grassroots black mobilization as an indispensable tactic for achieving African American advancement. Demonstrations, boycotts, pickets, union organization, and

the MOWM were now in the arsenal of black protest. Increasingly, black clergy and congregations became a part of this thrust.

Randolph's strategies complemented the attitudes and actions of a small but significant group of African American religious intellectuals. Mordecai W. Johnson, Benjamin E. Mays, Howard Thurman, William Stuart Nelson – all Baptist ministers – became presidents and professors at Howard University and other elite black educational institutions. They discovered Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of nonviolence during the 1930s and 1940s and were impressed with its successful application against British colonial power in India. They wrote and lectured about Gandhian satyagraha, visited Gandhi in India in his ashram, and encouraged African Americans to emulate his tactics in the emergent civil rights movement. These explorations influenced students James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality, Martin Luther King, Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and others. In the succeeding two decades they led a moral, church-based, and nonviolent movement against legalized segregation and discrimination.[32]

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Angell, Stephen W. *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African American Religion in the South*. Knoxville TN, 1992.

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Watts, Jill. *God, Harlem U.S.A. The Father Divine Story*. Berkeley, 1992.

[32] Dennis C. Dickerson, "African American Religious Intellectuals and the Theological Foundations of the Civil Rights Movement, 1930–1955," *Church History* 74:2 (June 2005): 217–36.

EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY
IN AMERICA

JOHN H. ERICKSON

Orthodox Christians sometimes refer to their faith as the best-kept secret in America. Globally, Orthodox Christians number between 210 and 225 million, making Orthodoxy the world's second largest Christian denomination. In North America the Orthodox churches claim upward of 4 million adherents, of whom perhaps only 1.2 to 2 million are active supporting members.[1] Nevertheless, even in regions where Orthodox Christians are relatively numerous, their history, beliefs, and practices remain largely unknown. Occasional feature articles in local newspapers may call attention to the pageantry of Orthodox Holy Week, which often falls some weeks after Western Christians have celebrated it, or to customs associated with Christmas, which for many Orthodox Christians falls thirteen days after the Western observance. But generally these token acknowledgments simply reinforce the impression that Orthodoxy is exotic, foreign, so closely linked to alien cultures – Greek, Russian, Serbian, Romanian, Syrian – as to be non-American, if not altogether un-American.

Orthodoxy in America is perceived as exotic. It also is perceived as fragmented. Despite efforts toward greater unity over the past half century, it is divided into over a dozen jurisdictions, which have been established not only along ethnic lines but also, in several cases, along factional lines within a given ethnic group. For example, Manhattan is home to a Greek Orthodox cathedral, a Serbian Orthodox cathedral, a Ukrainian Orthodox cathedral, and no fewer than three cathedrals that could be classed as Russian. The jurisdictions to which these three Russian cathedrals belong, though now mutually reconciled, for many decades were bitter adversaries, with a succession of court cases marking their struggles over church property.

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[1] A. Krindatch, "Orthodox (Eastern Christian) Churches in the United States at the Beginning of a New Millennium: Questions of Nature, Identity, and Mission," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (2002): 533–63.

Despite the fractious history of their competing jurisdictions, Orthodox Christians in America share a common faith, sacramental life, tradition of worship, ethos, and history that distinguish them from their Protestant and Catholic neighbors. They have a strong sense of the continuity of their church, going back to the earliest centuries of Christianity in the Eastern Mediterranean world. They value the way it has identified with the hopes and aspirations of their forebears in the faith, whether in times of ascendancy, as in medieval Byzantium, or in times of marginalization and persecution, as under Islamic and Communist domination. They have a deep respect for tradition, which – in their understanding – has enabled the Orthodox Church to preserve the apostolic faith unchanged through the centuries. Put somewhat differently, they tend to be suspicious of anything that could be regarded as an innovation, whether in matters of doctrine (e.g., the West's addition of the word "filioque," "and from the Son," to the creed during the Middle Ages), or of polity (e.g., the Catholic Church's doctrine of papal primacy), or of worship (e.g., calendrical reform). Yet as Orthodox theologians themselves have lamented, respect for tradition can easily degenerate into a traditionalism unresponsive to new contexts. This unresponsiveness may help account for the relative invisibility of Orthodoxy in America. While Orthodox Christians themselves may sense their inner spiritual unity, they have not always expressed this in tangible ways. Often they present themselves to the wider American public simply as a collection of ethnic groups, each with its own traditional foods and colorful costumes, linked together by little more than a shared name and an accident of geography.

Whether in standard church history textbooks or in accounts emanating from the various Orthodox ecclesiastical jurisdictions, the history of Orthodoxy in America most often has been written in much the way that the history of America itself has been written: as the composite story of various ethnic immigrant groups and their gradual integration into American life. But a different perspective may be possible. As Columbus discovered, it is possible to reach America from the Old World by sailing westward across the Atlantic, as so many immigrants did, but it also is possible to reach America by traveling eastward across Siberia to the Pacific rim and from there to Alaska, following the route taken many thousands of years earlier by America's first immigrants, its native peoples. Orthodox Christians have brought their faith to America from both directions. This makes the story of Orthodoxy in America more complex than church historians generally have acknowledged. The story has, indeed, been one of immigrants and their struggle to fit into American life without abandoning all aspects of their Old World patrimony. But it also has been a story of missionaries, of persons who regarded themselves as active agents in the spread of authentic Christianity within the cultural context of a New World.

The story of Orthodoxy in America begins not on Ellis Island or some other East Coast port of entry, but on Kodiak Island in Alaska, with the arrival of a team of eight missionary monks from Russia's Valaam Monastery in 1794. For several decades Russian trappers had been developing a lucrative trade in sea otter pelts, and in 1784 a wealthy Siberian merchant, Gregory Shelikov, set up a permanent trading post on Kodiak. Hoping to gain an imperial monopoly for his Russian American Company, Shelikov traveled to St. Petersburg where he boasted of the many natives he had baptized and the number of native children who were attending the (nonexistent) company chapel. Shelikov asked for a priest to serve the spiritual needs of his fledgling colony. Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg responded with an entire missionary team. On arriving in Alaska, the missionaries met with hostility, not from the native peoples but from Shelikov's all-powerful company manager, Alexander Baranov. Heirs of a long tradition of mission in the Christian East, they quickly assumed the role of advocate, identifying with the needs the native peoples and defending them against exploitation at the hands of the rapacious Russian fur traders. So outspoken were they that Baranov for a time kept them under close confinement and threatened to put them in irons.

The last member of the Valaam missionary team, the beloved Father Herman, died in 1837. He would be canonized as the America's first Orthodox saint in 1970. But already a new generation was dramatically expanding the scope and effectiveness of the Alaskan mission. Particularly noteworthy was the work of Innocent Veniaminov, first as a priest, later as the first Orthodox bishop in America, who devised an alphabet for the Aleut language, translated church services and scripture, established a seminary for the training of indigenous clergy, and dramatically expanded the scope of the mission into regions far beyond the closest Russian outpost. By the mid-nineteenth century, a vibrant Orthodox culture had developed with native and mixed-race Alaskans taking a dominant role in economic and religious life. According to an 1860 census, the population of Alaska included approximately twelve thousand baptized Orthodox Christians, of whom only a small fraction – barely two thousand – were Russian. Besides churches and chapels, the mission operated seventeen schools and four orphanages.[2] In remote villages, its lay readers and church wardens maintained community worship life even in the absence of resident priests. The dedication of these native leaders ensured the survival of Orthodoxy in Alaska even after the sale of Alaska to the United States in

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[2] Gregory Afonsky, *A History of the Orthodox Church in Alaska (1794–1917)* (Kodiak, AK, 1974), 95; M. Oleksa, *Orthodox Alaska: A Theology of Mission* (Crestwood, NY, 1992), 157.

1867, notwithstanding vigorous efforts of federally funded Protestant mission schools to replace native culture, which now included the Orthodox faith as an important component, with Anglo-American culture and religious values.

Although the sale of Alaska to the United States brought many new challenges, some visionaries saw it as an opportunity for wider mission. Innocent Veniaminov, by this point an archbishop back in Russia, viewed it as "one of the ways of Providence whereby Orthodoxy will penetrate the United States," and he offered a series of suggestions on how to reorganize church life. Diocesan headquarters should be transferred from Alaska to San Francisco; an English-speaking bishop and staff should be appointed; the bishop should be allowed to "ordain to the priesthood for our churches converts to Orthodoxy from among American citizens"; and he and all his clergy should be allowed "to celebrate the Liturgy and all other services in English (for which purpose, obviously the service books must be translated into English)," and "to use English rather than Russian (which must sooner or later be replaced by English) in all instruction in the schools."[3]

Many of Innocent's recommendations were implemented over the next few decades. Diocesan headquarters were transferred to San Francisco (1872–74) and subsequently to New York (1905). Most of the bishops were fluent in English or nearly so, and they appear to have been selected on the basis of certain relevant competencies. Bishop John Mitropolsky (1870–76) was the author of a five-volume *History of Religious Sects in America*. Nestor Zakkis (1879–82) had previously spent a year in, or at least near, the United States during the American Civil War as a Russian naval chaplain. Vladimir Sokolovsky (1888–91), who had made two extended visits to the United States while stationed as a missionary in Japan, created English-language settings for the most common Russian liturgical chants. More enduring would be the translation work of Isabel Hapgood, devoted Episcopalian friend of successive Orthodox hierarchs, whose *Service Book* has remained in print and frequent use since its first appearance in 1906. Even more important from the perspective of both mission and pastoral care was the establishment of a full-fledged theological seminary under Archbishop Tikhon Belavin (1898–1907), later Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia (1917–25), where young people born in America "could study and become pastors for the people from within their own milieu, knowing their spirit, customs, and language."[4]

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[3] In P. Garrett, *St. Innocent, Apostle to America* (Crestwood, NY, 1979), 275–7.
[4] Report to the Holy Synod for 1902, in J. Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America: A Short History,* rev. ed. (Oxford, 2008), 50.

As such accomplishments suggest, the Russian North American dio-
cese maintained a mission perspective even after the sale of Alaska to
the United States, but the context for mission had changed from what it
had been when the first missionaries reached Kodiak Island in 1794. No
longer was the mission operating in a remote corner of the Russian Empire,
among pre-Christian peoples whose circumstances were, by contemporary
European standards, primitive. Now the mission was operating in a foreign
sovereign state. And unlike Japan and China, two other loci of Russian
Orthodox mission activity in this period, the United States was not just a
budding (or declining) world power. By its own self-understanding, it was
a "Christian nation" in the vanguard of Western civilization.

This change of context meant, among other things, a new and different
public role for the mission's bishops and their associates. They were expected
to be in frequent contact with the Russian ambassador and consuls. They
played an important role in public relations. Whether on grand ceremonial
occasions, such as the state visit of a grand duke or a memorial service for a
deceased czar, or in everyday affairs, they served as the public face of Russia,
not simply as religious figures.

As the context for mission was changing, so was the understanding of
mission itself. The early missionaries in Alaska could refer to the Great
Commission, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), in
order to explain their activities. They could take the work of St. Cyril and St.
Methodius, ninth-century evangelizers of the Slavs, and other great saints
from the past as models for their approach to evangelization. Now leaders
of the mission diocese could also draw on the conceptions of Slavophile
thinkers such as Khomiakov and Dostoevsky, who postulated a uniquely
important role for Russia in world history – a kenotic role, at once self-
emptying and all-embracing, anticipating the ultimate reconciliation of all
peoples on the basis of the Gospel principles so faithfully lived out in the
Orthodox Church. Drawing on Slavophile thought, diocesan leaders could
present the historical mission of the Russian church and nation in a strik-
ingly positive and progressive light. For them, Russia, the quintessentially
Orthodox nation, was in the vanguard of a noble struggle for authentic
Christian civilization and the moral betterment of society against nihilism,
anarchism, atheism, papism, sectarianism, and other dark forces sometimes
named and sometimes implied. This made it easy for them to appeal to
many of the aspirations – and also to play upon many of the fears – of
mainstream America, still largely white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, in the
last decades of the nineteenth century.

Particularly open to closer contact with the Orthodox during this
period were the Episcopalians. Hitherto Americans had had little pos-
sibility to explore Orthodox life and thought, save through a handful of

books. Some leaders of the Protestant Episcopal Church, specifically those of a high church orientation, wished to remedy this situation, if only to counteract pressures from that church's evangelical wing. Their concerns led to the establishment of a Russo-Greek Committee whose chairman visited Russia in 1864 to urge the establishment of an Orthodox center or showplace where mainstream Americans could view Orthodoxy in its proper setting. Nothing came of this proposal until 1870, when Nicholas Bjerring, an American of Danish extraction, left the Roman Catholic Church in the wake of Vatican I and petitioned to be received into the Russian Orthodox Church.

Bjerring's reasons for conversion are interesting. In an open letter to Pope Pius IX, he explained how his doubts about Rome were first awakened by publication of the *Syllabus of Errors*. "It is impossible ... that there should be so flagrant a contradiction between the vital exigencies of human society and those of the Church of God. It is impossible that the duty of being a good citizen involves the necessity to abstain from all progress, to shut out all light." Bjerring continues, offering his own "take" on Orthodoxy: "The shelter, the haven, which I have striven to reach in this storm was a Church which has preserved inviolate and intact the evangelical and apostolic doctrines. It is a Church which has never been in contradiction with the vital and paramount exigencies of society, with progress and science."[5]

The progressive Bjerring's petition was acted upon favorably in Russia. He was received into the Orthodox Church on 3 May 1870 by the equally progressive rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Ivan Yanishev, and in quick succession he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood and assigned to open a church in New York City. The parlor of his home was transformed into an elegantly appointed chapel in which most services were conducted in English, since Bjerring knew practically no Church Slavonic or Russian. The flock was small – personnel from the Greek and Russian consulates and a mixed group of resident Russians, Greeks, Serbs, and Syrians. Nevertheless, Bjerring and his chapel enjoyed extensive and favorable press coverage. Largely free of pastoral responsibilities, he devoted most of his time to lecturing, assembling English translations of the various liturgical services, and publishing works on Orthodoxy and Russia. His quarterly *Oriental Church Magazine* sought "to lay before English-speaking readers a candid and authoritative statement of the constitution, tenets and progress of the Oriental Church," but, reflecting Orthodoxy's engagement with culture, it also included articles on science, literature, and art. It should come

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[5] In D. O. Herbel, "A Catholic, Presbyterian, and Orthodox Journey: The Changing Church Affiliation and Enduring Social Vision of Nicholas Bjerring," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 14 (2007): 57–8.

as no surprise that Bjerring found many similarities between the United States and Russia, both developing rapidly at this point and both engaged in social reform, at least for the moment. For example, he points out how, in the 1860s, the two nations – one under the great emancipator-president Abraham Lincoln, the other under the great emancipator-czar Alexander II – "were moving by widely different paths towards a common goal – the abolition of slavery and the advancement of humanity."[6]

Bjerring did not just write and talk about the moral betterment of society. Together with the Russian consul-general in New York City, he established the Russian Benevolent Society to provide assistance for needy Russians in search of employment or medical care. But while maintaining his dedication to social engagement, Bjerring eventually shed the rosy view of Russia's messianic mission that he had derived from the Slavophiles. Perhaps disillusioned by the increasingly reactionary stance of the autocracy following the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881, he left the Orthodox Church to become a Presbyterian minister and head a Presbyterian-sponsored settlement house. Eventually, two years before his death in 1900, he returned to Roman Catholicism.

With Bjerring's defection, the Russian church and government withdrew its financial support for his showcase chapel. But this did not mean an end of efforts to gain the attention of mainstream American society and to present Russian Orthodoxy to the American public in the most attractive possible light. This was not always easy. A number of prominent figures, including George F. Kennan, Julia Ward Howe, Mark Twain, and other members of the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom, were calling attention to the plight of political prisoners and Jews in czarist Russia. To counteract negative publicity of this sort, Russian diplomats and churchmen enlisted the support of their own American friends. These included industrialist Charles R. Crane, a leader in early-twentieth-century efforts to promote Russian-American friendship and cooperation. An enthusiastic supporter of the choir of New York's St. Nicholas Cathedral, he probably was responsible for arranging its 1917 invitation to perform at the White House. He and fellow industrialist Cyrus McCormack were among the benefactors who contributed to the construction and decoration of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago, a charming example of the work of Louis Sullivan, the leading American architect of the period.

Leaders of the North American diocese also cultivated close relations with the Episcopal Church. Episcopalians and Orthodox shared many things – emphasis on the importance of the historic episcopate, love for traditional forms of worship, and antipathy to the claims of the Roman

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[6] *Ibid.*, 63.

papacy. Church union seemed imminent. But relations, though close, were ambiguous. For many years Archbishop Tikhon had been a close friend of Bishop Charles C. Grafton of Fond du Lac, leader of high church American Episcopalians, but their friendship came to an end when Tikhon received a deposed Episcopalian cleric, Nathaniel Ingram Irvine, into the Orthodox Church and ordained him to the priesthood, thus calling into question the validity of Anglican orders.

While the diocesan leaders continued to view themselves as missionaries, they now faced a new challenge. How were they to address the pastoral needs of the various Orthodox immigrant groups that were streaming into the United States? Can one be an effective missionary and at the same time an effective pastor of immigrants? From the 1870s until the 1917 Communist Revolution in Russia, the bishops and their close associates in the North America diocese tried to be both.

Initially, while immigration was still a trickle, the diocesan administration tried to minister to its small, scattered, and ethnically diverse flock by establishing multiethnic parishes served by priests with wide linguistic competence. These included a number of Syro-Arabs, Balkan Slavs, and a few Greeks who had studied in Russian theological academies – clients, one might say, of the Russian church. Then, under the visionary Archbishop Tikhon, as the trickle of immigration became a torrent, the diocese itself was reorganized into an archdiocese, with deans or auxiliary bishops supervising parishes of at least some of the ethnic groups in question. Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny – born in Damascus, educated in the Kiev Theological Academy, then professor in the Kazan Theological Academy – organized and supervised the growing Syro-Arab community and maintained close ties with the Patriarchate of Antioch. Archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich – American born but of Serbian descent, educated in the St. Petersburg and Kiev Theological Academies – was in charge of the Serbian parishes. In a 1905 report to the Preconciliar Commission of the Holy Synod in Russia, Archbishop Tikhon explained the rationale for these arrangements:

> The diocese is not only multinational: It is composed of several Orthodox churches, which keep the unity of the faith but preserve their peculiarities in canonical structure, in liturgical rules, in parish life. These peculiarities are dear to them and can perfectly well be tolerated in the pan-Orthodox scene. We do not consider that we have the right to suppress the national character of the churches here. On the contrary, we try to preserve this character, and we confer on them the latitude to be governed by leaders of their own nationality.[7]

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[7] "Documents: Tikhon as Archbishop in America and Patriarch," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975): 49.

These Russian efforts to foster the structural unity of Orthodoxy in America met with only limited success. As the flood of immigration continued, many independent parishes were organized without any formal ties to the Russian archdiocese or, for that matter, to any other superior ecclesiastical authority, something quite easy to do, given the American legal system. This was especially true among the Greeks, whose numbers in America were increasing dramatically in the years just preceding World War I. In 1900 there were just 5 independent Greek parishes in the United States; by 1916 there were about 140. Some of these parishes might petition the Church of Greece to supply a priest; others, the Patriarchate of Constantinople or even the Patriarchate of Alexandria or Jerusalem. Some parishes might simply rely on the recommendation of friends and relatives in the Old Country. Invariably the political and regional preferences of parishioners played a preponderant role.

The formation of the first two Greek Orthodox parishes in Chicago provides a striking illustration of this tendency. By 1892, the Greek community of Chicago, dominated by immigrants from Sparta, had formed the Lycurgus Society. The society, in turn, formed Annunciation parish and obtained a priest from the Church of Greece. But the Greek community also included a growing number of immigrants from the rival region of Arcadia. When war broke out between Greece and Turkey in 1897, some of these Arcadians were among the Greek Americans who went off to fight. They arrived too late for the war, but before embarking on the trip back to America they chanced to meet a priest from Arcadia who was eager to visit his two sons in Chicago. With a congenial priest at hand, the Chicago Arcadians quickly formed a parish of their own, this one dedicated to the Holy Trinity.[8]

Meanwhile, as new arrivals streamed in and independent parishes of this sort proliferated, the Russian North American archdiocese was devoting more and more of its energy to its "Russian" constituency. The adjective "Russian" here must be placed in quotation marks because the number of Orthodox immigrants from the Russian Empire itself was relatively small. The vast majority of the "Russians" in America were Carpatho-Rusyns from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who had arrived in America as Greek Catholics or – as the Orthodox called them – Uniates, that is, Eastern Christians whose forebears, under pressure from the Catholic rulers of Poland and Austria-Hungary, had accepted the authority of Rome. Catholic bishops in the United States were generally ignorant of the many liturgical, cultural, and linguistic peculiarities that distinguished these Eastern Catholics from their Latin Catholic fellow immigrants. Americanists, like

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[8] T. Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 124–5.

Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, opposed the establishment of Eastern Catholic parishes. If these people are good Catholics, their reasoning went, let them attend the existing Latin-rite parishes of their Slovak, Polish, and Hungarian neighbors! From 1891 onward, the bishops' hostility provoked a massive "return" of these Uniates to their ancestral Orthodoxy, a movement spearheaded by the fiery Fr. Alexis Toth after a dramatic run-in with Ireland in 1889.[9] By 1917 some 163 communities of these Carpatho-Rusyns had entered the Russian North American archdiocese. What greater proof of successful mission could one ask for? And with the approach of World War I, which would pit the Russian Empire against the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the struggle for the allegiance – indeed, for the very identity – of the Carpatho-Rusyns intensified, with political considerations and Russian patriotism often obscuring religious concerns.

As archdiocesan attention increasingly turned to "Russian" issues, other ethnic groups were neglected. After the death of the saintly Bishop Raphael in 1915, a visiting bishop from Syria tried to assume leadership of the Arab Orthodox community in opposition to Bishop Raphael's eventual successor, Aftimios Ofiesh. This prompted numerous clashes between the "Antacky," or pro-Antiochians, and the "Russy," or pro-Russians. The Serbs also were restive. At a church convention in 1913, the twelve Serbian parishes in the North American archdiocese resolved to secede and join the Serbian Orthodox Church instead. Belgrade did not respond; the matter was taken up again only after World War I. Nevertheless, the resolution of the Serbian parishes, like the tensions within the Syro-Arab community, did not bode well for the structural unity of Orthodoxy in North America.

Despite these centrifugal tendencies, a spirit of optimism still prevailed. By 1917 the archdiocese could boast of over 350 parishes and chapels, a seminary, a women's vocational training school, a monastery, a convent, several orphanages, an immigrant aid society, a settlement house, and a savings bank, with a projected central administrative budget totaling nearly $300,000 of 1917 dollars, when the dollar had over five times its present purchasing power.[10] But 1917 was a tumultuous year. A revolution in Russia in February dethroned the czar. Another in October put the militantly atheistic Bolsheviks in power. These events and their sequel, the protracted Communist experiment in the liquidation of religion, had a seismic impact on the history of Orthodoxy in America. One would be hard-pressed to name any religious tradition in America whose historical course has been so decisively altered by external events.

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[9] Recounted in Erickson, *Orthodox Christians*, 56–7.
[10] Archbishop Evdokim Meschchersky's report to the Holy Synod for 1916, in *ibid.*, 47.

Before 1917, leaders of the North American archdiocese sometimes had spoken of its eventual need for autocephaly, that is, ecclesiastical independence. But in fact the archdiocese was still quite dependent, both financially and administratively, on the Russian Orthodox Church and on the state to which that church had been so closely linked. Hitherto that relationship had been advantageous for the archdiocese. For example, a subsidy from Russia covered nearly all its hefty central administrative budget. With the advent of Communist rule in Russia, that relationship became an overwhelming liability. The archdiocese was plunged into financial chaos. With subsidies cut off, disposable income was negligible. Total receipts for 1922 would come to only \$2,557.[11] As a result, practically all educational and philanthropic programs were terminated.

The archdiocese also faced a constitutional crisis. Archbishop Evdokim Meshchersky had departed for Russia in the summer of 1917 to participate in an All-Russian Church Council, leaving administration of the archdiocese in the hands of one of his auxiliary bishops, Alexander Nemolovsky. But Evdokim never returned, and Alexander was left to deal with financial and administrative problems far beyond his ability to solve. In 1922 he resigned and left the country, turning over administration of the archdiocese to Metropolitan Platon Rozhdestvensky, who previously had headed it (1907–14) and who now had returned to the United States as a refugee. While the generosity of private benefactors helped stem the immediate financial crisis, the archdiocese now faced a new question: Who was to be acknowledged as its legitimate head? A council of archdiocesan clergy and laity, the "Third All-American Sobor" meeting in Pittsburgh in 1922, proclaimed Platon as "Metropolitan of All America and Canada," a position he would hold until his death in 1934. Nevertheless, his authority was challenged from several directions.

One of these challenges had its roots in Russia. With the support of the new Soviet regime, a group of reform-minded clergy seized control of the headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church, declared Patriarch Tikhon deposed, and proceeded to introduce a number of liturgical and canonical innovations, including the ordination of married men as bishops. This "Living" or "Renovated Church" appointed a defrocked American priest, John Kedrovsky, as its archbishop for America. He, in turn, launched a series of court suits in an attempt to gain control of the parishes and other assets of the archdiocese, claiming to be its legitimately appointed head.

As the struggle with the Living Church intensified, communication with the legitimate patriarchal church in Russia was becoming unreliable. Unable to communicate freely with Patriarch Tikhon and threatened

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[11] C. Tarasar, ed., *Orthodox America 1794–1976* (Syosset, NY, 1975), 180.

by Kedrovsky's lawsuits, the "Fourth All-American Sobor," meeting in Detroit in 1924, proclaimed the North American archdiocese to be "a temporarily self-governing church" until a future council of the Russian Orthodox Church could deal with ecclesiastical affairs under conditions of political freedom.[12] Henceforth the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America (to give it its official name) or Metropolia (as it was popularly called) would pursue its own troubled but self-governing course in the Orthodox world.

The Detroit Sobor gave the embattled Metropolia a clearer sense of its institutional identity, but it could not prevent further divisions. While Kedrovsky's lawsuits met with little success on the parish level, he did win possession of the historic archdiocesan cathedral of St. Nicholas in New York City in 1925. In addition, two other groups entered into the struggle for the spiritual allegiance of Russian Orthodox Christians in America. One was the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia or "Karlovtsy Synod," organized by a group of refugee Russian bishops in Sremsky Karlovtsy, Yugoslavia. The Synod aimed at presenting a "united front" of all the Russian Orthodox outside the suffering Soviet Union, but it compromised its effectiveness by adopting an aggressively promonarchist political position. The other challenge came from a revived patriarchal church, which by this point had pledged its full loyalty to the Soviet state and demanded that Russian bishops outside the Soviet Union refrain from any anti-Soviet activity. Despite the establishment of these rival Russian jurisdictions in America, the vast majority of clergy and parishioners remained loyal to the Metropolia. Nevertheless, struggles between these groups left their mark on parish life, both for those who remained in the Metropolia and for those who left. Orthodox Christians of Russian background could hardly avoid discussions – and arguments – about the fate of Russia and its church.

As the Russian North American archdiocese became absorbed in its own financial and administrative problems, it lost whatever power it once had to provide for the structural unity of Orthodoxy in America. Centrifugal tendencies already evident before 1917 accelerated. By 1940 over a dozen Orthodox ecclesiastical jurisdictions would emerge in America, each organized along ethnic lines, with ties of varying nature and strength linking them to nearly as many "mother churches" in the Old World, but with only minimal contact among themselves.

First and by far the largest of these was the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Greek immigration to the United States had increased dramatically during the first decades of the twentieth century, in one year alone reaching

[12] *Ibid.*, 185.

over 46,000, and the number of Greek parishes had increased accordingly, but these had little contact with the Russian archdiocese and received little supervision from abroad. A 1908 decree of the Patriarchate of Constantinople had placed them under the jurisdiction of the Church of Greece, but for over a decade nothing was done to provide them with a bishop or to organize church life above the parish level. This situation began to change in 1917 when the pro-Allied prime minister of Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos, forced German-leaning King Constantine into exile and replaced the incumbent archbishop of Athens with his energetic kinsman, Meletios Metaxakis. Archbishop Meletios was determined to organize the hitherto-independent Greek parishes in America into a coherent diocese – no small task because Greeks in America were as divided over politics as their compatriots back home in Greece.

Greek politics took a new turn in 1920. Venizelos suffered a stunning election defeat, the king returned from exile, and Meletios Metaxakis was deposed from office. Still claiming to be the legitimate head of the Church of Greece, Meletios returned to the United States where he convoked the "First Clergy-Laity Congress" of Greek parishes in America. This historic assembly, meeting in New York City in 1921, formally established the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. But before the end of the year, in another dramatic development, Meletios, exiled archbishop of Athens, was elected patriarch of Constantinople. In one of his first acts as patriarch, Meletios repealed the 1908 decree and, in effect, transferred jurisdiction over the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese from himself as archbishop of Athens to himself as patriarch of Constantinople. Needless to say, not everyone was pleased by these developments. In America, strife between Royalists and Venizelists would continue into the 1930s. Unity was restored only with the appointment of the charismatic Athenagoras Spirou as archbishop (1931–48; subsequently patriarch of Constantinople, 1948–72), who transformed the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese into the largest and most influential Orthodox jurisdiction in America.

Most of the other Orthodox jurisdictions formed during this period followed a common pattern. The Serbian parishes, formerly associated with the Russian North American archdiocese, turned to the Patriarchate of Serbia and were chartered as a diocese in 1921. Albanian parishes, also formerly associated with the Russian archdiocese, were organized as a diocese in 1932 by Archbishop Theophan Noli, former head of the Albanian Orthodox Church, one-time prime minister of Albania, and noted literary figure. The Romanian Orthodox parishes held their first congress in Detroit in 1929 and asked the Patriarchate of Romania to establish a North America diocese, but their first bishop, the beloved Polycarp Morusca, arrived only six

years later. The Bulgarian Orthodox parishes in America received their first resident bishop from the Patriarchate of Bulgaria even later, in 1938.

More complex was the situation of the Syro-Arab parishes. Struggles between the "Antacky" and "Russy" resulted in a split within the Arab Orthodox community that continued long after circumstances leading to it had faded from memory. The energetic Archbishop Antony Bashir in New York won the allegiance of the vast majority of Antiochian parishes, but his rival in Toledo, Bishop Samuel David, also received recognition from the Patriarchate of Antioch. As a result, two Antiochian jurisdictions existed side by side in America, their separation ending only in 1975.

Most immigrant groups found it fairly easy to form a relationship with a "mother church" in the Old World. For a few, however, political or other circumstances made this difficult. Ukrainian Orthodox – restive whether their homeland was part of the Russian Empire or part of the Soviet Union – formed their own dioceses in the United States and Canada, but because of irregularities surrounding their formation, these were regarded as uncanonical by the other Orthodox jurisdictions in America for many decades. More fortunate were two groups of former Eastern Catholics. A 1929 papal decree requiring celibacy for all newly ordained Eastern Catholic clergy in America prompted many Eastern Catholic Ukrainians and Carpatho-Rusyns to consider returning to their ancestral Orthodoxy. But to whom should they turn? They did not regard themselves as Russians, and they had no desire to be Russified. Rather than turn to the Russian Church, following the path taken by Fr. Alexis Toth in the previous century, they turned to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which claimed exclusive jurisdiction over the so-called Diaspora, that is, lands beyond the limits of the other autocephalous Orthodox churches. As a result, the former group entered the jurisdiction of Constantinople in 1937 as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, and the latter group a year later as the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the U.S.A.

The jurisdictions formed during this period brought a measure of order, cohesion, and pastoral care to Orthodox immigrant groups in America. Through their many cultural programs – the Greek school, the balalaika orchestra, the folk dance group – they offered a way for groups that otherwise would be submerged in the maelstrom of American society to preserve and celebrate their distinctive identities. Many people saw the ethnic jurisdiction as the natural and self-evident way for Orthodoxy to be organized in America. But this came at a high price. Divided, the ethnic jurisdictions lacked the financial and human resources necessary for supporting the kinds of educational and social service programs that had served Orthodox Christians in America before the Communist Revolution in Russia. For example, the theological seminary that Archbishop Tikhon had founded in

1905 closed its doors in 1923 for lack of funds. A small Greek Orthodox seminary founded by Meletios Metaxakis in 1921 ended its short existence the same year. Nothing comparable would take their place until the establishment of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 1937 and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in 1938.

Following World War II, Orthodoxy in America remained structurally fragmented. In fact, the number of jurisdictions increased as many ethnic jurisdictions split over problems created by the postwar Communist ascendancy in Eastern Europe. Inwardly, however, things were beginning to change. The socially mobile, English-speaking, American-educated children and grandchildren of the first generation of immigrants were relatively uninterested in Old World cultural differences and politics. Individual Orthodox Christians began to discover a common Orthodox identity across ethnic lines. They were less inclined than their parents had been to regard religious faith and ethnic identity as inseparable. They were not ashamed of their immigrant background and ethnic heritage, but if asked about their religious affiliation they might answer simply that they were Orthodox or, if pushed to add a modifier, American Orthodox. They called for more use of English in church services. They set up religious education programs for their children. They moved to the suburbs, physically and psychologically miles from the ethnic ghettos of their youth, where they established new pan-Orthodox parishes.

Most Orthodox Christians in America were enthusiastic about these developments. They were optimistic even when controversies erupted over such issues as language and liturgical renewal. Such controversies, in their estimation, were signs that their church was taking seriously the challenge of adapting to American life. Many also were optimistic about prospects for greater Orthodox unity in America. Sociological obstacles to unity were breaking down, and theological reasons for unity were becoming more compelling. The prevailing spirit of optimism expressed itself in several cooperative programs and agencies that spanned jurisdictions. On a local level, Orthodox clergy associations were organized. In university communities, Orthodox Campus Fellowships (OCFs) sprang up, which brought together students from across jurisdictional lines to hear lectures by such eminent Orthodox theologians as Georges Florovsky and Alexander Schmemann. On the national level, an inter-Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCEC) was established.

A new phase in the quest for Orthodox unity in America began in 1960 with the creation of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). During the first decade of its existence, under the dynamic leadership of Archbishop Iakovos Coucouzes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, SCOBA became an important agency for

cooperation between virtually all the Orthodox jurisdictions in America. It took the OCEC under its wing and established various commissions to coordinate Orthodox activities on a national level, including a Commission on Military Chaplaincies, an Ecumenical Commission, and a Campus Commission to assist the burgeoning OCF movement.

SCOBA began as a voluntary, consultative body, with no authority to make decisions that would be binding on its member jurisdictions or to represent American Orthodoxy in an official way. But from its inception, many hoped that SCOBA would become the basis for a structurally united Orthodox Church in America. During the mid-1960s, SCOBA members discussed a series of proposals which, if adopted and implemented, would have transformed Orthodoxy in America from a collection of separate jurisdictions, each dependent on an Old World mother church, into a single autonomous church. While each jurisdiction would continue to manage its own internal affairs, SCOBA – now constituted as the Holy Synod of a united church – would assume responsibility for such matters as episcopal ordinations, educational and outreach programs, and relations with other Orthodox churches.

One difficulty, of course, was getting the Old World mother churches to agree to these proposals. Some were favorably inclined; others were opposed. Despite this lack of consensus, proponents of unity still had some cause for optimism. The Old World churches themselves were beginning to meet together in pan-Orthodox conferences to discuss issues of common concern. Would it not be possible for these conferences to address the question of Orthodox unity in America? Unfortunately, tense interchurch relations, particularly between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Russian Orthodox Church, ensured that the pan-Orthodox conferences would avoid issues on which the churches were likely to disagree. SCOBA's appeals to have its proposals taken up by a pan-Orthodox conference therefore met with no success.

Behind these futile efforts lay an old problem: the relationship between the Metropolia and the Moscow patriarchate. The revival of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union following World War II made it difficult to question its legitimacy any longer. In the 1960s, joined by the other Orthodox churches of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe, it was playing an increasingly active role in inter-Orthodox affairs. At the same time, it began to put pressure on Constantinople and the other autocephalous churches to end all relations with the Metropolia and other groups in the West that it regarded as schismatic. Within SCOBA, representatives of the Moscow patriarchal jurisdiction insisted that greater unity was not possible until all the participating jurisdictions were in good standing with their mother churches – something clearly not the case with the Metropolia.

For its part, the Metropolia had often expressed a desire to normalize relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. Yet many in the Metropolia feared that subordination to Moscow would compromise their church's internal freedom, and many no longer regarded themselves as constituting a "Russian" jurisdiction. Their church had experienced decades of effective independence during which its earlier Russian character had not been reinforced by the arrival of new immigrants. Instead the church had assumed an American character, to the point that an overwhelming majority of clergy and laity favored changing its official name from the unwieldy "Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America" to the simpler "Orthodox Church in America."

The Metropolia wanted to maintain its autonomy and distinctive character, but as the Moscow patriarchate increased its pressure on the other churches, it risked being isolated from the rest of the Orthodox world. In 1966 it attempted to get around this problem by appealing to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which in the past had accepted other Orthodox groups into its jurisdiction. But during this period Constantinople was under considerable pressure from Moscow. "You are Russians," the aged Patriarch Athenagoras told the Metropolia's representative. "Go back to your mother church. No one can solve your problem except the Russian Church."[13] Rebuffed by Constantinople, the Metropolia entered into a long series of discussions with the Russian Orthodox Church in a new attempt to resolve the differences between them. As a result of these discussions, in 1970 the North American "daughter church" was reconciled to its Russian "mother church," and in turn the Russian Church granted the Metropolia autocephaly as the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

Autocephaly resolved the old problem of the Metropolia's relationship to the Russian Orthodox Church, but it created a new problem. Constantinople and the other Greek-led churches (Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cyprus, Greece) refused to recognize the Metropolia's new status and name. They argued that only a pan-Orthodox council of ecumenical standing or the patriarch of Constantinople, acting as "first among equals," could establish a new autocephalous church. On the other hand, a number of Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Georgia) did recognize the autocephaly of the OCA. Still other churches (Antioch, Romania, Serbia) adopted a wait-and-see attitude. In America, meanwhile, many had hoped that the autocephaly of the OCA would advance the cause of Orthodox unity. But, in fact, the autocephaly of the OCA did not spark a wider unification of the Orthodox jurisdictions in America. If anything, practical cooperation between the jurisdictions declined. The OCA in the

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[13] *Ibid.*, 263.

1970s and 1980s proved no more able than SCOBA had been in the 1960s to bring about the full structural unity of Orthodoxy in America.

Meanwhile, the face of Orthodoxy in America was itself changing. The National Origins Quota Act of 1924 had effectively limited new immigration to Northern Europeans, thus ending Orthodox immigration to the United States. By the 1960s the great majority of Orthodox in America were no longer immigrants but rather second- and third-generation "hyphenated Americans" – Greek Americans, Serbian Americans, Russian Americans – who by this point were as fully integrated into American life as their Italian American and Irish American neighbors. This began to change with the Immigration Act of 1965, which reopened America's doors to immigration from all parts of the world. Included among these new immigrants were many Orthodox Christians – Greeks dislocated by the Cyprus crisis, Lebanese fleeing civil war and insecurity at home, and then, following the fall of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, many thousands of Russians, Ukrainians, Romanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Georgians. For a variety of reasons, these new immigrants have not always fit in well in the parishes founded by the immigrants of the early twentieth century and their hyphenated-American descendants. Newcomers complain that the old-timers make them feel unwelcome and unwanted. Old-timers complain that the newcomers expect everything, but do little or nothing to support the parish. In short, echoes of the protracted national debate over immigration can be heard in many Orthodox parishes in America today, regardless of jurisdiction.

Recent immigrants have not been the only newcomers to Orthodox parishes in America. Throughout its history in America, the Orthodox Church has attracted men and women from other religious backgrounds, but since the 1960s their numbers have increased dramatically. Their presence can be felt across jurisdictional lines, but it is especially strong in the Orthodox Church in America and in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, where over half the priests now being ordained entered the Orthodox Church as adults. These converts to Orthodoxy differ widely in background. Most have entered the Orthodox Church as individuals, usually after a period of religious searching, but some have entered as part of a group. The origin of one of these groups goes back to the evangelical Campus Crusade for Christ; that of another group to a New Age movement known as the Holy Order of MANS. Regardless of background, most converts are well-read, articulate, and enthusiastic about their new faith. Their presence has made Orthodoxy in America more diverse than ever but also less cohesive. Many converts have a highly developed sense of mission, which at times makes them impatient with cradle Orthodox who may view Orthodoxy simply as one aspect of their ethnic identity. Some, upset

by developments in other Christian denominations and impressed by the ostensibly unchanging character of Orthodoxy, try to be as "traditional" as possible, to the point of adopting practices and apparel that many cradle Orthodox in America find rather odd.

As Orthodox jurisdictions in America struggle with the challenges of ministering to new immigrants and integrating new converts into church life, they face an additional challenge. How are they to relate to their mother churches in the Old World? During the twentieth century, the subjection of most of the Orthodox jurisdictions in America to one or another Old World patriarchate had little impact on daily life. The Old World churches were preoccupied with other issues, leaving their American dependencies, with their increasingly Americanized flocks, to their own devices. But toward the end of the century, this began to change, particularly after the collapse of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe. Ease of communications facilitated contact at all levels. Old World patriarchs made state visits to America. American faithful made pilgrimages to hallowed Old World sites. While Orthodox Christians in America have continued to express their commitment to unity and wider outreach through the work of several new pan-Orthodox agencies, such as International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Orthodox Christian Missions Center, prospects for wider structural unity remain elusive. Old World mother churches have moved to strengthen their authority and influence in America in various ways. For example, in 1997 the Patriarchate of Constantinople ushered in a protracted period of uncertainty for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese when it forced the aging Archbishop Iakovos into retirement and unilaterally promulgated a new archdiocesan charter. Since 2003 disagreement has arisen between the Patriarchate of Antioch and its North American Archdiocese over the meaning of "self-rule." While the OCA has maintained its independent status, its stature has been diminished by financial scandals. In addition, reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia with the Moscow patriarchate in 2008 has raised questions about the OCA's future role on both national and international levels. Clearly Orthodox Christians in America are still linked to the Orthodox churches of the Old World by powerful emotional and structural ties. Now as in the past, they face the challenge of adapting to the American context, reaching out in witness and mission, without sacrificing their Old World cultural and spiritual heritage.

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NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

GRANT UNDERWOOD

In the academic study of religion, "new religious movements" has a specialized but not entirely specific meaning. Rather than encompassing all new religious entities, the term typically targets an assortment of groups that used to be labeled "sects," or more disparagingly "cults." Less pejorative terms have also been employed: "alternative" or "nonconventional" religions. If there is no universally agreed-upon nomenclature, the taxonomy of characteristics that constitutes the category has been even more diverse. Powerful leaders and uncritical followers, exclusivism and secrecy, extrabiblical revelation, and un-Christian or unconventionally Christian beliefs and practices are just a few of the criteria that sometimes appear as classificatory keys. Such taxonomies, of course, are highly subjective and based on assumptions about religion and the study of religion that are far from universally embraced. What most categorizations share, however, is an interest in cultural difference and a focus on the more "exotic" manifestations of religious innovation. Thus groups classified as "new religious movements" are not just new, but are religions whose belief systems and behaviors are interpreted as exhibiting considerable divergence from the "mainstream." Even narrowing in this manner the groups to be included leaves a cluster too large to be considered in a brief study, despite the fact that some, such as Christian Science, that arguably fit the focus are treated elsewhere in this volume. This essay examines the Shakers, Unitarians, Mormons, Millerites, Seventh-day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses, important and representative new religious movements that prospered in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

By way of background, the question may be posed, why did religious innovation flourish at this particular time and place? Taking cognizance of several historical realities begins to provide an answer. One of the chief legacies of the American Revolution was a willingness to question authority. More than ever before, ordinary citizens in the new republic felt themselves fully capable of charting their own spiritual destiny without the aid of

either mediating ministerial elites or centuries of Christian tradition. They believed that by engaging the Bible directly and taking it alone for their sure guide truth seekers could return to pure Christian beginnings and bypass the clerical corruption of the intervening centuries. If this "Christian primitivism," this "plain reading" of the Bible, seemed to some, such as former Baptist minister Alexander Campbell, the obvious and easy path to Christian truth and unity, it actually ended up producing a cacophony of competing views and a number of new religious movements. Richard McNemar, a Methodist-turned-Presbyterian-turned-Christian-turned-Shaker, spoke from experience when he penned these lines around 1807: "A thousand reformers like so many moles have plowed all the bible and cut it in holes. And each has his church at the end of his trace, built up as he thinks of the subjects of grace."[1] As his contemporary, theologian John W. Nevin, mocked, the belief was widespread that "every congregation has power to originate a new Christianity for its own use."[2] In short, religious deregulation favored religious start-ups.

For related reasons of faith in human ingenuity, the nineteenth century also witnessed widespread interest in social reform. Progressivism, utopianism, and communitarianism characterized the philosophies of many. As Ralph Waldo Emerson quipped to Thomas Carlyle in 1840, "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket."[3] Numbers of new religious movements went beyond doctrinal or liturgical reform to refashion fundamental aspects of economic, social, and domestic life. Americans' confidence in their ability to remake the world would not be significantly dampened until the 1920s and 1930s. During the nineteenth century, favorable political, economic, and social circumstances nurtured faith in the possibility of human progress, and primitivist assumptions liberated religious reformers from the constraints of the past, freeing them to proclaim bold new visions for the future. Such is the setting that fostered the rise of so many "new Christianities" in this era.

SHAKERS

Formally the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, the Shakers had already been in existence in America for several decades when

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[1] Richard McNemar, "The Moles Little Pathways," in Daniel W. Patterson, *The Shaker Spiritual* (Princeton, 1979), 136.

[2] John W. Nevin, "Antichrist and the Sect System," in Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989), 167.

[3] Charles E. Norton, ed., *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834–1872* (Boston, 1883), 1:308–9.

the nineteenth century began. English immigrant Ann Lee (1736–84) was neither the founder nor the sole leader of the society, but her charismatic gifts and subsequent elevation in Shaker theology to female messiah make her the key figure in the movement. Little is known about the first half dozen years after Ann Lee and several other Shakers arrived in America in 1774. Later recollections by Believers (as Shakers called themselves) focus on the period after the little band moved from New York City, where they first lived, to Niskeyuna, near Albany, New York. There, some of these English immigrants and confirmed pacifists, including Ann Lee, were occasionally imprisoned as suspected Loyalists. Even greater opposition and physical violence were experienced from 1781 to 1783 when the small band undertook a two-and-a-half-year missionary tour through eastern New York and New England to "open the gospel." This time it was their distinctive religious beliefs rather than alleged Loyalist sympathies that attracted antagonism.

Among the most unpopular teachings was the Shaker sexual ethic. Having lost four children at childbirth and having separated from a difficult husband, it is not surprising that Ann Lee, then in her mid-forties, forcefully proclaimed "against the flesh." Ultimately for Shakers this came to mean celibacy and dissolution of the conventional family, but for many outside the fold "taking up the cross" and following Christ in this way was a hard and threatening doctrine. Opposition to the fledgling flock was also engendered by "Mother" Ann's strong indictment of the follies and formalism of the established churches, the kingdom of the Antichrist. The concomitant call to gather out of Babylon, to live apart from "the world," eventually propelled the Believers to seek more than spiritual fellowship. In the years following Lee's death in 1784, Believers began to pool their resources, purchase land, and move together, perhaps onto the farm of a convert and often with a core of extended kin constituting the initial nucleus. Soon meetinghouses and celibate, communal lodgings were constructed, agricultural and craft buildings erected, and land cultivated to provide for community livelihood and trade. Within each of these Shaker villages, Believers grouped into celibate, communal units called "families." Early villages were located in places like Watervliet (Niskeyuna), New York; Hancock, Massachusetts; and Enfield, New Hampshire.

It required a generation after Ann Lee's death to complete her apotheosis as the female Christ and the embodiment of the Second Coming, but this became the most distinctive and cherished doctrine of the Society, generating such worshipful expressions as the beloved hymn, "I Love Mother." Outsiders, including disgruntled former members, were less appreciative. They accused Lee of all manner of unsavory behavior, from

sexual misconduct to false prophecy. "Persecution," as religious insiders are prone to call it, rarely undermines a movement. Typically, it generates renewed evangelism and institution building. It did so with the Shakers. The Ministry (the four top Shaker leaders consisting of two women and two men) sent missionaries to the West in the early 1800s. When they arrived in Kentucky, they encountered a region still in the thrall of the famous Cane Ridge Revival that had occurred some months before. Here a number of important converts were made, and by 1805 Union Village had been gathered across the river in southern Ohio. It would become the center of Shakerism in the West.

Although briefer works preceded it, publication in 1808 of the six-hundred-page *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing; Containing a General Statement of All Things Pertaining to the Faith and Practice of the Church of God in This Latter-Day* was a significant milestone in Shaker history. Not only was it the most substantial publication to date, but it was the first printed proclamation that Ann Lee's life and ministry constituted the Second Coming of Christ. Other important publications followed in the years ahead. *Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee and the Elders ... Collected from Living Witnesses* (1816) was a key publication that for the Shakers represented the normative, collective memory of Ann Lee's words and deeds and that functioned within the society much as the recollections of Muhammad's life in the Hadith and Sura literatures or the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life did for their respective communities. *Millennial Laws ... Adapted to the Day of Christ's Second Appearing*, first published in 1821, offered Shaker communities detailed instructions on how to regulate virtually every aspect of their existence. As the protocols of Shaker communalism were being worked out in the early nineteenth century, so were new forms of ritual worship such as dancing, a practice that would be widely commented on by curious observers. What began as spontaneous, ecstatic displays among the Shakers soon were liturgically structured and regularized.

Shaker growth reached its zenith in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when the society counted some five to six thousand adherents living communally in approximately twenty villages in the Ohio River valley, New York, and New England. The 1820s witnessed both the establishment in Sodus Bay, New York, of the last major village and the first closing of a village, West Union, in Indiana. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, the society's denouement was temporarily arrested by the onset of what Shakers called the "Era of Manifestations" or "Mother Ann's Work." A decade before the Fox sisters brought nationwide notoriety to Spiritualism by serving as mediums for messengers from the spirit world, young Shakers fell into trances and dictated or drew messages from

predecessors that had passed on, particularly Mother Ann. This vision-
ary era climaxed in 1843 with publication of the lengthy communication
received by Philemon Stewart titled *Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book*.
In some ways, this volume and several less extensive ones resembled the
revelation texts that Mormonism's founder Joseph Smith was dictating
about this time. In contrast, however, Stewart was not the acknowledged
leader of the Shaker community, merely one medium among many; and
the *Divine Roll and Book*, though published and respected, was neither
canonized nor treated as normatively binding. In the third quarter of the
nineteenth century, as the excitement of spiritual revitalization subsided,
institutional ossification and internal struggle set in. To be sure, dur-
ing this period a new periodical, *The Shaker Manifesto*, was launched, the
society's hymnody was expanded, and a centennial celebration was held
commemorating the Shaker arrival in America. Still, the general drift was
downward. The 1860 revision and relaxation of the *Millennial Laws* was
a minor sign. A more crucial manifestation was the society's inability to
attract and hold converts, particularly male converts. For a celibate and
economically diverse society, this was critical. Correspondingly, the mod-
est growth derived from admission of adopted children or the offspring
of converts upon reaching adulthood dried up. More than theological or
liturgical changes, these biological and sociological realities worked to
undermine Shaker vitality. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth
century and on into the twentieth, the society witnessed the steady gray-
ing and the feminization of its membership, and one village after another
closed. By the mid-twentieth century only a handful of Shakers lived in
the remaining villages.

UNITARIANS

In contrast to Trinitarianism, Unitarianism is belief in a single, unitary
God, with Christ and the Holy Spirit seen as separate and subordinate
entities. This simple dictionary definition, however, belies the fact that
historically Unitarianism has been home to a variety of anti-trinitarian
views, ranging from "Arian" acceptance of Christ as divine, though sub-
ordinate or inferior to the Father, to "Socinian" affirmations that Jesus
was merely a good man. Socinian Unitarians existed in small numbers in
late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America, particularly after
English scientist Joseph Priestley immigrated to the United States and
stimulated the formation of several such congregations in the Philadelphia
area. Unitarianism as a new religious movement, however, was more gener-
ally Arian in its theology, and its immediate progenitor was more properly
the liberal wing of New England Congregationalism than either Priestley

or Deists-turned-Unitarians such as Thomas Jefferson who derided "the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three."[4]

Beginning in the mid-1700s with Great Awakening opponents Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew and continuing into the first quarter of the nineteenth century with the likes of William Ellery Channing and Andrews Norton, liberal New England ministers, particularly in Boston and eastern Massachusetts, challenged the Trinitarian doctrines and Calvinist soteriology of their orthodox neighbors. To a considerable degree, Unitarianism grew out of this family squabble among Congregationalists, with orthodox Calvinists gradually losing ground to rationalist liberals who, even more than Trinitarian theology, loathed the famous five points of Calvinism articulated in the 1619 Canons of Dort (popularly recalled by the mnemonic TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints). In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, orthodox Calvinist Congregationalists lost control of Harvard College as well as the majority of the oldest, most prestigious pulpits in eastern Massachusetts. Triumphant liberal ministers and their congregations increasingly came to be called Unitarian, even though it was their optimistic, anti-Calvinist view of human nature and its potential for moral perfection that dominated their preaching. By the 1820s, more than a hundred congregations in New England had Unitarian leanings. Ministers from nearly half of them banded together in 1825 to form the American Unitarian Association, and a new religious institution was born.

During the early nineteenth century, William Ellery Channing was the leading spokesman for this new religious movement. In a famous 1819 sermon, he issued what amounted to a manifesto for liberal or Unitarian Christianity. Channing emphasized the moral perfection of God, a perfection of character that made it impossible for him to create incorrigibly depraved human beings and then arbitrarily save some and damn the rest. Instead, Channing argued, a perfectly just and merciful God created humans in his own moral image, endowed them with a moral sense enabling them to discern right from wrong, and gave them the freedom and the ability to choose a moral life. He believed that the doctrine of "predestination" discouraged moral exertion and that an optimistic assessment of human nature was far more likely to produce virtuous behavior. Such views were sufficiently congenial to the democratic spirit of the early Republic that, according to one source, Channing's published sermon became the

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[4] Thomas Jefferson to Timothy Pickering, Esq., Feb. 27, 1821, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Definitive Edition*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington, DC, 1907), 15:323.

most widely circulated pamphlet in America since Tom Paine's 1776 tract *Common Sense*.[5]

The Unitarian emphasis on ethics over dogma foreshadowed the "modernist" challenge to "Fundamentalism" a century later. Both Unitarianism and Modernism stressed that the genius of Christianity was its high moral vision and its ability to foster in humanity the formation of a genuinely Christ-like character. "True religion," argued Channing, consists in proposing, as our great end, a growing likeness to the Supreme Being. Its noblest influence consists in making us more and more partakers of the Divinity."[6] Notwithstanding the name by which they were known, Unitarians expended far more energy promoting this moral vision than in doctrinally distinguishing Jesus Christ from the unitary God of creation. Explained Channing,

> We consider the errours which relate to Christ's person as of little or no importance compared with the errour of those who teach, that God brings us into life wholly depraved and wholly helpless, that he leaves multitudes without that aid which is indispensably necessary to their repentance, and then plunges them into everlasting burnings and unspeakable torture, for not repenting.[7]

Moreover, Calvinism tended to channel believer love and adoration toward Christ more than to God by investing Christ with the role of merciful mediator and appeaser of God's infinite wrath. Unitarians thought such characterizations robbed God of his "amiable and venerable attributes." By emphasizing the morality and mercy of God the Father, Unitarians altered understandings of Christ's contribution to human redemption. Gone was the belief that his crucifixion was necessary to placate the divine wrath or that Christ's death satisfied an infinite debt generated by human sinfulness (original or actual). The Father in heaven was constitutionally disposed to be merciful and kind toward his creatures. Although in some unspecified way, most Unitarians continued to affirm a link between Christ's death and human forgiveness, they focused more on the virtue-engendering power of Christ's teachings and example. The ultimate goal of Christ's redemptive mission was human perfection, the restoration to humanity of the moral image of God. Too much of traditional Christianity, wrote Channing, "consists in disparaging good works and human virtue, for the purpose of

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[5] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York, 2007), 614.

[6] Channing, "Likeness to God," in Sydney E. Ahlstrom and Jonathan S. Carey, eds., *An American Reformation: A Documentary History of Unitarian Christianity* (Middletown, CT, 1985), 119.

[7] Channing, "A Letter to Rev. Samuel C. Thacher," in Ahlstrom and Carey, *An American Reformation*, 82.

magnifying the value of Christ's vicarious sufferings. In this way, a sense of the infinite importance and indispensable necessity of personal improvement is weakened, and high-sounding praises of Christ's cross seem often to be substituted for obedience to his precepts."[8] Herein lay the practical, utilitarian nature of American Unitarianism.

A related but more populist manifestation of anti-Calvinism was known as Universalism. Ultimately, in the 1960s the Unitarians and the Universalists would merge, but in the nineteenth century they followed separate but somewhat parallel paths. With Universalism, the animating idea was not so much the divine potential of God's human creations, but the profundity of his love for those creatures. That love was so compelling that ultimately all humanity would taste its saving power. Thomas Starr King, who pastored both Universalist and Unitarian congregations in mid-nineteenth-century San Francisco, is remembered for this witty distinction: "[T]he [Universalist] thinks God is too good to damn [people] forever, the [Unitarian] thinks [people] are too good to be damned forever."[9] Universalism was more accessible and appealing to ordinary Americans than the Christian rationalism of Eastern liberals. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Universalists accounted for as many as a third of the Christian population in certain areas of the Northeast. Reflecting on the social distinctions that tended to keep Universalists and Unitarians apart, the common quip was that Unitarianism stood for the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the neighborhood of Boston.

Unitarianism and Universalism naturally engendered opposition, but it was mild in comparison with what other new religious movements received. "Persecution" of urbane Unitarians was restricted to verbal assaults in the press where conservative Congregationalists and Presbyterians turned Unitarian arguments on their head and claimed that capacious views of salvation actually daunted human determination to live the gospel. The fear of damnation was a much greater deterrent to sin than contemplation of divine love. Even toward the more rural Universalists, antagonism was subdued; few were physically harassed, and lynchings were unknown. For both Unitarians and Universalists, tolerance of divergent religious doctrines and behavior was an early hallmark of their belief systems.

MORMONS

Mormonism is the name popularly given to the faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, an organization founded by Joseph Smith,

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[8] Channing, "Unitarian Christianity," in Ahlstrom and Carey, *An American Reformation*, 110–11.

[9] Charles W. Wendte, *Thomas Starr King: Patriot and Preacher* (Boston, 1921), 18.

Jr. in upstate New York in 1830. The name is derived from the Book of
Mormon, a lengthy revelation dictated by Smith and viewed by the church
as companion scripture to the Bible. Whereas the Hebrew Bible provides a
history of ancient Israel in its Palestinian homeland, the Book of Mormon
presents a narrative encompassing the thousand-year history (roughly,
600 B.C.E.–400 C.E.) of a group of Exile-era Israelites who migrated to the
Americas. Smith's revelation identifies Mormon, who lived at the end of the
thousand-year period, as the volume's ancient redactor and primary narra-
tive voice. Like the Bible, the Book of Mormon is theologically driven. In
its own words, its purpose is

> to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the LORD
> hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the
> LORD, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the
> Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, mani-
> festing Himself unto all nations.[10]

Within weeks of the book's publication, Smith gathered his support-
ers and formally organized the "Church of Christ," the church's original
name. As with most new religious movements, Smith and his followers
encountered opposition from the beginning. Within a year of the church's
organization, the New York "Mormons" (initially a term of derision but
one, like "Shakers," that stuck and today is more value neutral) moved to
Ohio where a number of recent converts resided. Soon Smith announced
a revelation directing the Saints, as Mormons eventually preferred to call
themselves, to gather to the western edge of Missouri, near what is today
Kansas City, to build a New Jerusalem. Just across the state line was Indian
Territory, newly created by the 1830 Indian Removal Act, to which a num-
ber of Shawnee and Delaware had recently been relocated. The Mormon
choice of a site for their New Jerusalem reflected their interest in the
Native Americans whom they believed were part of the "remnant of the
House of Israel" addressed in the Book of Mormon and who they hoped
would embrace their vision and assist them in their endeavor.

For a variety of reasons, matters did not go as planned. The Mormons
were unable to secure a license to proselytize in Indian Territory, and con-
sequently there was no influx of Native Americans to help them with their
eschatological project. More crucially, the Saints were people of mod-
est means and never managed to raise enough money to purchase suffi-
cient land in Missouri to carry out their plans. Perhaps most importantly,
an influential group of prior settlers in the area vigorously opposed the
Mormon scheme and within two years drove them from the county. By the

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[10] *The Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, NY, 1830), Title Page.

end of the 1830s, those settlers and other antagonistic Missourians, with the cooperation of the governor and state militia, expelled the Mormons from the state altogether. The Saints found temporary refuge in Illinois, where they continued their efforts to build an ideal community, doing so on the Mississippi River near the Missouri-Iowa Territory border. With high hopes, they chose a name for their new city-to-be – "Nauvoo," a Hebrew-related word that they interpreted as "beautiful place."

Events over the next half dozen years, however, made naming their new location Nauvoo as ironic as it was accurate. To be sure, the Saints built a city that by the mid-1840s rivaled Chicago in size, but it was as much a typical Mississippi river town as it was a New Jerusalem. Endeavoring to protect themselves from past vulnerabilities, the Mormons secured a city charter that gave them significant power to run Nauvoo the way they wished, including permission to organize a branch of the state militia – the Nauvoo Legion – that put several thousand men at the defensive ready. Such actions, exacerbated by Mormon political and judicial maneuverings, once again riled their neighbors. Matters were complicated by dissent from within the church over some of the unconventional theology Smith was promulgating in the 1840s, as well as over rumors that he and some of his closest associates had begun practicing plural marriage – which they had.

The match that lit the powder keg was the decision made by Smith and the Mormon-dominated city council to destroy the printing press used by a group of dissenters to publish the first issue of their new newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*. As a carry-over from earlier sedition legislation, contemporary law allowed a periodical to be declared a public "nuisance" and destroyed, but in the highly charged climate of 1844 Hancock County, Illinois, it was not a wise move. An immediate hue and cry was raised throughout the county. Demands that retributive justice be exacted on Smith and the Mormons propelled Governor Thomas Ford into action lest a civil war break out. In the end, his efforts to mediate the dispute failed, as did his promise of protective custody for Smith. On a hot summer afternoon in June 1844, a mob broke into the Carthage, Illinois, jail where Smith was being held for trial and shot him and his brother dead.

Some expected that the end of Smith would mean the end of Mormonism, but when it became apparent that Mormonism was not going to disintegrate, violence broke out, and the Mormons found themselves compelled once again to abandon their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. This time their exodus took them to the Far West, to the Great Basin, in what was then Mexican territory but what eventually became Utah Territory. Here they hoped to thrive in isolation, and here they sought to build not only a New Jerusalem, but a new Israel.

Not all Mormons followed Joseph Smith's successor, Brigham Young, to the Great Salt Lake Valley. A substantial minority felt that the version of Mormonism promoted by Young and his associates diverged from the church's foundational scriptures and teachings, and they disliked Young's leadership style. These individuals remained in the Midwest. Among them several would-be successors to Smith arose and fell. By 1860, however, a sizeable coalition of Midwestern Mormons persuaded Smith's son, Joseph III, to be their leader, and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (presently, the Community of Christ) was born. Then and now, the RLDS church represented only a fraction of all who trace their roots to Joseph Smith, but it was the largest of the various offshoots of early Mormonism. Most of these groups distinguished themselves from the Utah Mormons by a preference for "primitive Mormonism" and eschewed some or all of the Nauvoo developments in doctrine and practice. The primary issue of contention was plural marriage or polygamy, and the RLDS church would battle it for the rest of the century.

Meanwhile, the main body of Saints spread out from their initial base in the Salt Lake Valley to colonize most of the area that in 1896 would become the state of Utah. Additional colonization efforts pushed into southern Idaho and western Wyoming, as well as into eastern Arizona and western New Mexico. For Mormons in the West, colonization was viewed as religious as well as secular activity, and for them the common evangelical phrase "building the Kingdom of God" took on a literal connotation. Yet it was precisely this attempt to create a separate new Israel in the West, especially with its commitment to the ideal of plural marriage, that eventually generated a nationwide anti-Mormon crusade.

In 1852, safely ensconced in their mountain retreat, the Mormons publicly announced their practice of plural marriage. For the next forty years they constantly promoted it within their own ranks and vigorously defended it against the assaults of Protestant America. In practice, only a minority of Mormons at any given time during the second half of the nineteenth century had the wherewithal to support multiple families, but the monogamous majority was as enthusiastic in their defense of "the Principle" as the fewer polygamist Latter-day Saints. Forged in the fires of adversity and opposition, support for polygamy became a defining ideal of Mormonism. As much as any aspect of Latter-day Saint belief or behavior, the energy, sacrifice, and emotion expended in its promulgation and defense created the Mormon "people."

Despite the importance of polygamy, less visible aspects of Mormonism also helped shape and define the Latter-day Saints. Chief among these was the Mormon belief in a version of apostolic succession and plenary inspiration. Latter-day Saints were like other primitivist Christians in their belief

that Christianity had long since drifted from its original moorings and that no extant ecclesiastical institution stood in unbroken succession with the New Testament church. Rather than merely claiming to have recaptured pure biblical principles and polity, however, Mormonism asserted an actual apostolic succession by angelic appearance of Peter, James, and John to lay their hands on Joseph Smith's head and confer upon him the priestly rights and ecclesiastical keys necessary to reconstitute the primitive church. Part of that restoration involved the recreation of Twelve Apostles with whom Smith shared these keys. As Latter-day Saint polity developed, these Apostles came to be viewed as the collective successors to Smith, and indeed to Jesus' original Twelve. Following Smith's death, the senior Apostle, Brigham Young, became the next church president; and thereafter, upon the death of the incumbent, the Apostle with the longest tenure in the "Council of the Twelve" has regularly acceded to the presidency.

From the beginning, the LDS church president has also been referred to and functioned as "the Prophet." This recognizes his role as recipient of normative, plenary inspiration. Although in addition to the Book of Mormon, Smith dictated in the venerable style of the King James Bible over a hundred much shorter revelations published in the canonical Doctrine and Covenants, his successors have rarely added to the church's scriptural canon. This did not stop most church members, however, from regarding the words of Brigham Young or successor prophet-presidents as the de facto word of God. Indeed, it was this pervasive conviction among Mormons that the Prophet directed them according to God's will that enabled them to make numerous personal sacrifices, devoting life and limb to building the Kingdom. Sometimes, after years of wresting from the wilderness a successful farm, a Mormon family might pick up and start all over again because they believed God called them through the Prophet to be part of a new colonizing venture. Or families might be asked to sustain themselves for several years in the absence of a husband and father whom the Prophet had "called on a mission" to proselytize in some distant place.

In many aspects of their belief and behavior, Latter-day Saints were consummately American; and a handful of distinctive Mormon doctrines and practices should not obscure what they shared with the rest of Protestant America. The Mormon theory of the Christ's atonement, for example, represented a fairly standard substitutionary position. Their theological anthropology and soteriology reflected the anti-Calvinist perspectives prevalent in antebellum America. And their eschatology was pronouncedly premillennial. Above all, Mormons were thoroughly biblicist. Especially during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, but throughout the nineteenth century, Latter-day Saint sermons and doctrinal literature quoted the Bible far more often than the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants.

Although they, like proponents of other new religious movements, interpreted parts of the Bible in an unconventional manner, nonetheless, the Bible provided the primary textual building blocks used to construct their theological edifice.

Latter-day Saint primitivism engaged both the New Testament and the Old Testament. With regard to the latter, Mormons, like most Christians, saw themselves as God's new covenant people, but they did not maintain this belief in the usual exclusive fashion. They envisioned a bright future, temporally and spiritually, for historic, ethnic Israel. In fact, as the Book of Mormon made clear, facilitating that future for ethnic Israel was part of the Mormon raison d'être. At the same time, Latter-day Saints saw themselves, too, literally and figuratively, as part of Israel and maintained symbolic identification with biblical Israel in a variety of ways. The Mormon clergy belonged either to the "Aaronic" or the "Melchizedek" priesthoods. Church members received "patriarchal blessings" like Jacob's sons in Genesis. Outsiders were called "Gentiles." The Prophet was charged to "preside over the whole church and to be like unto Moses."[11] And the edifices Mormons built to house special, sacred ceremonies were called "temples" and were believed to be patterned after Solomon's temple. This dual emphasis on both ethnic Israel and Mormon Israel meant that the prophecies of the Old Testament could be interpreted to apply to either group or to both.

None of this detracted from a pronounced New Testament restorationism among the Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith once listed belief "in the same organization that existed in the primitive church" as one of his church's leading articles of faith.[12] Mormons went beyond many Christian primitivists in their strong experiential primitivism that expected restoration in their own time of all the spiritual gifts described in the New Testament. Mormons embraced healing, speaking in tongues, and prophecy, including the potential for plenary, scripture-producing inspiration, while most mainstream theologies confined these "extraordinary" gifts to the first Christian century.

Outsider perceptions of alternative religions typically focus on and distort the unusual, and characterizations of Mormonism were no exception. Polygamy, theocracy, and economic communitarianism were often held up as the defining Mormon triumvirate. Yet, as has been noted, despite its symbolic importance, polygamy was a lived reality for only a minority of Mormons. Theocracy was really what Mormons called "theodemocracy," as they both embraced and worked within the American democratic system; and bloc voting, for which they were criticized, was common among many

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[11] *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, OH, 1835), 88.
[12] Smith, "Church History," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1842): 709.

geographically clustered ethnic or religious groups in America. As for communalism, it was the economic order of the day only in the smallest Utah Mormon villages, and then only for a few years. Aside from a few brief, location-specific attempts at full communal resource sharing, Mormon communitarianism generally amounted to seeking intraterritorial economic self-sufficiency. In so doing, Mormons often replicated typical American patterns of acquisitiveness and seem to have felt little dissonance between the views of Adam Smith and Joseph Smith. Overall, whether considering the lived Mormon experience or probing LDS theological ideals, it is clear that the Saints, despite portrayals to the contrary, were always quite American at heart. In the end, it was this core of shared values that enabled them to achieve statehood in the 1890s and thereafter assimilate so successfully into the broader body politic that today they are often viewed as the poster children of Americanism.

ADVENTISTS

In 1836, upstate New York farmer William Miller published a volume of several hundred pages titled *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year 1843*. For a number of years, Miller preached his message of the "near Advent" throughout northeastern New York and western Vermont, but it was not until 1840, when Joshua V. Himes, veteran evangelical reformer and friend of William Lloyd Garrison, took up the crusade that "Millerism" became an independent and self-conscious movement. Under Himes' aggressive leadership, Millerite newspapers were started (the *Signs of the Times* in Boston and the *Midnight Cry* in New York City), regional and general Advent conferences were convened, and more extensive, better organized lecture tours were carried out. Yet Miller and Himes founded no new church; their innovation truly was a new religious "movement."

As the predicted year elapsed, Millerites faced their first major disconfirmation. Fortunately, prominent Adventist Samuel Snow reexamined the prophecies and announced his discovery that Christ would actually return on the Jewish "Day of Atonement," the tenth day of the seventh month, which he, using Karaite Jewish calculations, determined would be 22 October 1844. Without ascension robes and not on hilltops, Millerites gathered quietly on the designated day to preach, pray, and await the Advent. During their vigil, they watched the hours tick by until the rising sun brought tears of despair to many. The story, however, does not end with the "Great Disappointment," for in time the Seventh-day Adventists, the Advent Christian church, and several other smaller, more ephemeral groups rose out of the ashes of Millerism.

Not all Millerites made sense of the Great Disappointment in the same way. Miller himself viewed it as a mistaken date, but otherwise continued to affirm his distinctive eschatology. Other Millerites affirmed the validity of the 1844 date, but reinterpreted its meaning. Some argued that the Advent had indeed occurred, but claimed that it was a spiritual return and that the Lord's millennial reign was even then underway in the hearts of the Saints. This view never garnered widespread support, and a number of its proponents soon found a more suitable home among the Shakers, who held similar beliefs about a spiritually present millennium. Others, most of whom later coalesced into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, claimed that although the 1844 calculation was correct, the mistake was to have interpreted the "cleansing of the sanctuary" in Daniel 8:14, a key Millerite passage, as a reference to Christ's personal return to physically cleanse the earth and inaugurate the millennium.

The proper understanding of the verse was that what actually occurred in October 1844, in an event prefigured by the Israelite "Day of Atonement" ritual (Leviticus 16), was that Christ entered the celestial Holy of Holies to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary. The Second Advent, the point at which the earth would be cataclysmically cleansed of sinful humanity, would follow later. As Seventh-day Adventist theology developed, Adventists proclaimed that Christ's major work in the celestial sanctuary was the time-consuming "investigative judgment" – investigation into the lives of all so-called Christians, dead and living, to "determine who of the myriads now sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation."[13] Conceptually, the "Day" of Atonement was becoming years of atonement, and Christ was not expected to depart the heavenly sanctuary and execute judgment on earth until the investigative judgment was complete.

Adventist emphasis on Jesus' high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary produced a distinctive view of Christ's atonement. Redemption was to be accomplished in two phases – the atoning sacrifice on the cross and the application to believing mortals of the benefits of that sacrifice through Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary. Although Adventists affirmed with the rest of Christendom that Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary was complete and performed once and for all, they diverged from others in emphasizing that only through Christ's heavenly intercession could the benefits of the atonement be applied to individual human beings. In other words, although Christ's crucifixion made forgiveness of sins possible, the actual cancellation of an individual's sins awaited Jesus' ministry in the

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[13] Uriah Smith, *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI, 1872), art. 18.

heavenly Holy of Holies. There, as Revelation 20 indicates, the records of human behavior would be opened, and Christ would investigate the life of each believer to see whose repentance and Christian strivings qualified him or her for a glorious resurrection. If he or she was found worthy of redemption, then Jesus would plead with the Father to apply his atoning blood and blot out that person's sins. Eventually, the entire record of Christian sinfulness would be expunged through application of the benefits of Christ's atonement, and in this way the heavenly sanctuary, as repository for that record of sin, would be cleansed.

Adventist eschatology envisioned that when the investigative judgment is finally complete, the Second Advent as occasion for executing judgment will occur. At that point, those deemed righteous will be resurrected corporeally, and they, with the living righteous who will be immortalized in the twinkling of an eye, will be caught up to heaven to reign with Christ. The living wicked will be destroyed from the face of the earth. This will leave the planet entirely desolate, literally a wasteland resulting from the catastrophic natural and supernatural devastation Christ will deploy to destroy every living human judged to be wicked. With the righteous translated to heaven and the wicked completely destroyed, no living soul will be left on earth. Rather than the paradisiacal utopia envisioned by most premillennialists, in Seventh-day Adventist theology the millennial earth is a depopulated and desolate planet that becomes the "pit" into which Satan is cast and that serves as his thousand-year prison. Adventists liken Lucifer's banishment on a barren, uninhabited earth to the Levitical description of the sin-bearing scapegoat being sent off to the wilderness on the Day of Atonement.

Based on their reading of the closing chapters of Revelation, Adventists anticipated this brief but dramatic episode at the very end of the thousand years: Christ brings to life as a second resurrection all the wicked who have ever lived on the planet. He then physically descends to earth accompanied by the "New Jerusalem," home to the redeemed of all ages. Because the resurrected wicked are still wicked at heart, they will quickly succumb to Satan's persuasions and lay siege to the Holy City. In a last desperate struggle between the righteous and the wicked, the final act in the "great controversy" between the Lord and Lucifer, the forces of evil will be decisively defeated. God will consume them by fire, a fire of such intensity that the very elements of the old earth melt and become a literal "lake of fire" that engulfs the vast multitude of resurrected wicked and effects the "second death." Thus, the wicked portion of the human population from all ages is extinguished "root and branch" forever, and the earth itself is cleansed from every stain of sin, completing the antitypical fulfillment of the Day of Atonement service. The millennium concludes with the creation of a

glorious, new earth – the "new heavens and new earth" of prophecy – that in its celestial perfection, and with New Jerusalem continuing as its metropolis and capital, becomes the eternal abode of the redeemed. This eschatological scenario incorporates a notion of "conditional immortality," the view that humans are not naturally immortal, that immortality is a gift given only to the righteous. For Adventists, death is permanent unconsciousness or "soul sleep" terminated only by resurrection or annihilation. There is no hell and no eternal torment; the unrepentant wicked will simply be extinguished.

Much of this eschatology was influenced by the numerous visions and voluminous writings of Ellen Gould Harmon White (1827–1915). Ellen was only a teenage Millerite when the Great Disappointment occurred, but in the ensuing years she had a series of visions that reassured Adventists and reinforced the emerging theological contours of what would become Seventh-day Adventism. Early on Ellen met and married Adventist preacher James White, and together they traveled and met with Millerite groups to shore up their flagging faith. The Whites embraced the seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath and began to promote it as much as Adventist eschatology. Indeed, they linked the two, interpreting the third angelic message of Revelation 14 as a warning against receiving the "mark of the beast" by worshiping on Sunday. This angelic message was designed to recall end-time humanity to a renewed respect for the Decalogue, particularly the command to honor the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. For a time, James White published the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. In the 1860s, after more than a decade informally promoting their version of the Advent message, the Whites and others who shared their views formally organized as the Seventh-day Adventist Church with headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Though Ellen's influence was immense at times, she neither held ecclesiastical position nor exercised institutional veto power to enforce her insights. Throughout her long life, she functioned as an inspired adviser. In the early years, while her minister-husband James White was alive, he mediated her messages to the church through his editorial work and publication decisions. Later she interacted on her own with a supportive but independent denominational bureaucracy at church headquarters. From the beginning, Adventists wrestled with the status of Ellen G. White's visions and writings. How they related to the Bible was a key issue. In time, she came to be seen as more "messenger" (her preferred term) than prophet, as one who delivered inspired counsel and commentary on the Bible, but whose writings were not on par with the holy scriptures. Nor was acceptance of her writings elevated to a test of fellowship.

Still, the practical consequence of recognizing in her the "spirit of prophecy" was that White's interpretations of the Bible, no matter how

unconventional, trumped other views and in so doing sometimes codi-
fied problematic perspectives ranging from a literal seven-day creation
to unusual lifestyle advice. Not all were pleased with this. In the early
1900s, John Harvey Kellogg, longtime White associate, trained physician,
and the founder of the church's famed nineteenth-century sanatorium in
Battle Creek, Michigan, caused a minor schism and along with others left
the church over a variety of disagreements, including disbelief in many of
White's "testimonies." Beginning with an important conference in 1919,
four years after Ellen's death, leading Adventist ministers and scholars in
the twentieth century labored to strike a balanced position with regard to
White's prophetic role, one that acknowledged her spiritual gifts and many
doctrinal and devotional contributions while at the same time taking cog-
nizance of her fallibility.

A focus on health was present, though not dominant, in White's earli-
est visions. Ellen had been a sickly child, wrestling with a variety of mal-
adies from headaches to heart problems; and for a time she turned from
doctors to deity to solve her health challenges. When faith healing alone
fell short, Ellen espoused a judicious use of both faith and natural pharma-
cology. Near the time of the formal organization of the church, Ellen had
an extensive vision about health. Reflecting contemporary ideas of health
reform, White urged the most wholesome diet possible, including absten-
tion from the unclean foods identified in the Hebrew Bible and limited
consumption of meat. Considering human bodies the "temples" of the
Holy Spirit, she also encouraged avoidance of stimulants such as coffee and
tea and prescribed the generous use of water. Her visionary views on the
beneficial uses of water resembled the contemporary practice of hydropathy
(water cure). Indeed, the Whites visited water cure retreats in the United
States, but broadened their health care prescriptions to include many of the
ideas found in the "hygienic living" movement of the day. They combined
this with a proscription of many of the contemporary "medicines" Ellen
deemed harmful, such as opium or mercury. In 1866, the Whites opened
the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek.

A turning point in Ellen's life and in the course of Adventist history
was triggered by the death of James White in the 1880s. After more than
thirty years of marriage, Ellen was deeply impacted by the loss of her
beloved companion. Depressed and somewhat disoriented by his death, she
took up travel. For nearly two decades she spent most of her time on the
road, founding and visiting Adventist congregations all over the world. At
the same time, she continued to record her visions and divine communica-
tions and to send them to headquarters. In 1900, Ellen, then in her seven-
ties, settled in California and spent an additional fifteen years promoting
her chief passions – evangelism, education, and health. At the time of her

death in 1915, the Seventh-day Adventist church had reached nearly one hundred thousand members.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Like William Miller a generation earlier, Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916), a young man of Scots-Irish Presbyterian ancestry living in Allegheny, Pennsylvania (now part of Pittsburgh), did not intend to launch a new church. Instead, in 1870 he merely formed a Bible study class to better understand Holy Writ. According to his later reminiscences, certain Christian doctrines, such as the Trinity and endless torment for the wicked, made no sense to him. Yet it was his association with several former Millerites that helped him to identify Christ's Advent as the interpretive key to the scriptures and the stimulus to intensive Bible study from that point forward. Throughout his life, Russell freely acknowledged his debt to Adventism (though not the Sabbatarian variety), seeing it as a preparation for the further insights into the Bible that came to him over the next forty-five years.

By the mid-1870s Russell had become impressed with the writings of Nelson Barbour, a former Millerite living in Rochester, New York. Barbour convinced Russell that Christ's Second Advent was an invisible, spiritual return that occurred in 1874. For a time, the two men collaborated and coauthored several Adventist publications. The idea of the spiritual return was based on their rendering of the Greek word *parousia*, often used as a synonym for the Second Coming. Barbour and Russell interpreted *parousia* to mean "presence" and argued that the Advent should be understood as an ongoing spiritual presence rather than a single moment in time. Russell claimed that his contribution to their shared eschatology was to clarify the extent to which the millennial kingdom that Christ's spiritual presence would gradually establish would bring about a restoration on earth of paradisaical, Edenic conditions. Ultimately, irreconcilable differences over the nature of Christ's atonement caused Russell to break with Barbour, but this did not alter Russell's belief that the Lord's return had already occurred and that his spiritual presence was even then at work "harvesting" the righteous to Jehovah's cause before the end of time. In 1879, Russell began publishing his own periodical with the Advent-announcing title, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence.* During the next decade, Russell and the "Bible Students" he had gathered around him incorporated not as a church but as a publishing society known as Zion's Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. It would not be until 1931, fifteen years after Russell's death, that Russell's successor, Joseph Rutherford, proposed a name change from Bible Students to Jehovah's Witnesses.

Over the years Russell developed an elaborate, eschatologically driven interpretation of the Bible that he expounded regularly in the columns of *Zion's Watch Tower* and in a six-volume series known as *Millennial Dawn* (later, *Studies in the Scriptures*). Date setting continued to be important to him, and he felt free to make changes in those dates as deeper study and the aid of the Holy Spirit led him to "greater light." Still, figuring out the prophetic timetable was always subordinate to explicating the eschatology that undergirded it. Among the more distinctive aspects of that eschatology were Russell's views about the destiny of humankind. For a relative handful, their final destiny was to reign forever in heaven as joint heirs with Christ. This limited group Russell identified with the 144,000 depicted in the book of Revelation as the "firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." He also referred to them as the spiritually "anointed," the "little flock," and Christ's "bride." Strictly speaking, these alone constituted the church of Christ, and as such were the only ones to partake of the Eucharistic emblems at the annual Passover-time celebration of the Lord's Supper, or "Memorial," as the Bible Students preferred to call it.

Russell varied in his views about when and how he and other living members of the "little flock" would be given spiritual bodies and translated to heaven, but he was consistent in his expectation that the resurrection, whenever it occurred, would transform them into the same kind of spiritual being that Christ had been since his noncorporeal resurrection. Originally Russell argued that just as Christ was resurrected three and a half years after his first coming, so the "anointed," both dead and living, would be taken up to heaven in 1878, three and a half years after Christ's invisible Second Advent in late 1874. When that did not occur, Russell determined that the annus mirabilis would be 1914, the year that he calculated marked the end of the old order, the worldly "times of the Gentiles," and the commencement of Jehovah's Kingdom. Even when the anointed were not raptured to heaven or Armageddon did not occur in 1914, Bible Students were confident enough that the end was near that for a time they adopted the slogan, "Millions Now Living Will Never Die." Because by 1914 Russell had deployed his "greater light" doctrine on many occasions, being wrong about when or how prophecy would be fulfilled was much less disappointing to Bible Students than it had been to Millerites in the aftermath of 1844. Although Russell was still refining his understanding of 1914 when he passed away two years later, Rutherford continued the practice of rethinking prophetic fulfillment. Ultimately, it was decided that deceased members of the little flock, from Jesus' first-century disciples to devoted Bible Students in Russell's day, had been resurrected, whereas the living among the 144,000 would not go to heaven as a group but individually as each died a natural death.

All the rest of humanity was divided into supporters of Jehovah and those who opposed him. The latter, as in Adventist theology, were destined for utter extinction, while the former would receive the gift of eternal life on an earth restored to Edenic perfection. Those gifted with immortality included individuals who had lived upright Christian lives but were not completely consecrated to Jehovah, as well as the billions who in life never heard the gospel message, and a small number to whom God extended a second chance to embrace it. During the millennium each group, composed of living survivors of Armageddon and the many subsequently resurrected, would be given a chance to choose Jehovah fully. If they did not, or if they later succumbed to Satan's assaults when he was "loosed for a little season" at the end of the thousand years, they would be annihilated. This anticipated outcome for the rebellious echoes Adventist theology and reflects Universalist antipathy to the traditional notion of eternal torment. On the other hand, those who stayed faithful to Jehovah throughout the millennium would be granted immortality on earth. Occasionally in their early history the Witnesses emphasized a qualitative difference between the heavenly 144,000 and this earthbound "great crowd," Christ's "other sheep"; but as their ranks swelled beyond 144,000, Watch Tower publications began emphasizing that eternal life on an earthly paradise was in no way inferior to living forever in heaven.

Another discernible trend in the history of Jehovah's Witnesses was toward greater centralized control. At first, Russell's strong anti-institutional bias, born of his belief that ecclesiastical organization had been a prime contributor to the historic corruption of Christendom, kept matters less structured. The frequency and content of Bible Student gatherings were locally determined, and for more than a decade, Watch Tower Society publications and occasional visits from Russell were the only glue that kept the "classes" (also called "churches" in the New Testament sense) together. Eventually Russell felt compelled to provide more structure. *The Watch Tower* commenced a regular column featuring study outlines and discussion questions for weekly meetings. Ad hoc congregational leadership was replaced by annually elected elders ("overseers") and deacons. And Russell began appointing traveling speakers ("pilgrims") to assist him in his pastoral and educational work. Through it all, Russell respected local sensibilities. Following Russell's death, however, Joseph Rutherford introduced the "theocratic principle." Greater structure and central control were the hallmarks of his administration. Pilgrims, for example, became traveling supervisors rather than just traveling speakers and were given responsibility over the expanding evangelization work. In the 1930s, Rutherford insisted that democratic procedures had no place in Jehovah's theocratic

organization. Thereafter, congregational overseers and key ministerial servants were centrally appointed rather than democratically chosen. All Witness meeting places were uniformly designated "Kingdom Halls."

As with other new religious movements, the Witnesses experienced their share of both external antagonism and internal turmoil. From the beginning, their strong denunciation of the churches raised the ire of ministers and laymen alike. Such antagonism came to a head in the aftermath of the publication of *The Finished Mystery*, the stridently anticlerical and antichurch final volume in the *Studies in the Scriptures* series. In the tense atmosphere of America's entry into World War I, its proclamation of the imminent fall of Christian "Babylon" seemed seditious, even treasonous. Offended clergy sparked a wave of violent persecution throughout North America. Canada banned the book, and Bible Students from Oklahoma to Ohio experienced mobs, tarring and featherings, and whippings. By mid-1918, Rutherford and a handful of other leaders found themselves in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, although they were released less than a year later when wartime hysteria subsided.

Difficulties also plagued the Witnesses from within. Ironically, Russell's greatest internal opponent was his own wife, Maria Ackley Russell. The exact causes of her alienation are contested, but what does seem clear is that in the mid-1890s, after years as associate editor of, and regular contributor to, the *Watch Tower*, she wanted to exercise greater editorial control. Russell refused. Maria left him in 1897, and several years later brought a case to court seeking legal separation on grounds of the "indignities" she received at his hands. Whether it was a clash between Maria's feminism and Charles patriarchalism or the strain of their mutually imposed marital celibacy, Maria not only sought to sever the relationship but also became Charles' vocal critic, publishing a tract against him in 1903. Even greater turmoil was experienced among the Witnesses during the succession crisis following Russell's death. Rutherford had been elected president of the Watch Tower Society, but four of the board members opposed his installation. When Rutherford removed them, they fought back by visiting congregations across the country and sowing discord among the Witnesses. Then only months later, the violent persecution of 1918 broke out, and Rutherford was imprisoned. For a moment, it looked as if the fate of the Bible Students hung in the balance. Rutherford, however, rebounded and went on to exert ever greater control over the society. Even the faithful recognized that their new leader had a brusque and autocratic leadership style, but over the twenty-five years of his presidency he almost single-handedly transformed the Bible Students into the modern Jehovah's Witnesses.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The significant groups highlighted in this essay represent a mere sampling of the nineteenth century's new religious movements. In the fertile religious soil of the new republic, countless small conventicles sprang up under the leadership of self-proclaimed prophets, but most quickly withered under the weight of their eccentricities. Isaac Bullard and his nonbathing, "Mummyjum"-muttering Vermont Pilgrims and the prophet Matthias (Robert Matthews) and his frequently bathing, highly patriarchal Mount Zion commune in New York are but two examples. Less ephemeral and less exotic, though still distinctive, were the various immigrant enclaves composed primarily of radical European Pietists. Prophet George Rapp and his several hundred Harmonist followers established colonies in Pennsylvania and Indiana based on celibate perfectionism, economic communalism, and esoteric millennialism. The Community of True Inspiration, whose name affirms its embrace of prophetic utterance, also migrated from Germany and established the Amana colonies in Iowa in the mid-1800s. About the same time, Swedish Pietists under the inspired leadership of Eric Jansson migrated to Illinois to found Bishop Hill.

Whether evanescent or enduring, large or small, transplanted or home-grown, alternative religions in America, particularly the ones discussed here in detail, share several identifiable characteristics. Religious innovation and dissent are really two sides of the same coin. At the most basic level, new religious movements, like any other new social entity, arise because adherents find that a new configuration of ideas or activities better addresses their dissatisfaction with the religious status quo. Yet defenders of that status quo often viewed members of new religious movements in the nineteenth century with suspicion, if not outright antagonism. Despite the legal possibility of religious innovation, the general population had little tolerance for heterodoxy. Accounts of "mobs" physically harassing members of the new religious movements are common. Sometimes the tension was exacerbated by economic, ethnic, or racial differences. These factors intensified the emerging construction of the innovator/dissenter as an unacceptable Other. Such social distancing was often reinforced by physical separation. That which is separate and private tends to raise suspicions, especially when in some cases those separate communities experimented with notions of family or property, matters that were culturally untouchable at the time.

Reflecting as well as reinforcing difference was the apocalyptic world-view characteristic of many of the new religious movements. Growing out of a profound discontent with the status quo, apocalypticists viewed society

and its power brokers as evil and antagonistic. A world so firmly in the grip of sin could hardly be expected to yield to the entreaties of the righteous, and only God was considered capable of effecting genuine reform. Millenarian apocalypticism promised that divine deliverance would come dramatically, even cataclysmically, and soon. It was the dream of "the great reversal," and it gave hope to many who were dissatisfied with the religious and secular worlds around them and who felt powerless to bring about societal change. If the faithful remnant could not remake the world, God would do it for them, and that new world would reflect their dreams for the ideal society. For a number of new religious movements, the coming millennial kingdom was imagined in stark contrast to a deficient present, and inevitably it promised a prominent role for the beleaguered faithful. Alternative religions typically reserved to themselves special salvific status in the eyes of God. Whatever their marginality and outsiderness societally, spiritually they were the only real insiders.

Finally, it is worth noting that these new religious movements, while different in many ways, were also creatures of their age. Traditional Calvinism was in definite decline in the nineteenth century, and citizens of the new Republic recoiled against its salvific "cannotism," as Charles Finney called it.[14] Many nineteenth-century Americans put a premium on volitional freedom and human possibility and reoriented their theologies in that direction. Most new religious movements did the same. The popularization of the Enlightenment led many Americans to reject Trinitarianism and other arcane dogmas as illogical and incomprehensible. Such a perspective also found its way into the doctrines of various new religious movements. And most alternative religions balanced their apocalyptic assessment of the larger world around them with a typical American faith in their own potential for progress and spiritual prosperity.

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AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIONS IN AMERICA, 1790–1945

CLARA SUE KIDWELL

A history of American Indian religions in America must first acknowledge that Indian religious experience is different from the practices of the organized religions that are generally studied in American history. Indian religions are place based, drawing spiritual power from specific aspects of the landscape. Their senses of spirituality come from an intimate relationship between humans and forces in the environment – winds, storms, the movements of animals, the flow of rivers, and significant rock formations in the landscape, because rocks may represent events that occurred in the formation of their worlds. In this sense religion is a part of life, and environment is the source of spirituality.[1]

Given the widely varying environments in which Indians lived throughout North America in 1790, however, ideas about spirituality took greatly varying forms. Among the hunting people of the Great Plains, men established their individual identities by seeking visions in isolated places and demonstrated their powers in warfare and hunting. Pueblo peoples in their agriculturally based societies believed that humans have a causal role in maintaining the world. Their ceremonial cycles promoted human fertility and growth of crops.

This sense of human agency, the ability of human beings to influence the forces of the natural world, is a defining characteristic of native religions and one of the causes of conflict in the encounters of Christian missionaries with native people in the new American nation. One manifestation of individual power that affects other humans is the practice of witchcraft. Even Christian Indians could believe in witches and their ability to cause harm and disrupt society, a belief that missionaries condemned. A second defining characteristic is respect for the autonomy of the individual and the truth of individual knowledge. Encounters with spiritual forces through dreams and visions were the ultimate form of acquiring knowledge and the

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[1] Vine Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO, 1992), 76.

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power that it brought. In this regard, native religions differ dramatically from the dogmatic nature of Christianity.

By 1790, Indian sacred knowledge and ceremonies throughout North America had been under attack for approximately two hundred years. French, Spanish, and British colonization both had brought Christian missions into Indian communities and had disrupted them. Disease caused the loss of many people with sacred knowledge and undermined the authority of spiritual leaders whose power could not counter the effects of European illnesses. European settlers killed game and pushed Indian communities off their lands, depriving them of access to places where they could encounter spiritual power. Loss of hunting territories and sacred sites had taken its toll on Indian beliefs.

Although much of the following discussion reflects on change in Indian practices, it emphasizes how ritual and ceremony were ways in which Indians adapted to their changing circumstances and how American Indian practices often became a syncretism of Christian and native belief systems.

As the American nation expanded westward throughout the nineteenth century, explorers and settlers encountered new Indian cultures. The federal government adopted policies that tried either to destroy or to assimilate Indians through Christian conversion and education. The American constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state, a historical artifact of American resistance to the English establishment of a state religion, was ignored as American leaders embraced Christianity in all its variants as a means to a new order of American society and a tool to assimilate Indians peacefully into it. Methodists, Baptists, Moravians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Catholics saw American Indians as fertile field for conversion. The formation of associations for foreign missions (and Indians were foreigners) was evidence of the importance of Christianity in early American life. The Congregational Church organized the Missionary Society of Connecticut in 1798, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was established in 1810, and in 1817 the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, and Associate Reformed Churches formed the United Foreign Mission Society.

The Iroquois tribes in the Northeast endured the harshest effects of the Revolutionary War. At the time of the Revolutionary War they were powerful, self-governing nations united in a league that had spiritual sanction in the story of the founder Deganiwidah's desire to bring peace among them. Deganiwidah gave them the great law that governed their social relationships, and various medicine societies controlled rituals that cured illnesses and restored balance between humans and the environment. Their

agricultural base – corn, beans and squash – also physically represented the spirits of the three sisters, and a yearly cycle of ceremonies maintained their relationship with the transcendent power of the natural world, *Orenda* in the Iroquoian languages.

Because the tribes allied mainly with the British during the Revolutionary War, however, their territory was subject to attack by American forces, and American troops pursued a scorched-earth policy particularly against the Seneca, destroying crops and villages. All the tribes of the Iroquois League were treated as defeated enemies despite the fact that some Oneidas fought with American troops, and the rest of the Oneidas and the Onondagas tried to remain neutral. They were forced to cede extensive tracts of land to the new American government, which had no money and was desperate to acquire land as a taxable resource and as a form of payment to its army. The loss of land both diminished Indian hunting territories and cut off access to areas that were the source of spiritual power for individuals. Dispossession, disease, and destruction of native villages during the war weakened the power of native religious practices, which were already suffering the effects of the introduction of alcohol into Iroquois villages.

In 1793, Samuel Kirkland, a Presbyterian missionary working under the auspices of the Society in Scotland for Propagating the Gospel, established a school for Oneida and Tuscarora students in Clinton, New York. The Treaty of Canandaigua in 1794 established boundaries between the Six Nations, that is, the Iroquois League, and the United States.

In 1801, a Seneca religious leader, Handsome Lake, emerged to preach a new gospel, *Gai wiio* (the good message). He had learned the principles of the gospel in a series of visions that he had experienced over a period of time from 1799 to 1801. His gospel enjoined the Iroquois people to give up their beliefs in witches and to embrace the ideal of the nuclear family, that is, mother, father, and children, rather than the extended matrilineal clan that characterized Iroquois kinship systems. Although his visions included George Washington and Jesus Christ, and his preaching inveighed against certain traditional beliefs, Handsome Lake urged the Seneca to hold to their yearly cycle of ceremonial activities, including the midwinter, dream-guessing, strawberry, and harvest ceremonies. His teachings were intended to strengthen Seneca culture against the influences of American society, and he urged the followers of his new gospel to reject those influences.[2]

One Iroquois leader had his own rationale for rejecting Christianity. In 1805, Red Jacket, a Seneca leader, challenged Joseph Cram, a missionary from the Boston Missionary Society, in a famous exchange in which

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[2] Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970).

he questioned why Christian missionaries disagreed among themselves so much "as you can all read the book."[3]

Missionary activity increased, despite Red Jacket's question. The New York Missionary Society was established in 1805. By 1827 a Presbyterian church was established at Cattarraugus, New York. Although Handsome Lake's gospel became the basis for the Longhouse religion that by the early twentieth century was considered traditional Iroquoian practice, it initially encountered opposition from Christian missionaries and their Iroquois converts.

Ideas of Christianity and civilization were inextricably interwoven in federal Indian policy in the early republic. The government encouraged Christian missions to work among Indian tribes in order to civilize them. Thomas Jefferson, a deist, distinguished between savage Indians who still pursued a hunting way of life and civilized Indians who lived in settled villages and were self-sufficient agriculturalists, his model of the yeoman farmer, and he acquired the Louisiana Purchase in part to have land to accommodate the savages. Despite his largely secular views, however, he accepted Christianity as a way of civilizing the savage. In response, however, Indian people often used religious traditions as ways to cope with pressures to assimilate and to deal with the consequences of European colonization.

As American settlement expanded through the Ohio Valley in the early nineteenth century, animal populations fled or diminished, and Indian hunters and traders were hard-pressed to supply their families. A significant military defeat of an Indian army at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and the subsequent Treaty of Greenville in 1795, signed by leaders of Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanoes, Ottawas, Chippewas, Potawatomis, Miamis, Eel-Rivers, Weas, Kickapoos, Piankashaws, and Kaskaskias, extended American influence in the Ohio River Valley. By 1801, a delegation of leaders of the Potawatomis, Miamis, Delawares, Shawnees, Kickapoos, and Kaskaskias went east to ask for assistance from the government. Over the next decade, both the federal government and various religious organizations, including the Quakers, sent money, farm implements, and teachers to the tribes.

The conflict between Americans and Indian nations was strongly colored by religious beliefs, and in the Ohio Valley it led to violence. The Shawnee tribe was particularly affected by the military defeat at Fallen Timbers, the loss of trade, and the importation of alcohol. The Shawnee were not a single unified body but a number of groups widely dispersed throughout

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[3] Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *The Indian and the White Man* (Garden City, NY, 1964), 213.

the Ohio Valley. Shawnee cosmology depended upon a delicate balance between forces of good and evil power, conceptualized in witches. Medicine bundles containing the flesh of a great serpent allowed men to keep the world in balance. The coming of Americans disrupted the balance.

A prophet, Tenskwatawa, and his brother, Tecumseh, rose to prominence among the Shawnee along the White River in eastern Indiana. Tenskwatawa had a visionary experience in 1804 in which he learned that the Master of Life, the spiritual protector of the Shawnee, would help them overcome American domination if they rejected all the white man's goods and beliefs.

Although Tecumseh tried in the period of 1810–12 to spread this teaching to other tribes throughout the Ohio Valley and the Southeast, he met with strong opposition. His attempt to raise a coordinated military effort failed, and he and many of those who did follow him were slaughtered at the Battle of the Thames River (in Canada) in 1813.[4]

The Cherokees in the mountains of Tennessee and northern Georgia lived in a homeland of valleys and mountains that according to their beliefs had been shaped when a great buzzard flew over the muddy land. Its wing tips hitting the earth forced up the mountains and created the valleys. Cherokees believed that plants, animals, and humans existed in a symbiotic relationship. If humans were not respectful of the animals they hunted, the animals could strike them with illnesses, but plants could then release their particular powers to cure the illnesses.

The Cherokees encountered Christianity in the form of Moravian missionaries who established a mission at Spring Place, Georgia, in 1803. The famous New Madrid earthquakes of 1811–12 inspired apocalyptic visions among Cherokees and inspired new ceremonies intended to appease spirits who were apparently angered by Cherokee acceptance of new ways. Subsequently, in 1813, John and Evan Jones, Baptist missionaries, began to preach to the Cherokees. Methodists also appeared in Cherokee country shortly thereafter. Native beliefs reinforced by the earthquakes existed in uneasy tension with Protestant doctrines.[5]

Missionaries often believed that Indians needed to be saved as much from the pernicious influences of godless white traders and settlers on the frontier as from eternal damnation. In 1817 Isaac McCoy, a Baptist minister, was assigned to the Miami Indians in Ohio. He conceived the idea of an Indian state west of the Mississippi River where Indians could be removed

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[4] R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, 1983).

[5] William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones* (Princeton, 1990); and William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789–1839* (New Haven, 1984).

from those influences, and he lobbied for it throughout his lifetime. He
ministered to the Shawnee and Potawatomi in Kansas and advocated tire-
lessly for the protection of Indians from contact with frontier white settlers
and traders, whom he considered godless and corrupting influences.[6]

In the southeastern United States, the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws,
Creeks, and Seminoles were large and still militarily powerful tribes in the
early nineteenth century. They lived in settled villages, where women raised
corn, beans, and squash, and men hunted deer. Their traditions centered on
ideas of personal power gained through encounters with spiritual beings
and on ceremonies that maintained a balance among people within com-
munities and between communities and the environment. Creek healers
passed sacred knowledge on to apprentices in ritual ways. The Cherokees
and Creeks had green corn ceremonies that ritually restored society to an
appropriate order during the spring. People swept trash from their houses,
put out old fires and kindled new ones, and settled disagreements. They
performed dances that encouraged the ripening of the corn. The Choctaws
considered the sun as the great motivating force in the world and fire its
physical manifestation on earth. These beliefs were embodied in distinc-
tive funeral rites in which the body of the deceased was exposed to the
elements on a raised platform until the flesh had decayed. The bones were
then cleaned by a ritual specialist called a "bone picker" and kept by the
family until they were interred in a mound. Choctaws also believed that
individuals could gain personal power through visionary experiences while
alone in the wilderness.

Choctaw warriors fought with Andrew Jackson against the British at the
Battle of New Orleans, which ended the War of 1812. At virtually the
same time, the Creek nation, a confederacy of tribal villages, engaged in
a disastrous civil war between leaders who espoused traditional spiritual
beliefs and those who argued for armed resistance to American domination.
Andrew Jackson dealt the militant Creeks a disastrous defeat at the Battle
of Horseshoe Bend in 1813, but the whole nation suffered when its leaders
were forced to cede much of their territory in Alabama. Such was the nature
of the deepening rift between the power of traditional spiritual beliefs and
the reality of American military and political power in the early republic.

The Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws were missionized in the early
1800s by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The
organization, sponsored by the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches,
was established in 1810. The American Board established missions among
the Cherokees (1817), the Choctaws (1818), and the Chickasaws (1823).

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[6] George A. Schultz, *An Indian Canaan: Isaac McCoy and the Vision of an Indian State*
(Norman, OK, 1972).

The Creek tribal government adamantly refused to accept missionaries into its territory, but Choctaw and Cherokee leaders requested missionary schools to educate their children so they could deal with the pressures of white settlement and federal policy that threatened their lands and governments.

For the Choctaw missionaries, a primary concern was the use of the Choctaw language. The question was "to teach, or to preach?" Was it best to teach Indians English first so they could hear and read the gospel and be subject to its power, or should the missionaries learn the language and translate the gospel in order to convert the Indians first so they might be more easily civilized? The American Board initially supported the translation of the gospel into native languages, but it soon reversed itself when confronted with the time, effort, and lack of results that that policy entailed. At the Choctaw mission, however, Cyrus Byington had made significant progress in learning the Choctaw language with the help of David Folsom, son of a Choctaw mother and a white father. Byington, Loring Williams, and Alfred Wright developed degrees of fluency in Choctaw. Byington developed a grammar and spelling book for the language so the missionaries could teach Choctaw literacy in the mission schools, and by 1823 he was preaching fairly regularly in Choctaw.

In 1823–24, the Choctaws were also visited by Methodist circuit riders, and Cyrus Kingsbury, head of the Choctaw mission, noted a new spirit of religious fervor in the neighborhoods of the Elliot and Mayhew missionary stations in Mississippi. The fervor was inspired by the Methodist style of preaching in outdoor camp meetings that attracted hundreds of people and entailed very emotional expressions of religious inspiration. Although the American Board missionaries could sniff rather contemptuously at "Methodist conversions," Alexander Talley, the lead Methodist preacher, claimed hundreds of them in a single year in contrast to the handful that the American Board could report. The Methodist success pointed to one general theme in the history of Indians and Christianity, that is, Indian people responded much more positively to highly emotional styles of religious experience than they did to the teaching of strict Christian dogma. The elements of the Methodist camp meeting that appealed to them were the singing of hymns, the opportunity for individuals to deliver lengthy testimony in Choctaw about their lives and religious experiences, and the general social activity that resulted from several days spent together camping in the woods. The American Board missionaries realized the effectiveness of this format and adopted it themselves.[7]

[7] Clara Sue Kidwell, *Choctaws and Missionaries in Mississippi 1818–1918* (Norman, OK, 1995).

Such missionary interest was in line with American policy to assimilate American Indians, which was embodied in the Civilization Act of 1819. It allocated $10,000 to "benevolent organizations" to teach Indians to live in a civilized manner, that is, men should farm, women should spin and weave cloth, the children should learn to read, write, and cipher. Benevolent organizations were largely Christian missionary associations, such as the American Board, that ventured into the wilderness of Indian country to offer Christian salvation to the heathens. Christian churches thus became agents of the U.S. government in attempts to subdue and assimilate Indian nations. The American Board found Indian communities where leaders were anxious to learn the ways of American society so that they could deal with the new circumstances in which they found themselves. Missionaries found themselves under intense pressure to establish schools where they could educate Indian children to read, write, cipher, and learn about the larger world through geography lessons. The intent of the leaders was not, however, to adopt Christian beliefs in order to assimilate, but to retain their own lands and governments by proving that they could live like their white neighbors.

The intent of the missions to assimilate Indians into American society ran headlong into the federal policy of removal that Andrew Jackson espoused. He feared the presence of Indian nations as independent entities within American territory, especially when they had openly allied with European powers in previous wars. He cloaked this fear in the rhetoric of salvation for the Indians in territory west of the Mississippi River where they could live undisturbed by American colonization and thus avoid annihilation. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 implemented Jackson's policy. Its passage was vehemently opposed by national leaders of the American Board. Jeremiah Evarts, the board's "Prudential Secretary," wrote a series of editorials, the William Penn letters, that appeared in national newspapers. He denounced the immorality of a policy that stripped Indians of their homes and property and sent them into unknown lands.

Members of the five southeastern tribes suffered the loss of property and possessions, significant loss of life, and physical suffering along the march to their new homes. Kingsbury and Byington, anxious to protect the gains in Christian conversions that they had made, went west with their parishioners. Their gains had been slight, however. Cyrus Kingsbury gave Choctaw church membership as 531 by 1832, out of a total population of about 20,000. Most Choctaws remained pagan by Christian standards. In the West, stickball games, with attendant gambling, were held on church lawns. Creeks and Cherokees continued their green corn ceremonies. Beliefs in witchcraft were widespread.

In the Great Lakes region, the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Potawatomis had long been exposed to European influence in the fur trade, but they retained their beliefs in the *Manitou*, the source of spiritual power in the world, the *Windigo*, or giant cannibal who lurked in the woods to turn the unwary hunter into a cannibal, and the *Midewiwin*, the healing lodge that could restore health to an individual who was sick and could ensure its practitioners a state of *pimidaziwin*, an ideal condition of well-being.

The primary influence was Catholicism. Fr. Frederick Baraga established missions in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota by 1844. Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians also had some churches in the Great Lakes region, but Catholic missions accounted for the greatest activity. In response to changing circumstances, tribal members, always keenly attuned to the significance of dreams as sources of information from the spirit world, initiated a new dream dance ceremony using drums, a convention learned from neighboring Dakota people. The Drum Dance gained popularity in the latter part of the nineteenth century as removals forced Chippewa people onto the White Earth reservation in 1864 and loss of land from the allotment of the reservation further disrupted community life.

The tribes on the Great Plains found their hunting grounds invaded early in the nineteenth century. The Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804–5 and Zebulon Pike's exploration of the southern plains in 1806 brought about the first major American encounters with plains tribes such as the Sioux, the Shoshone, the Comanche, and the Kiowa. These explorations expanded scientific knowledge of the new terrain of the Louisiana Purchase, and Thomas Jefferson thought that the plains would offer a place where Indians could be moved so they could continue their traditional lifestyles free from the negative impacts of contact with white society. Missionaries did not accompany these first expeditions, nor did the explorers record details of Indian religious beliefs, but missionary interest in American Indians remained strong.

The inevitable cultural conflict between white settlers anxious for land and the plains tribes whose territories provided the basis for their spiritual beliefs led to battles and bloodshed. On the plains, young men sought visions that asserted their status as adults and warriors. In American Indian cultures, dreams, visions, and initiation into secret societies marked the transition from childhood to adult responsibility. On the plains, that responsibility was associated with defense of one's kin group and community. Young men expressed their individuality in raids on enemy camps and, in the American period, raids on encroaching settlers, railroad building parties, and American forts along key immigrant trails.

The Osages were the most powerful tribe on the central plains who accepted Christian missionaries. They lived in settled villages and controlled

a vast territory between the Arkansas and Red Rivers. Their elaborate cosmology oriented them toward the sky world, the earth, and the rivers and established a system of kinship groups (clans) that controlled various parts of a ceremonial complex that timed their agricultural and hunting activities and kept them integrated as a tribe. The elaborate ceremonies that they practiced on a regular basis maintained their sense of order in a world where all things manifested the great spiritual power *Wakonda.*

By the early nineteenth century, they were coming under increasing attack from tribes east of the Mississippi River that were experiencing the disruptions of white settlement. As warfare with eastern tribes increased, the Osage looked for white allies, and in 1821 they accepted the presence of missionaries from the United Foreign Mission Society (UFMS). It was soon clear, however, that the Osages wanted to learn about the white man's ways in order to better deal with their Indian enemies rather than to accept Christian salvation.

While the UFMS missionaries labored to convert the Osages through their preaching and positive example, Catholic priests visited frequently to hold mass. In 1847, a Jesuit mission and school were established among the Osages. Catholicism appealed to Indians much more than Protestantism because of its use of ritual, icons, and medals, all of which reflected ceremonial practices among tribes. The religious trappings of Catholicism, rather than its dogma, appealed to Osages.[8]

The neighboring Pawnees, with whom the Osages waged almost continuous warfare, had a unique ritual, the morning star ceremony, that epitomized their cosmological belief in their relationship to the star world. The ceremony involved the ritual killing of a young female captive and burial of her body on the prairie. The captive symbolized the morning star, progenitor of the Pawnees in their origin story, and the burial symbolically ensured the fertility of the land and growth of crops in the next planting season. The Pawnee built elaborate earth lodges, and because they, like the Osages, both planted corn and hunted buffalo, they regulated their yearly subsistence cycle through a ceremonial cycle.

The Pawnee world was disrupted, however, by raids from their Sioux neighbors, the decline of the great buffalo herds, and European diseases. Their ceremonial cycle began to break down as the human sacrifice in the morning star ceremony was halted. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Pawnee religious beliefs had been undermined by famine, loss of population, and relocation of their villages under pressure by Indian enemies and white encroachment on the plains. The last recorded sacrifice

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[8] Willard H. Rollings, *Unaffected by the Gospel: Osage Resistance to the Christian Invasion (1673–1906): A Cultural Victory* (Albuquerque, 2004).

of a victim in the morning star ceremony occurred in 1838, in response to the widespread smallpox epidemic of 1837–38 that devastated the populations of many tribes on the central and northern plains. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established a mission among the Pawnees on the Loup River in 1834, but by 1847 it was clear that the Pawnees were preoccupied with survival rather than Christian conversion, and the mission was abandoned.

The Sun Dance, ubiquitous among the northern plains tribes, gave kinship groups the opportunity to display their social status when they sponsored their young men as participants in the dance. The Sun Dance was held in June during the rutting season of the buffalo and the coming together of scattered family groups that had wintered individually on the plains. It marked a renewal of life, the beginning of the buffalo hunting season, and the social reintegration of the tribal community. It was the individual vision quest writ large in a communal setting where young men demonstrated their valor by tethering themselves to a central pole with rawhide thongs tied to small sticks inserted into their chest muscles, or by dragging buffalo skulls attached to their back muscles in a similar fashion. The object was to tear loose from the bindings and to receive visions from the sun as a sign of power in battle and hunting.

The Sun Dance also marked the spiritual bond between the buffalo and plains people. The term *wakan* in the Siouan languages of the northern plains expressed spiritual power manifest in natural phenomena such as winds, the sun, the moon, the endurance of rocks, and the buffalo, *wakan tanka*.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the American idea of Manifest Destiny, itself a belief of mythic proportions, propelled western expansion and settlement across the Great Plains. Father Pierre de Smet, a Belgian Jesuit priest, became a leader of Catholic efforts among Indians on the western plains. He had established a Jesuit post at Florissant, near St. Louis, in 1823, with the commitment to work among the Indians; and he established a mission among the Potawatomi in 1838 at Council Bluffs in Iowa. De Smet established a strong Catholic presence on the northern plains, traveling extensively among the Blackfeet, Crows, Flatheads, and Nez Perce, and establishing several missions until he left the field in 1846. De Smet's efforts left a lasting legacy of Catholicism among the Sioux, the Flathead, and the Nez Perce.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions extended its reach to the tribes on the West Coast in 1836 when Marcus and Narcissa Whitman arrived near Walla Walla, Washington, to establish a mission for the Cayuse and Nez Perce tribes. Tribes in the high plateau region of central Idaho, Oregon, and Washington held highly individualistic beliefs

in the power of spiritual forces in their environment. They hunted and lived off the lush vegetation of the prairies. The spirits of the environment gave men power through sought visions and unexpected encounters. As peaceful people with access to rich natural resources, the plateau tribes led settled lives. Marcus Whitman was, however, not only a missionary, but he also became a guide for subsequent parties of American settlers along the Oregon Trail. This American advance began to upset the balance of life for Indian people, and the autocratic ways of his fellow missionary Henry Spalding did not endear him to the local Indians. In 1847 a cholera epidemic devastated Indian communities in the area. Cayuse Indians saw the mission as the source of the disease, and the Whitmans and twelve members of the mission family were killed.

As American expansion continued, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 brought the Navajo and Pueblo people under American jurisdiction. The Pueblos had experienced Spanish domination and Catholic missionary influence since the early seventeenth century. As peaceful agriculturalists, they maintained a delicate balance with their desert environment. The main body of Pueblos was located along the Rio Grande River, and they irrigated and cultivated communal crops. There were also four Pueblos west of the Rio Grande (Hopi, Acoma, Zuni, and Laguna) where dry farming led to individual family farm plots. All the Pueblo peoples, however, shared highly structured kinship groups based on clans and yearly cycles of ceremonies conducted by organized groups that controlled secret knowledge. Ritual observances gave the sun the energy to make his yearly trip across the sky from one solstice point to another and thus ensured the change of seasons, the coming of rain, and the growth of crops. Such beliefs were strongly antithetical to Catholic beliefs in the supremacy of God's will and the Catholic dogma that made pride, that is, a belief that humans were equal to God, a sin. Long before the time that the Pueblos came under American control in 1848, the Pueblo people along the Rio Grande River had amalgamated aspects of Spanish Christianity, that is, worship of various saints, into their traditional ceremonial cycles, but they remained in their own lands and still based their religious practices in the landscape and in rituals that governed their seasonal agricultural activities.

The Navajo, however, had a worldview strikingly different from that of the Pueblos. Although their own origin story (similar to that of the Pueblos) said that they emerged from below the earth, archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests that they migrated from the interior of Alaska. Sheep raising, which they learned from early Spaniards, was a primary subsistence activity. Although they raised extensive stands of corn in the bottom of Canyon de Chelly, they left the corn largely to tend itself as they moved their flocks from winter pasture in low-lying desert areas to summer

pasture in mountain meadows on a yearly basis. Their relationship with the spiritual world was shaped by the extremes of their desert environment. Gladys Reichard, an anthropologist who worked extensively on Navajo reservations, described the Navajos as a society shaped by the loneliness of individual self-sufficiency. Dreams gave individuals knowledge of the spiritual world, and elaborate group ceremonies known as chants or sings, involving songs, dances, sand paintings, and ritual purification, had the power to restore balance and harmonious relationships between the human and the spiritual worlds. When those relationships were disturbed by disrespect or inappropriate behavior (even if unintentional), misfortune or physical illness would result. The chants thus were the foundation of the Navajo belief system and gave singers the power to achieve the ideal state of human society known as *hozho* (translated in English as "beauty").

After the American assumption of jurisdiction, Navajos were subject to attempts to confine them to reservations; and when they continued to raid white settlements, they were forcibly removed in 1864 to the Bosque Redondo, a military post in southern New Mexico. The "long walk" led to the deaths of many Navajos in the harsh environment of the Bosque, and it is a deeply painful memory in the history of the contemporary Navajo tribe. Despite the experience, Navajos remembered and continued the practice of their traditional chants. Despite American policies and changing economic factors around them, Navajo chants provided a sense of stability for many families.

In California, the discovery of gold in 1848 and the rapid influx of white settlers had a devastating impact on the native population. Already disrupted by the Spanish policy of confining them to Catholic missions where disease and malnutrition took an enormous toll on their populations, they were further affected by the greed of miners and settlers, which led to a de facto campaign of genocide against Indians during the mid-nineteenth century. California tribes were generally very small, numbering perhaps two or three hundred people at most, and widely dispersed in mountain canyons and river valleys. Their yearly ceremonial cycle was dominated by so-called world renewal rites, in which the members of the community made a ritual march around the boundaries of their territory, naming significant sites where spirits had been encountered and stamping the earth in order to firm it. These rituals thus defined tribal territory and identity. With the influx of white settlers and the search for gold, often violent disruption destroyed many Indian communities. For some that survived, for example, the Pomo groups in the central coastal region, the traditional world renewal ceremonies took a new form. Beginning in 1870, a number of tribes in California and Oregon had found a new way to preserve their identity. Their beliefs were inspired by the visions of a Paiute man, Tavaibo.

If people would dance, their dead ancestors would be restored to life, and game would return to the land. For tribes that had been subject to genocidal assaults by white settlers and whose populations had shrunk dramatically, Tavaibo's teachings had significant appeal; but when the dance failed to effect its objective, it died out after about a year, although the Earth Lodge Dance and the Bola Maru persisted as world renewal ceremonies among the Pomo tribes in California well into the twentieth century. The 1870 Ghost Dance was an early variation of the Ghost Dance movement on the plains started by Wovoka in 1890.[9]

By the early twentieth century, many California tribes were totally gone. The Yahi were extinct except for a single man, Ishi, who became a living exhibit for anthropologists at the University of California. Nevertheless, the traditions of world renewal ceremonies, involving dances and the retracing of paths along places where spiritual encounters had happened in the path or where certain villages had been established, still grounded some native communities.

After the Civil War, President Ulysses S. Grant implemented his Peace Policy and essentially turned the administration of Indian reservations over to religious organizations. The corruption of federal Indian agents, part of the larger evidence of graft and corruption in the American political patronage system, led to his action. Congress established a Board of Indian Commissioners, representatives of religious and philanthropic organizations, which was to oversee the policy. The board was exclusively Protestant in its makeup, reflecting a strong anti-Catholic bias in American society in the late nineteenth century. The Catholic Church, which ministered to some eighty churches, primarily in the West, established a Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in 1874 to protect its interests, and Rev. William H. Ketcham, its director, finally became a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1912.

The assignment of missionary groups to reservations was arbitrary. Grant's policy originated in his support for Quaker missions to Indian tribes because of the long history of Quaker-Indian relations and the Quaker commitment to peace. The long-suffering Pawnees, among others, were assigned Quaker agents, but neither the agents nor the U.S. Army could protect the Pawnee from marauding Sioux warriors. Grant's policy expanded to a general acceptance of religious organizations as agents of American policy. At the Pine Ridge agency in South Dakota, Indians found themselves under the control of Episcopalian priests, although they had requested that they could have their black robes, that is, Catholic priests,

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[9] Cora Alice Du Bois, *The 1870 Ghost Dance. Anthropological Records, 3:1* (Berkeley, 1939).

back. Ultimately, Lutheran, Methodist, Dutch Reformed, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, United Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Christian Union denominations were charged with serving as Indian agents on reservations throughout the West.[10]

The Peace Policy failed partly because of missionary frustration with the seeming intransigence of Indians in the face of Christian teaching and partly because religious denominations were reluctant to take on the financial obligations of serving Indian communities. By 1882 religious denominations were no longer appointing Indian agents, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was once again firmly in control of reservation agencies. In 1883, the bureau established the Religious Crimes Code, specifically forbidding the practice of the Sun Dance and the giveaway, a ceremony that affirms family status by giving gifts to the attendees who are present, and authorizing agents to use force and imprisonment to stop any practices that they considered immoral, subversive, or contrary to civilization.

By the late nineteenth century, American Indian tribes had suffered the impacts of American Indian policies designed to destroy them entirely or to assimilate individuals into American society. Tribal communities, living on their land, drawing cultural and spiritual identity from it, and drawing their individual identities from close-knit kinship relations, faced an American society characterized by an attitude of rugged individualism. Railroads crisscrossed the country. The great buffalo herds that had sustained plains tribes were decimated. Many Indians saw the slaughter of thousands of buffalo for their hides, the meat left to rot on the ground as Indians starved. Indian religious practices came under direct attack in the directives of the Office of Indian Affairs to agents to ban the practice of Indian dances.

In the Indian Territory, the attack on Indian culture was primarily on the communal landholding practices of the tribes. The federal policy of allotment, that is, breaking tribal holdings into individual sections of land and distributing them to individual family groups, imposed the idea of private property on members of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole tribes. Some elements in the tribes resisted. The Cherokee Keetowah Society, which had existed as a bastion of cultural beliefs and practices since before the Civil War, formed to oppose allotment. The original Keetowah Society was primarily political in its opposition to cultural change. Under the leadership of Redbird Smith in the late 1890s, the society revived traditions of the stomp dance and sacred fire that had largely died out, and took the name Nighthawk Keetowah. Some five thousand of

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[10] Robert H. Kelleher, Jr., *American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy, 1869–82* (Lincoln, 1983).

Smith's followers refused to register for individual allotments, and Smith refused to sign the agreement by which the Cherokee national government accepted allotment.

In the Creek Nation, a group of full bloods under the leadership of Chitto Harjo (Crazy Snake) also resisted allotment. Although not overtly religious in their sentiments, they insisted on the cultural integrity associated with communal ownership of land. Their resistance led to violent confrontation with the U.S. Army. Harjo disappeared mysteriously before a final confrontation, and the Snake movement waned after the First World War.

In Washington Territory, where the lushness of the environment and abundance of marine life made it easy to acquire material goods, the potlatch was the traditional ceremony. Family groups distributed great quantities of goods to other families to display their status. The real display, however, was of songs, dances, and names that were the personal property of a family because of their ancestors' encounters with and control of spiritual forces. Federal agents saw such ceremonies as pauperizing whole families, not realizing that the potlatch system was a reciprocal one that kept goods circulating within the society. The potlatch involved tribes in both Washington and Canada, and in 1921 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police broke up "the last potlatch" on Vancouver Island after Tom Cramer had distributed sewing machines, blankets, guitars, sacks of flour, and other goods. Items seized from potlatches also included ritual regalia and paraphernalia that were highly prized by museums and private collectors and that ultimately found homes in some of the major museums in America.

Although federal directives went out to agency officers, people went about their lives, and they found covert ways to carry out traditional activities. When the potlatch was forbidden, people from the Makah reservation on the Olympic peninsula went to Tatoosh Island, a rock pinnacle at the mouth of the Strait of Juan De Fuca, for birthday parties and Christmas parties that involved the distribution of gifts.

The coastal Salish tribes in the Puget Sound region maintained their spirit dances, in which people danced to express the spiritual power that they had received in individual vision quests or highly emotional states such as sickness or sadness.

In 1881, potlatch ceremonies and spirit dances were joined by the Indian Shaker Church, which was formed around the teachings of John Slocum, a member of the Squaxin band of Indians living on the shore of Puget Sound. Slocum appeared dead after a logging accident, but during his wake he returned to life and told those present that he had been turned back from the gates of heaven by Jesus, who told him he must go back to teach Indians how to live a good life. Jesus offered him an array of seven religions to choose from, and Slocum chose a ritual that involved candles, bells, and

singing. Basic tenets of his new religion were that people must love one another and must not drink or smoke. He also said that Indians did not need to read the Bible because he could reveal what the Bible said.

During a second illness the following year, Slocum again appeared close to death. His wife, Mary, went to the beach, where she was overcome by a fit of shaking and then returned to the house to shake and weep over her husband. Other people that she touched also began to shake, and Slocum began to recover. This episode established the healing power of his teachings. He began to preach that Indian doctors were bad and that Indians should be healed through the power of his teachings. After Slocum's death, his teachings were carried on by others on the Squaxin reservation. The Shaker religion became strongly associated with healing. The local Presbyterian and Congregational missionaries and the Bureau of Indian Affairs agent attempted to suppress the church, but with the support of a white lawyer it assumed a quasi-legal foundation in 1892 and was formally incorporated in 1910.

The rituals of the Shaker church centered on the use of hand bells, candles, singing, and ritual brushing away of sins. The sins could be caught within the mouths of the bells and taken outside the church. The Shaker Church represents a syncretism of Christian and nativist beliefs that gained widespread acceptance among northwest coast tribes in the early twentieth century and has persisted into the twenty-first century.[11]

On the plains, warfare and the spread of European diseases had devastated Indian communities. Commissioners of Indian Affairs issued directives forbidding the practice of Indian ceremonies, reasoning that ceremonies that often lasted for several days kept the Indians from attending to their farms. The Sun Dance was specifically forbidden because of its aspect of self-mutilation.

The ostensible salvation for Indians was the Ghost Dance. Wovoka (whose English name was Jack Wilson), a Paiute man living in Nevada, had a vision during an eclipse of the sun in 1890. He said he saw God in the vision and learned that if Indian people would do the dance that he prescribed, the buffalo would return, the spirits of the dead would come back to life, and the old way of life would be restored. The Ghost Dance had echoes of the Sun Dance, but now the situation was desperate. News of Wovoka's vision and teachings spread rapidly among demoralized tribal people in the northern plains. The Ghost Dance became a new religious phenomenon that promised a restoration of a previous world that had existed before contact with Europeans.

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[11] H. G. Barnett, *Indian Shakers: A Messianic Cult of the Pacific Northwest* (Carbondale, IL, 1957).

The Ghost Dance was a pivotal moment for renewal of Indian ways, and the massacre of a band of some three hundred Minneconjou Sioux Ghost Dance adherents at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota was a devastating blow to tribal dreams, not because it disproved the ideal but because it demonstrated the intention of the U.S. government to destroy Indian cultures. The massacre at Wounded Knee and the killings of Sioux leaders Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse by American troops (and Indian men inducted by the Office of Indian Affairs as police) were evidence of the American intent.[12]

Despite the intent, variations of the Ghost Dance sustained Indian cultures into the twentieth century. Parker McKenzie, a Kiowa living in western Oklahoma, promoted a "feather dance" that maintained the vision of the Ghost Dance as a form of Kiowa culture. McKenzie promoted his dance not to restore the dead but to reach an accommodation between the Kiowa and American society.

In the face of federal attempts to suppress traditional religions and educate Indian children in the ways of white, Christian, American society, Indians found ways of syncretizing Christianity with their beliefs. Although poverty, despair, and boarding school education drove many Indian people to reject traditional beliefs entirely, others found ways of integrating their customs with Christian practices. The Pueblo peoples of the Southwest had long experience in finding places for Catholic saints in their rituals, where they coexisted peacefully with kachinas.

On the plains, a Lakota (Sioux) holy man, Black Elk, witnessed the aftermath of the massacre at Wounded Knee. Although he was born in the 1850s and grew up fully Lakota in his beliefs and his profound visionary experiences, nevertheless, he became a convert to Catholicism and indeed a catechist, dedicated to converting other Lakotas to the Catholic Church. Indeed, his picture appeared on the cover of *The Indian Sentinel*, the publication of the Board of Catholic Indian missions. At the same time he adhered to his belief in the power of his visions to cure people of sickness. His biography, *Black Elk Speaks*, originally published in 1931, was reissued in 1961 and became a popular text for Americans seeking new forms of spiritual experience. The biography makes no mention of his Catholicism, but to Black Elk, being Lakota and Catholic was an exercise in religious syncretism that gave him two sources of religious power.

Charles Eastman was another voice expressing the persistence of American Indian religions. Eastman, a Dakota Sioux, whose mixed-blood mother was the daughter of a famous white American painter, was educated

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[12] James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance: The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Chicago, 1965).

in missionary schools and at Dartmouth College and ultimately received a medical degree from Boston College. He treated the few survivors of the Wounded Knee massacre. He published a number of influential works on Dakota life. His book *Soul of the Indian* (1911) was a highly romanticized account of traditional Dakota beliefs, and also an attempt to place Indian religion on an equal ground with Christianity.

A well-known example of syncretism and revitalization is the Yaqui Deer Dance, a ceremony that integrates traditional Yaqui beliefs in its power to repel enemies into the Christian drama of the death and rebirth of Christ. Dancers representing Christ and the devil stage a ritual battle at Easter, and Christ's triumph marks the beginning of the Yaqui new year. Traditional Yaqui ceremonies had been suppressed by the government in their Mexican homeland in Sonora in the late nineteenth century, and the Yagui had been dispossessed of their territory. Between 1887 and 1910 a number of them had settled in southern Arizona, and when their status as political refugees was established in 1910, they revived their most important ceremonial complex, their spring celebration based on their version of the Christian Passion Play that they had learned from early Spanish Catholic missionaries. In their version, deer dancers play an essential role along with the devil dancers and *matachini*, or soldiers, who overcome them in the ritualized battle of good and evil. The deer dancers ground the Christianized elements of the ceremonies in the natural cycles of hunting and farming that were the basis for Yaqui culture. The juxtaposition of Easter, Christ's death and rebirth, and the promise of fertility in the spring season is thus a powerful syncretism.[13]

By the early twentieth century, the Office of Indian Affairs had complete control of American Indian people. The office had issued a number of directives forbidding the practice of Indian ceremonies. Indians should not ignore their crops to spend days in ceremonies. The self-mutilation in the Sun Dance must cease.

The issue for American Indians and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the late nineteenth century was the status of Indian societies in an American society where scientific rationalism was an ideal and economic development was a reality. The Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 pointed up the importance of American Indians and other primitive people throughout the world to demonstrate the progress of American society toward civilization. The BIA received regular requests from civic groups for demonstrations of Indian dances. For befuddled BIA commissioners, the dilemma was whether to encourage the continuation of Indian customs

[13] Muriel Thayer Painter, *With Good Heart: Yaqui Beliefs and Ceremonies in Pascua Village* (Tucson, 1986).

and ceremonies to satisfy the public or to suppress such practices to complete the assimilation of Indians into American society. At the Columbian Exposition, a Quakiutl Indian village shared the grounds with a display of clothing and canned goods made by Indian women and photos of Indian students at the BIA who operated schools demonstrating their skills in mechanical arts, reading, and writing.

In the Southeast in the post-Civil War period, Indians were largely invisible as the southern dichotomy of black and white hardened. Many small eastern tribes in New England and the mid-Atlantic had suffered the disruption of war and white settlement and had moved to new locations or formed new communities with other tribes. Although tracing their identities is difficult, they persisted as discrete communities through the nineteenth century and began to assert a distinctive Indian identity in the late nineteenth century. The Lumbee Indians of North Carolina, although not recognized by the U.S. government, are a prime example of the amalgamation of Christianity into an Indian identity. Although their historical origins are obscure, by the time of the Civil War approximately six thousand people concentrated in the swamps of southeastern North Carolina along the Lumber River identified themselves as Indians. Because they did not have a tribal name or language, they were known by surrounding non-Indian communities as Scuffletown Indians, after the name of their central settlement. They attended Baptist and Methodist churches along with whites. After the Civil War, however, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South voted to exclude blacks and free persons of color from its congregations, and its Indian members established their own churches. Although theologically allied with mainstream Methodism in the early twentieth century, the Lumbee churches, as well as Baptist Churches, became centers of the separate communities that composed the tribe.[14] Although strong kinship ties bound communities together and family was the primary source of Indian identity, community location and church membership were also integral to identity.

In the Southwest, military men and amateur ethnographers gave detailed accounts of Indian ceremonies. Although army physician John Bourke wrote with fascinated horror about the Moqui (Hopi) Snake Dance, in which dancers carried live snakes in the hands and teeth, such accounts appeared also in the popular press, and tourists flocked via the railroads

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[14] The term "Lumbee" was not formally used by the state of North Carolina until 1953. Previously Indians had been generally recognized as Croatan or Cherokee, or by specific locations, that is, Indians of Person County. The federal government used the term in the legislation in 1956 that acknowledged the existence of the tribe, but denied its rights to special services.

to observe the exotic ceremonies of the Pueblo and Navajo Indians. They dodged the cans of food thrown to the crowds by Kachina dancers, men who masked and dressed themselves as Kachinas in order to embody these spirits who were essential to Hopi life. Tourists did not realize that the Hopi considered snakes as their messengers to the spirits of the earth who caused the corn crops to grow and the rains to come. The dance was an essential part of an elaborate cycle of rituals that maintained the balance between the Hopi people and the spiritual world.

In the southern plains and the Southwest, a new native religion emerged in the form of peyote, a potent cactus that gave people access to a new form of seeking spiritual knowledge. Peyote grows only in the Rio Grande River Valley. Its chemical composition of powerful alkaloids alters sensory perception and the psychological state of mind. The Mescalero Apache learned about peyote in 1870 and used it in curing practices. Members of the Kiowa Tribe learned about it from the Mescalero in 1886 and passed it on to Cheyennes, Delawares, and Poncas. The Comanches got peyote when a Comanche man married an Apache woman, and Quanah Parker became an advocate for its use, traveling to a number of tribes – Arapaho, Ponca, Otoe, Pawnee, and Osage – to introduce the new ritual. In 1895 John Wilson (Caddo-Delaware) learned about peyote and spread his knowledge, and in 1914 Jonathan Koshaway incorporated the Church of the Firstborn in Oklahoma to promote the use of peyote. The cactus buttons embodied the spiritual force of Father Peyote who inspired songs; and road men, specialists in the practice of ceremonies, conducted ceremonies in Indian communities.

Despite tribal variations, there was a pattern to peyote ceremonies. They took place from sundown to sunup in a closed structure or tipi. They involved song cycles. A woman brought water to the participants at midnight, and a bird spirit hovered over the water. The ceremony ended at dawn with a meal of dried meat and pounded corn. Some adherents viewed the symbolic elements of the ceremony in a highly Christian context, equating the woman who brought the water with the Virgin Mary, the water bird spirit with the Holy Ghost, and the ceremonial meal as a kind of communion. The peyote itself, as a way to new knowledge, took on sacramental qualities.

Even with some Christian overlay, the peyote religion was anathema to federal bureaucrats and missionaries alike. It was equated with the use of alcohol in terms of its behavioral effects, and it was thought to promote the sexual immorality and "degrading dances" that remained as signs of Indian paganism. Although the form of peyote ceremonialism differed from tribe to tribe, it offered a new way of accessing visionary knowledge for people who were demoralized by the confinement of reservation life. It was not

universally accepted, however. Among the Kiowa tribe, it met opposition from the keepers of the Ten Grandmothers, the traditional medicine bundles that were considered repositories of spiritual knowledge. Pueblo leaders of religious societies also rejected the new religion. It spread, however, among younger people who had often attended government boarding schools and learned new ideas from each other.

Federal officials banned peyote ceremonies, but in 1918 James Mooney, an ethnographer for the Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnography, managed to get the peyote religion protected by incorporating it as a religion, the Native American Church, and giving it First Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution. The conflict of Indian spiritual beliefs and American understanding of organized, dogmatic religion was resolved, albeit in a legalistic manner.[15]

The practice of traditional ceremonies, particularly in the pueblos of the Southwest, remained a strong and distinctive part of Indian culture. Although Catholic saints' feast days had been integrated into the ceremonial cycles of the eastern Pueblos, the Hopis to the west still practiced the Snake Dance and clowning ceremonies that included mock sexual intercourse that promoted the fertility of the land. Although they were imbued with deep cultural significance, these dances represented to missionaries the persistence of paganism and the failure of Indians to adapt to Christian civilization.

In 1921 Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles Burke issued a directive, Circular 1665, forbidding the practice of Indian ceremonies and dances. It was aimed particularly at the Pueblos, but constituted a direct attack on Indian religious practice. In 1922, Burke called a meeting of federal agents and missionaries in Rapid City, South Dakota, to consider the course of the federal policy of assimilation. Recommendations emerged from the meeting that led Burke to modify his circular in 1923 to strongly encourage Indians to give up their dances rather than forbidding them outright, but the intent was still to maintain a strongly assimilationist policy supported by Christian missionary activity.

Pueblo religion came under another form of attack as the federal government sought to justify its seizure of Indian lands. In 1906 the government placed a large tract of land in the mountains near Taos, New Mexico, under the control of the National Park Service and opened it to public use for recreation. The area included Blue Lake, a site considered sacred by members of the Taos Pueblo. An important ceremony in their yearly cycle was held at the lake, but after 1906 they no longer had exclusive access to the site.

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[15] Weston La Barre, *The Peyote Cult* (Norman, OK, 1989).

A survey of American Indian communities in 1923 conducted by the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys of the Interchurch World Movement provided information on the social, economic, and religious conditions on 161 reservations and in other areas with appreciable Indian populations. It reported 597 Protestant mission churches, with 160 white and 268 native ministers and 32,164 members. The largest denominations included Baptist (32 Northern and 114 Southern), Methodist Episcopal North (43) and South (78), and various Presbyterian groups (USA, 125; U.S., 20; United, 4; Reformed, 1; and Cumberland, 15). Other groups represented were Seventh-day Adventists (1 church), Congregational (17), Quaker (8), Lutheran (8), Mennonite (12), Moravian (2), Plymouth Brethren (2), Reformed in America (7), Christian Reformed (5), Reformed in the United States (2), and Wesleyan Methodist (1). The Roman Catholic Church was by far the largest group with 149 missions and 61,456 Indian parishioners.[16]

In 1934, a new commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, reversed federal Indian policy on a large scale. Collier had been a social worker with Indians in the Southwest in the 1920s, and he espoused an almost mystical ideal of American Indian cultures. He admired the communal nature of Indian tribes, their ceremonies that promoted sharing, and their spiritual association with their environment. He reversed the federal policy of giving Indians individual allotments of land and encouraging them to adopt values of private landowners. He lifted bans on Indian ceremonies, although many had indeed been abandoned under previous directives. He made it possible for Indian tribes to adopt constitutions and assert their own forms of self-government. Collier's policies were controversial among government bureaucrats and Indian leaders who had followed the path of acculturation and saw no value in maintaining traditional ceremonies and culture. Many rejected the idea of a return to the reservation, particularly in Indian Territory (the state of Oklahoma), where allotment had destroyed communal land bases and opened up significant areas of land for white settlement.

Indian communities in Indian Territory, however, maintained their Christian churches. Baptists and Methodists were predominant, but a small Catholic enclave from Central Mississippi had been established in Ardmore after 1903. Fr. William Ketcham had established the first Catholic congregation in Muskogee in 1892. He had served the Catholic mission among the Choctaws in Mississippi and aided their relocation to Indian Territory in 1903. During his work in Mississippi, he learned the Choctaw language

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[16] G. E. E. Lindquist, *The Red Man in the United States: An Intimate Study of the Social, Economic, and Religious Life of the American Indian* (New York, 1923), 428–30.

and published a translation of the *Baltimore Catechism* in 1916. The use of native languages for hymn singing and preaching became a characteristic of Indian Christian churches in Oklahoma in the twentieth century. There is a certain irony in the fact that although Creek (Muskokee) and Choctaw languages were put into written form by missionaries intent on destroying Indian belief systems, they served as markers of continuing Indian identity through the mechanism of Christian churches.

In 1880 Mennonite missionaries established a post among the Arapaho in the western side of Indian Territory and then extended the effort to the Southern Cheyennes in Indian Territory and the Northern Cheyennes in Montana. The missionary to the Cheyennes, H. R. Voth, was sent to establish a mission among the Hopi in Arizona in 1893. Although Voth worked diligently to bring Hopis to Christianity, he could count only six converts. He also worked to learn their language and record their customs, and he produced a dictionary of Hopi and several ethnographic accounts of the tribe.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, American Indian communities expressed their religious sentiments in a wide variety of ways, from complete acceptance of Christian dogma and rejection of traditional practices to the opposite extreme. The vagaries of federal policy swung from the domination of Christian missionary influences in the early 1920s to the promotion of Indian cultures under the administration of John Collier. Throughout American history up to 1945, however, Indian communities proved remarkably adept at syncretizing Christian and aboriginal beliefs into new practices, such as the peyote religion, that have persisted into the twenty-first century.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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18

WHY MUSLIMS MATTER TO AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY, 1730−1945

EDWARD E. CURTIS IV

Long before the American Revolution, Muslims were a vital presence in the thirteen colonies and throughout the Americas. Though Muslim explorers from North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula may have been among the first Mediterranean peoples to arrive in the Americas, it was slaves from sub-Saharan Africa who composed the first significant population of Muslim Americans. No sidebar to United States history, Muslims at home and abroad became a vital symbolic force in national debates over slavery, the defining of American political identity, the shaping of evangelical Christianity, and the emergence of American consumer culture. As a religious and for the most part racial minority, Muslim Americans in nineteenth- and twentieth-century history helped to define the center of cultural and political power in the United States.

The history of Muslim Americans also illuminates the simultaneous local, national, and global nature of American religious history from the colonial age to the early twentieth century. Shaped by voluntary and coerced travel and resettlement, most Muslims lived both as Americans and as persons whose identities crossed national and regional boundaries. In addition to Muslim slaves from Africa, Muslim practitioners in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included immigrants who came largely from the Balkans and the Middle East, but also from Eastern Europe and South Asia. These were the first Muslims to establish mutual aid societies and other formal Muslim American associations. From the time of the Barbary wars in the early nineteenth century to the Gilded Age, a small number of white Americans also converted to Islam, choosing to cross a dangerous social boundary in so doing.

Then, in between World Wars I and II, thousands of African Americans came to call themselves Muslims and observed a variety of Islamic religious traditions. Their practice of Islam was North American in its adoption of denominational structures, its simultaneous absorption into and resistance to white American Protestant ideas, and its negotiations with

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state power, but it also expressed the influences of and cultivated connections with Southeastern European, Levantine, North African, and South Asian Muslim peoples and cultures. During this period, American Islam was interethnic, transnational, and mostly black.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSLIM SLAVES, 1730–1865

Islam was part of a diverse West African religious complex that arrived in the Americas with African slaves beginning in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Such cultural flows across the black Atlantic were never one-way – that is, the practice of Islam in the United States was not simply a matter of African Muslims enslaved in the United States. Against their will, African Muslims became Americans when they were brought to the Americas. They helped to shape American culture, and their religious practices were also influenced by their presence on American ground. African American Muslim slaves were vital non-Christian interlopers in the cultural discourse that explained the Anglo-American and later white American colonization of North America in religious and specifically Christian terms. They may have been peripheral to the mainstream history of religion in English-speaking North America, but it was from their peripheral social locations that they were consequential: from their position on the outside, they identified, analyzed, and critiqued the center, while also inevitably participating in its perpetuation.

Although it is not clear exactly how many first-generation African American slaves in North America were Muslim, the most reliable estimates have established that they likely numbered in the tens of thousands. Historian Allan Austin has calculated that of all slaves imported to the thirteen colonies and United States between 1711 and 1808, about 5 to 10 percent, perhaps as many as 30,000 to 40,000, were Muslim. Austin argues that many of these Muslims likely arrived in North America from Senegambia, "the source for the most sought-after slaves, especially by American slavers working fast between the end of the Revolutionary War [in 1783] and January 1, 1808," when the international slave trade was made illegal.[1] Historian Michael Gomez has come to the same conclusion, figuring that of the 481,000 first-generation Africans who were brought to British North America, 255,000 – more than half – came from areas in which Muslims lived or ruled. He estimates that thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of African Americans may have had a Muslim upbringing.[2]

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[1] Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles* (New York, 1997), 22.

[2] Michael A. Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge, UK, 2005), 166.

The tens of thousands of Muslim slaves who came to the thirteen colonies and the United States were ethnically diverse, tracing their lineage to the Wolof, Tukolor, Fulbe or Fulani, Vai, Mandingo, Hausa, Nago, Nupe, and Soninke ethnic groups or tribes from the current-day countries of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali, Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria. Some of the most educated Americans of any race or class, the elites among them were connected to global Muslim networks of trade, diplomacy, religious piety, travel, and scholarship. Some Muslim slaves came from nomadic backgrounds, but the majority of them belonged to cultures that embraced literacy, scholarship, calligraphy, poetry, and Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam in which Muslims cultivate personal and intimate relationships with God.

Not all of these Muslims were particularly religious, but many of them were, and some were fully prepared to debate the many Christians who attempted to convert them, as the story of Job Ben Solomon (c. 1701– c. 1773), one of the earliest biographies of an English-speaking black Muslim slave, attests.[3] Job was born Ayuba or Hyuba, Boon Salumena Jallo (Job, Son of Solomon, of the Fulbe tribe) around 1701 in Boonda, also known as Bundu, in the eastern part of the modern country of Senegal. The son of an imam, or religious scholar and leader, Hyuba was trained in Qur'anic Arabic and Islamic studies by his father. He married twice as a teenager and had four children. In 1730, he was on his way to sell two slaves to English traders at a port along the Gambia River when he was himself captured and enslaved. Sent to the English colony of Maryland in North America, Job briefly cultivated tobacco and tended livestock before his identity as an educated man was discovered by James Oglethorpe, a member of the British Parliament and founder of Georgia. He also suffered humiliation at the hands of a white boy who constantly threw dirt on him as he was trying to pray. Job penned a letter in Arabic to his father to seek help, and through a complicated series of events the letter made its way to Oglethorpe, who had it translated into English. In 1733, Oglethorpe, impressed by the literacy of the slave and his determination to return home, purchased his bond, paid for his passage to England, and introduced him to nobles and members of the Royal Court. A religious man, Job prayed, fasted, butchered his own meat according to Muslim dietary rules, and abstained from all alcoholic drinks.

Job also resisted the attempts of Christians to convert him. He read the Arabic translation of the New Testament that various sponsors and friends

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[3] Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the High Priest of Boonda in Africa; Who Was a Slave about Two Years in Maryland; and Afterwards Being Brought to England, Was Set Free, and Sent to His Native Land in the Year 1734* (London, 1734), http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bluett/menu.html (accessed 1 June 2009).

in England gave him, and in his rudimentary English explained that their
doctrine of the Trinity was not explained in the book. The word "trinity"
did not even appear in the New Testament, he noted correctly. Already
familiar with Christian teachings from Africa and well trained in Islamic
studies, Job turned the tables on those trying to proselytize him, explain-
ing that God was not three in number but one. Even Prophet Jesus, who
was born of a virgin and who performed miracles, was not God, he said. Job
warned them against the sin of *shirk*, the association of graven images with
the one God, and he was particularly critical of Roman Catholic mission-
aries in Africa who, he said, practiced idolatry. Around 1734, after success-
fully raising funds to purchase his freedom, Job returned home on a ship
owned by the Royal African Company. Little was heard from him again,
although his biography, one of the earliest published English-language
slave narratives, established him as a key figure in the transnational history
of religion in the Atlantic world of the eighteenth century.[4]

At once, this story is an early example of Christian-Muslim dialogue as
well as a key piece of evidence in understanding one African response to
Christian missionary efforts in the colonial era. Job's biography also illumi-
nates American history as a transoceanic phenomenon. Clearly, any analysis
of Job's religious life that excludes his presence in the Americas, Britain,
and Africa, and his moving across the Atlantic Ocean, fails to explain the
life of this individual and the intersecting worlds that he inhabited. Job's
biography is also important for what it is not. Unlike most slave narratives,
it is not an abolitionist document. Whether Job, as a former slave trader
himself, came to oppose slavery is simply unclear. Certainly his biography
expresses no religious opposition to slavery. Illuminating the theological
encounter of Islam and Christianity in North America, it does not expl-
icitly address the ethical and political challenge of religious life in a slave
society. Such critiques emerged later, as African American religious prac-
titioners became involved in abolitionism and other social reform move-
ments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Unlike Job Ben Solomon, for example, African American Muslim slave
Abd ar-Rahman Ibrahima (c. 1762–1829) mounted a critique of American
Christianity that indicted American Christians for failing to live up to their
ideals. This remarkable person, whose life story became a media sensation
in the nineteenth century and the basis for a full-length film in the twenty-
first century, was born the son of a Muslim notable in Futa Jalon, located
in the contemporary West African nation of Guinea. A member of the
Fulbe ethnic group, the tribe from which Job Ben Solomon also came, Abd
ar-Rahman was educated in both Timbuktu and Jenne, where he learned

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[4] Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic*, 50–62.

to read and write in Arabic. In 1788, during a military campaign to extend the territories controlled by his clan, Abd ar-Rahman was captured and sold into slavery. First taken to the West Indies, he was transported to New Orleans and then up the Mississippi River to Natchez, Mississippi, where he married a Baptist woman, Isabella, and had several children.[5]

Achieving local fame as a "Muslim prince" in the early nineteenth century, Abd ar-Rahman emerged as a national figure in the 1820s. In 1826, he wrote a letter in Arabic to his father requesting that he free him. The letter made its way from one of Mississippi's U.S. senators to the U.S. consul in Morocco, and then to Secretary of State Henry Clay, who agreed to help because he thought the release of the prince might better relations with the North African "Barbary" states against which the United States had fought two wars from 1801 to 1805 and from 1815 to 1816. Clay's confabulation of the West African Muslim "prince" with the North African states was partly a result of the view among slaveholders that Muslim slaves, better educated and more "civilized" than their non-Muslim peers, were from a different ethnic, racial, and religious stock. Some black northerners also found this first-generation African American to be better educated and "superior" to most other Africans in the United States, often conflating racial, religious, and ethnic identities to inscribe Muslim difference. As an 1828 article in New York's *Freedom's Journal*, whose author may have been African American emigrationist John Russwurm, put it, "It must be evident to everyone that the Prince is a man superior to the generality of Africans whom we behold in this country."[6]

Henry Clay, a slaveholder and an advocate of emigration himself, offered to transport Abd ar-Rahman back to Africa, but Abd ar-Rahman was unwilling to leave without his wife and children.[7] In 1828, he set out on a nationwide tour during which he intended to raise the funds necessary to purchase the freedom of his family and buy them passage to Africa. A variety of northern periodicals spun his life story as the tale of a tragic prince who had been wrongly separated from his rightful legacy. As the *Freedom's Journal* said, he was "brought up in luxury and Eastern splendor – but for forty long years compelled to taste the bitter cup of poverty, and slavery."[8] The story inverted American narratives of white captivity in

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[5] Terry Alford, *Prince among Slaves* (New York, 2007); Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook* (New York, 1984), 134–240; and Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic*, 65–83.

[6] "An Afro-American Recalls His Visit to Washington, D.C.," 29 Aug. 1828, 29, as quoted in Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook*, 159, 251n67.

[7] Henry Clay to Andrew Marschalk, 12 January 1828, as quoted in *ibid.*, 196–7.

[8] "An Afro-American Recalls His Visit to Washington, D.C.," as quoted in *ibid.*, 159, 251n67.

North Africa such as Royall Tyler's *Algerine Captive* (1797), introducing the tale of a Muslim prince wrongly held in a Christian land. By evoking the "Eastern splendor" in which the prince had been raised, it also played on Americans' deeply held and increasingly central fantasies about the Muslim Orient as a site of consumer capitalism. As Thomas Gallaudet put it, "His life appears like a romance, and the incidents would seem incredible if the evidence was not so undeniable."[9]

Through its telling, Abd ar-Rahman gained access to some of the country's most powerful political, social, and business leaders and was thrust into the center of various social and political movements, including a burgeoning commercial interest in African goods and markets, abolitionism, and emigrationism, the movement to transport black Americans to Africa. During his tour, Abd ar-Rahman met President John Quincy Adams at the White House, and he was hosted in Boston by the Black Masons, including David Walker, author of the *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829). He also met Massachusetts Congressman Edward Everett, philanthropists and merchants Charles and Arthur Tappan, deaf education pioneer Thomas Gallaudet, and "Star-Spangled Banner" writer Francis Scott Key. Raising funds from the American Colonization Society and Christian missionaries, Abd ar-Rahman allowed colonizationists and evangelicals to claim him as an advocate of these movements. He also gave credence to the idea that English-speaking blacks could represent white business interests in Liberia, as Arthur Tappan's remarks in the *Journal of Commerce* (New York) suggested.[10]

Back home in Mississippi, the partisans of President Adams' political rival, Andrew Jackson, cited Adams' support for the slave to be evidence that the administration was "actually exciting the slaves to revolt, by the same species of arguments which produced the massacre of St. Domingo [Haiti]."[11] For African Americans such as David Walker, the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Haitian Revolution was a sign of a coming American apocalypse in which former slaves would take divine revenge on their captors. For southern whites, the potential for a black revolution in the United States was a constant fear and thus a potent factor in political life.

During his 1828 tour, northern abolitionists, colonizationists, and others welcomed Abd ar-Rahman's critique of slavery as a sinful stain on the soul of America, and they contributed about $3,400 toward the effort

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[9] "Abduhl Rahaman," *New York Journal of Commerce*, 16 October 1828, as quoted in *ibid.*, 175, 254n84.

[10] *Freedom's Journal*, 31 October 1828, 252, as quoted in *ibid.*, 176–8.

[11] Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic*, 78.

to free his family. In 1829, he departed with his wife Isabella from Norfolk, Virginia, for Liberia, the American colony in West Africa populated by African American freedmen and women. Some of his children arrived in Liberia in 1830 while others stayed in the United States.

The very marginality of Abd ar-Rahman's story to the main plot of American religious history unveils the centers of religious, social, and political power in the antebellum United States. Writing in Arabic on demand, Abd ar-Rahman used his advanced education to set himself apart from other slaves and cultivate relationships with powerful people. Telling the story of his royal lineage, he separated himself from other people of African descent – thus making his appeal for freedom safely distant from a more republican, egalitarian appeal for black liberty. By emphasizing his connections to Islam, he also constructed a racial, religious, and cultural identity that safely affirmed racist notions of black inferiority. His white and sometimes his black audiences did not see Islam as an African religion; for them, it signified the Muslim Orient and a level of civilization that black Africans did not possess. Abd ar-Rahman also gave support to a burgeoning consensus among whites in the North that slavery was a threat to the American way of life. His appeal to white citizens in the United States to help him return to Africa reified the notion that blacks were a foreign element in a white republic.

Finally, Abd ar-Rahman was a critic of slaveholder Christianity, making clear, unlike Job Ben Solomon, that he thought Christian religion itself was the victim of slavery. According to Cyrus Griffin of the Natchez *Southern Galaxy*, Abd ar-Rahman said that the New Testament was "very good law . . . [but] you no follow it." Slaveholders were "greedy after money. You good man, you join the religion? See you want more land, more niggers; you make niggers work hard, make more cotton. Where you find that in your law?" In addition, Abd ar-Rahman noted, Christians "no pray often enough."[12] The publication of such sentiments turned Abd ar-Rahman into a regional figure who represented the business, religious, and political interests of the North.

Abd ar-Rahman Ibrahima and Job ben Solomon were among the dozens, perhaps hundreds, of elite, formally educated African American Muslims in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Others included Omar ibn Sayyid (1770–1864) of North Carolina; entrepreneur and Georgetown landholder Yarrow Mamout (c. 1736–1829) of Washington, D.C.; War of 1812 veteran and overseer Bilali Mahomet (c. 1760–1859) of Sapelo Island,

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[12] From Cyrus Griffin, "Prince Abduhl Rahahman," *Southern Galaxy* (Natchez, MS), 29 May, 5 June, 12 June and 5 July 1828, as quoted in Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook*, 142.

Georgia; Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua (b. c. 1830), author of *Biography of Mahommah G. Baquaqua, a Native of Zoogoo, in the Interior of Africa* (1854); and Civil War veteran and author Nicholas Said (c. 1831–82). These were figures who achieved regional and national recognition in the mainstream press; their influence was disproportionately large.

But as elites, they did not represent the majority of African American Muslim slaves and freed people, and there is no evidence that they established multigenerational communities of Muslims devoted to the practice of their shari'a-minded form of Islam – that is, the form of "high Islam" that they had been taught in West African seminaries and that linked them to international networks of learning, pilgrimage, and piety. Though future research, especially archaeological digs such as the discovery of African burial sites in New York City, may reveal new and vital information about Muslim life in North America,[13] it seems that the forms of Islamic religious cultures that were passed on to subsequent American-born generations were those involving material culture, notions of spirituality, ethnic identity, rituals, food practices, and language – but not written texts.

The best evidence currently available for establishing the intergenerational practice of Islam in the United States is to be found along the seacoast of the southeastern United States. In the 1930s, the descendants of Muslim slaves on St. Simons Island and Sapelo Island, Georgia, recalled the African Islamic practices of their grandparents and great-grandparents in interviews conducted by the Georgia Writers Project, which was funded by the Works Progress Administration.[14] Though oral histories are often and notoriously inaccurate, these sources are at least partially verified by the contemporaneous accounts of white visitors and slave owners who noted the presence of Muslims on these islands in the 1850s.[15]

That some African Islamic practices would have been preserved over generations in this environment makes sense in light of what is known more generally about the survival of African cultures in the Americas. African traditions were more likely to survive where new slaves continued to arrive with each passing generation, where slaves were relatively isolated, and where blacks outnumbered whites by a large ratio.[16] All of these factors were present along the Georgia seacoast. On Sapelo Island, for example,

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[13] Joyce Hansen and Gary McGowan, *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence: The Story of New York's African Burial Ground* (New York, 1998).

[14] Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies among the Georgia Coastal Negroes* (Athens, GA, 1940).

[15] Georgia Bryan Conrad, *Reminiscences of a Southern Woman* (Hampton, VA, n.d.), as quoted in Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: A Sourcebook*, 275, 304n14.

[16] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1978), 1–92.

Muslim slave Bilali – also called Ben Ali, Belali Mahomet, and Bu Allah – seemed to have raised his children as Muslims. In the 1930s Sapelo Island native Katie Brown, the great-granddaughter of Bilali, remembered the names of Bilali's daughters, two of whom were Medina and Fatima, names that were African and Muslim in origin. Brown commented that according to her grandmother, both Bilali and his wife Phoebe regularly prostrated themselves in prayer toward the East in addition to "praying on the bead," meaning that they likely used prayer beads to recite their *dhikr*, or religious litanies. Muslims in these coastal areas also observed African harvest festivals, wore turbans and veils, and prepared food associated with African Muslims.[17]

What such religious practices meant to Bilali's children is hard to determine. Like all other human beings, African Americans saw multiple meanings in their religious practices and invested old rituals with new meanings over time. Even if the origin of certain religious practices was African/Islamic, their meanings may have been altered in the United States. Even more, African Muslim traditions were blended seamlessly with African traditional religious practices often called conjure or hoodoo, the religious practice of healing and harming that seeks to bridge the gap between the material and spiritual worlds. For example, Nero Jones told his interviewers that his ancestors celebrated the harvest by beating drums, shaking rattles, and performing the ring shout – a counterclockwise dance – all of which were aspects of African traditional religions. But his aunt and uncle also used Muslim prayer beads and recited some of their prayers in Arabic. Rosa Grant's grandmother, Ryna, would perform the *salat*, one of the five pillars of Islamic practice, each morning, and she regarded Friday, the day set aside in Islam for congregational prayers, to be her "prayer day." She also practiced conjure. "If you have a pain or a misery in the leg or arm," Rosa Grant recalled her grandmother saying, "you kill a black chicken and split it open and slap it where the pain is, and that will cure the pain."[18]

These practices seem to have been part of an African American religious subculture that, like much of West African religious practice, was not in the business of making denominational boundaries. The integration of Muslim Americans into the story of American religious history illuminates how denominational history is an insufficient frame to understand the religious practices of many Americans in the antebellum era. Denominational authorities held little sway here; in fact, there was no governing body, no ecclesiastical organization that policed the boundaries of African American

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[17] Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, 152–6.
[18] Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York, 2009), 19–21; Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, 136–8, 157–8.

religious life in many isolated, black-majority areas such as the coastal islands. Even if plantation owners, Christian missionaries, and the occasional learned Muslim such as Bilali of Sapelo Island criticized and sometimes feared hoodoo as a form of superstition and witchcraft, there was little they could do to suppress its practice. In this setting, praying toward Mecca and the ritual use of chicken blood were not mutually exclusive practices, showing that some religious practices in America, as in West Africa and other locales, blurred religious boundaries and, though never operating outside of other forms of authority, had little relationship to the emerging competition among denominational institutions in the U.S. religious marketplace.

ISLAM AS AN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION, 1893–1945

Understanding the practice of Islam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, is a different matter. In this period, Americans and foreigners began to establish Islam as an American religious denomination – that is, as a voluntary, formal, and public religious institution regulated by the powers of state and committed to its own perpetuation in a society that recognized other such institutions. Though there is little evidence linking the presence of Islamic religion among slaves to the construction of Islam as an American denomination in the first half of the twentieth century, the story of Islamic religion in the United States once again involved people of African descent. In addition to their critical participation, white practitioners of metaphysical religions and Muslim immigrants contributed to the creation of Islam as a religion among American religions.

Like Islam in the colonial, revolutionary, and antebellum periods, denominational Islam was a religious tradition shaped by the vicissitudes of U.S. politics and American culture while also being formed through the transnational exchanges and by the diasporic consciousness of Muslim Americans. The life of the most prominent Muslim missionary of the nineteenth century, white newspaperman and former U.S. Consul to the Philippines Alexander Russell Webb (1846–1916), illustrates this trend.[19] Webb was a religious seeker and a believer in Theosophy, an ancient esoteric philosophy revived in the nineteenth century that stressed the oneness of the spiritual and material worlds. In the late 1880s, he converted to Islam, which he considered to be an Eastern religious tradition that was rational, spiritual, and scientific.

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[19] Umar F. Abd-Allah, *A Muslim in Victorian America: The Life of Alexander Russell Webb* (New York, 2006).

On the one hand, Webb's Islamic faith was deeply shaped by American metaphysical and liberal religious traditions.[20] On the other hand, Webb's interest in Islam was also fashioned in contact with foreign Muslims. In 1886 or 1887 he corresponded with Ghulam Ahmad, the Indian reformer who called himself a *mujaddid*, or renewer of religion. Webb wrote to Ahmad hoping to find a fellow follower of "the esoteric teachings of Mohammed, and not what is known to the masses of the people as Mohammedanism." Webb wanted to make sure that Ahmad "recognize[d] the truths that underlie all religions, and not their exoteric features which have been added by men."[21] For Webb, all religions were one in spirit even if their ritual and outer elements differed.

In addition to seeking theological solidarity with foreign Muslims, Webb desired their financial support, without which he would not have been able to launch a mission in America.

Cultivating relationships with other Muslims in South Asia while he was U.S. Consul in Manila in the late 1880s, Webb published in the South Asian *Allahabad Review* and sought the help of Bombay merchant Budruddin Kur and Calcutta businessman Hajee Abdulla Arab. In 1892, Webb resigned his post as U.S. Consul to engage in a fund-raising tour throughout South Asia. Webb criticized his Indian hosts often in racist terms, but achieved his goal of raising initial funds toward the establishment of a Muslim mission in New York, which he opened in 1893 – the same year in which he addressed the World's Parliament of Religion held in conjunction with the World's Fair in Chicago. Webb also authored the book *Islam in America* (1893) and published a periodical called *The Moslem World*. Despite the initial flurry of activities, however, Webb's funding dried up, he had few followers, and the American Islamic Propaganda, his mission, failed within three years.[22]

Webb's failure to establish a lasting denominational presence for Islam was an important marker of the limits of white, respectable, bourgeois interest in "Oriental" religions at the end of the nineteenth century. Though appropriating a broad array of Muslim Oriental signs into their dress, theater, literature, music, Masonic rituals, and alternative religious practices, few Americans were willing to cross a key social boundary and become Muslims. As observed by Inayat Khan, the Hindustani musician and Sufi Muslim guru, during his tour of the United States from 1910 to 1912, many liberal elites tried on the garb of Oriental spirituality, but most

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[20] Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality from Emerson to Oprah* (New York, 2005), 181–4, and Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, 2007), 332.
[21] Abd-Allah, *Muslim in Victorian America*, 65.
[22] *Ibid.*, 103–256.

treated Asian religions as a fashion, a commodity that could be bought and then discarded as a new season rolled around.[23]

Becoming a Muslim during the same era in which American evangelicals actively promoted Protestant Christianity as a form of racial and religious superiority was simply unimaginable for most white Americans. This was, according to historian Ussama Makdisi, a "moment in mission history when American nationalism, racialism, and evangelism fused together in a manner that obviated any further discussion of American shortcomings, and escalated criticisms of those un-American places in the world yet to be saved by American missionaries."[24] In one sense, Webb challenged this missionary logic by seeking to win souls for Islam. In another sense, however, Webb participated in a similarly racist mission, trying to save Islam from the vast majority of Muslims, the "masses" who were decidedly in need of modernization, according to his progressive politics. Overtly racist and classist, the former Democratic political appointee had no interest in proselytizing black Americans and the many immigrant Muslims from the Ottoman Empire already living in the United States by 1893.[25]

In dismissing these populations as unthinking and backward, Webb also dismissed the very demographic that, at least in the eyes of missionary critics such as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912), had the most to gain by becoming Muslims. Webb failed to separate Islam from the negative and potentially subversive qualities that it possessed in white eyes; despite his efforts, he could not reconstruct it as a legitimate white religion. In the 1890s, the word "Muslim" could still be used, as it had been by opponents of President John Adams a century before, as an epithet. For instance, during his 1889–90 tour of the United States, Blyden, the Liberian nationalist and pan-African intellectual, was criticized by U.S. minister to Liberia Charles H. J. Taylor in the *Atlanta Constitution* as a "Muslim, a fetish-worshipper, and a hypocrite."[26] Blyden's support of the American Colonization Society's efforts to transport black Americans to Africa and his positive assessment of African Islamic civilization provoked similar responses in other quarters. The reactions to Blyden, both negative and positive, signaled the late-nineteenth-century association of Islamic

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[23] Pir Inayat Khan, "America: 1910–1912," in Edward E. Curtis IV, ed., *Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States* (New York, 2008), 49–50.

[24] Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, 2008), 178.

[25] Abd-Allah, *Muslim in Victorian America*, 134–7, 166–7.

[26] Edwin S. Redkey, *Black Exodus: Black Nationalist and Back-to-Africa Movements, 1890–1910* (New Haven, 1969), 54, 66–9.

religion with the cultures of nonwhite people who at the time included most Muslim immigrants.[27]

From the 1880s until 1920, it was not African Americans but immigrants from the Ottoman Empire who were likely the majority of Muslim Americans. From 1869 to 1932, 127,081 persons from Arabic-speaking regions in the Ottoman Empire arrived legally in the United States.[28] In 1924, historian Philip Hitti estimated that there were 200,000 Syrian Americans, 8,000, or 4 percent, of whom were Muslim.[29] Later historians calculated that 10 percent of these Arab Americans were Muslim, suggesting that during this period, 12,708 Muslim Arabs legally came to the United States.[30] The actual number was likely higher, however, given that many immigrants from Syria changed their names, claimed to have different national identities, and came into the country illegally from Mexico or Canada. Certain Arab American communities in the United States seemed to have had much larger percentages of Muslims than others. For example, through careful analysis of U.S. census records, homestead claims, and deeds, one study has shown that the Arab American population of North Dakota from 1900 until 1945 was likely 30 percent Muslim.[31] World War I records from North Dakota confirm these percentages, since approximately one-quarter of the state's Syrian American soldiers had Muslim names such as Alley Juma or Omer Otmen.[32]

As Work Projects Administration (WPA) interviews and other records show, some of these immigrants continued to fast during Ramadan, to pray, and to perform other Islamic religious duties after arriving in the United States.[33] But it seems that in most cases, the expression of Islamic religiosity from the 1880s to World War I was relatively private, taking place in people's homes. For example, East European Muslim immigrants from Poland, Russia, and the Baltic states, some of whom were Tatar Muslims, are said to have engaged in the communal practice of Islam as early as 1907, though it was perhaps not until 1931, when they purchased three buildings on 104, 106, and 108 Powers Street in Williamsburg,

[27] Edward E. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (Albany, 2002), 21–43.

[28] Appendices I and II in Gregory Orfalea, *The Arab Americans: A History* (Northampton, MA, 2006), 436–7.

[29] Philip K. Hitti, *The Syrians in America* (New York, 1924), 108.

[30] Philip M. Kayal, "Religion and Assimilation: Catholic Syrians in America," *International Migration Review* 7 (Winter 1973): 409.

[31] William C. Sherman, *Prairie Peddlers: The Syrian-Lebanese in North Dakota* (Bismarck, ND, 2002), 34, 98–9.

[32] Appendix D in *ibid.*, 376–88.

[33] Curtis, *Muslims in America*, 47–54.

Brooklyn, that they had a permanent, public presence as a religious community.[34] Several mutual aid associations were established during the end of the World War I era, including the Moslem Brotherhood Association of Worchester, Massachusetts, in 1918 and a Detroit chapter of the Turkish Kizilay, or Red Crescent, in 1920.[35] In Ross, North Dakota, Muslims visited each other's homes to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the feast held at the end of Ramadan, during the first decade of the twentieth century, but they did not begin to build their public place of worship until 1929 or 1930.[36] Muslims in greater Detroit erected their first purpose-built mosque in 1921.[37] The Muslim community in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, opened the doors to its newly constructed "Mother Mosque" in 1934.[38]

What is striking about the establishment of local aid societies and mosques among immigrants is that it occurred during the same period in which the first national and regional Muslim missions and organizations became successful among African Americans. In fact, the phenomena were often related. The interwar convergence of Muslim American denominational developments contrasts dramatically with a racial divide among Muslims that widened in the last three decades of the twentieth century.[39] In the 1920s and 1930s, Muslim American history was not as racially divided as it would later become. All Muslim Americans, with the exception of the very few Muslims who were white Americans, were oppressed persons in this period. The sources of Muslim American oppression were diverse but interrelated, and included xenophobia, sexism, racism, and Orientalism, among other forms of discrimination that marked them as nonwhite and thus un-American. Treated by the executive and judicial branches of the federal government as nonwhites, defined as nonwhite by the 1924 National Origins Act, and in at least one instance subject to lynching, Asian Americans, like black Americans, did not succeed in fighting the legal discrimination against them until after 1945.[40]

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[34] Marc Ferris, "To 'Achieve the Pleasure of Allah': Immigrant Muslims in New York City, 1893–1991," in Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, eds., *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany, 1994), 211.

[35] Elizabeth Boosahda, *Arab-American Faces and Voices: The Origins of an Immigrant Community* (Austin, 2003), 35, and Barbara J. Bilgé, "Voluntary Associations in the Old Turkish Community of Metropolitan Detroit," in Haddad and Smith, *Muslim Communities*, 393.

[36] Sherman, *Prairie Peddlers*, 156–8.

[37] Hitti, *Syrians in America*, 108, and Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock, "Detroit," in Edward E. Curtis IV, ed., *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History* (New York, 2010).

[38] Brooke Sherrard, "Cedar Rapids, Iowa," in Curtis, *Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*.

[39] Bruce B. Lawrence, *Old Faiths, New Fears: Muslims and Other Asian Immigrants in American Religious Life* (New York, 2002), 80–86.

[40] Kathleen M. Moore, *Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States* (Albany, 1995), 19–67, and Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley, 2009), 113–34.

The period between World War I and World War II was characterized by an alignment of interests among Muslims Americans, who often saw – despite their differences – the potential to create political and social alliances. It was in this period, and precisely because of the alignment of these interests, that Muslim Americans first fashioned Islam as a successful American religious denomination that embodied their spiritual and temporal dreams. American Islam in the interwar era involved the contact of several different Muslim American populations and groups. An international cast of visitors and immigrants joined with American-born converts to build denominational infrastructures that have lasted, in many cases, to the present day.

It began in 1920 with South Asian Muslim missionary Muhammad Sadiq, who was likely the first successful Muslim missionary in the United States. Sadiq was a member of the Ahmadiyya movement, which formed in the late nineteenth century around the personality and teachings of Ghulam Ahmad. Ahmad was a Muslim reformer believed by his followers to be the long-promised Christian Messiah and the Islamic Mahdi, a figure in Islamic tradition who will bring peace and justice to the world before the Day of Judgment. Many also believed that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet, a view that conflicted with the Sunni Muslim belief that Muhammad of Arabia is the "seal of the prophets" and the final messenger of God to humanity.[41] Such sectarian differences would later limit the interaction of Ahmadi followers with other Muslim Americans, though in the early 1920s few communal divisions yet existed among Muslims in America. For example, when Detroit's first purpose-built mosque was opened in the Highland Park area in 1921, Ahmadi missionary Muhammad Sadiq joined Shi'a imam Khalil Bazzy to celebrate the accomplishments of the community and its Sunni imam, Hussien Karoub (1892–1973).[42] Sadiq and Bazzy represented different strands of Islamic religion, but their presence at the opening of a Sunni mosque suggested their willingness to cooperate – as well as to compete – with other Muslim American leaders.

In addition to creating a permanent mission along Wabash Avenue on Chicago's South Side in 1922, Sadiq began the *Moslem Sunrise*, a periodical that chronicled the rise of what became the first Muslim American denominational institution that was national in scope.[43] That success relied on Sadiq's strategy to target African Americans for conversion. Sadiq fused

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[41] Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous* (Berkeley, 1989).

[42] Articles in the *Detroit Free Press*, 8 June 1921, and *Detroit News*, 9 June 1921, as cited by Sally Howell, "Mosques History," in Jocelyne Cesari, ed., *Encyclopedia of Islam in America* (Westport, 2007), 1: 432.

[43] See Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, 2003), 109–46.

teachings about the Qur'an and the Sunna (or traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad with post–World War I agitation by people of color for freedom from colonialism and Jim Crow segregation. On the one hand, he stressed the universal appeal of Islam as a religion of social equality; on the other hand, Sadiq said that Arabic and Islam were part of a specifically African heritage that had been stolen from blacks when they were enslaved. He endorsed the thought of black nationalist and pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey and sought converts from Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. In this era of the new nativism, when the Ku Klux Klan rose to political prominence based on a combination of Protestant Christianity, white supremacy, and terrorism, the Ahmadi linking of domestic struggles for racial liberation to what Sadiq and others described as the deep spirituality of the Qur'an, black historical achievements under Islam, and a rising call for self-determination was a potent message that helped to bring over 1,025 converts to Islam from 1921 to 1925.[44]

Sadiq was likely the most successful of the Muslim missionaries in the 1920s, but he was not the only one. Other foreign Muslims, including black Africans, also attempted to establish Muslim organizations in the United States. Among them was Dusé Mohammed Ali (1866–1945), the Egyptian-born Shakespearean actor and founder of the *African Times and Orient Review*. Having already spent time in the United States as a member of a touring acting troupe in the nineteenth century, Ali became a foreign affairs columnist for Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* in New York in 1922. The job was short-lived, and Ali spent most of the 1920s traveling from one American city to another in search of entrepreneurial success. He also participated in the establishment of a multiracial and multiethnic group of Muslim worshipers in Detroit in 1925, when, along with Shah Zain ul-Abdein, Joseph Ferris, and S. Z. Abedian, he participated in the Universal Islamic Society, also known as the Central Islamic Society. In 1926, Ali served as secretary of the American Asiatic Association, also called the America-Asia Society, which reportedly drew support from the Iranian chargé d'affaires, the mayor of Detroit, and the Egyptian ambassador in Washington. Unlike Sadiq, however, Ali seemed to have left behind few traces of any institutional legacy when he left the United States in 1931 for Nigeria, where he became an elder statesman of the pan-African movement.[45]

A more successful missionary – at least in terms of his impact on the organizational history of Islam as an American religious denomination – was

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[44] *Ibid.*, 124.
[45] Ian Duffield, "Some American Influences on Dusé Mohammed Ali," in Robert A. Hill, ed., *Pan-African Biography* (Los Angeles, 1987), 11–56.

Satti Majid (1883–1963), who seems to have begun his career as an American imam in 1921 when he ministered to Yemeni sailors stranded in New York during World War I. In 1922, he traveled to Detroit where he sought incorporation papers for a benevolent association named the Moslem Welfare Society. There is also evidence that he established the Moslem Unity Association in New York in 1927. Then, in 1928, he created the African Moslem Welfare Society in Pittsburgh. After leaving the country on 31 January 1929, several letters addressed to the "Rev. Magid" and the "Respectable Father Sheich {shaykh, or leader} of Islam in America" were sent to him by his Pittsburgh followers. One letter, penned on 29 February 1932, asked for news from Majid, stating that Pittsburgh followers remained in contact with Muslims in New York and Cleveland. Helena Kleely, secretary of the Pittsburgh group, coauthored a 18 May 1932 letter asking for Majid to provide English translations of the Arabic literature that he had sent. A 1935 letter discussed the Italian occupation of Ethiopia and looked forward to the day when African Americans could "return back to our homeland Africa," mentioning Abyssinia (Ethiopia) as a place that African Americans could colonize. Several of the writers complained that they had not received prompt replies to their correspondence.[46]

In addition to immigrants such as Hussein Karoub and missionaries such as Satti Majid, American-born converts established Muslim American groups in the 1920s. The most prominent was the Chicago-based Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) begun in the middle 1920s, probably in 1925, by North Carolina native Timothy Drew, who became known as Noble Drew Ali (1886–1929). The organization combined Noble Drew Ali's prophecies with Islamic symbols and elements of Freemasonry and metaphysics to create a new version of Islamic religion. Ali, considered by his followers to be a prophet, taught that African Americans were Moors, part of a Moroccan nation whose religion was Islam and whose racial heritage was Asian. The MSTA appropriated its Islamic dress, rituals, and other visibly Oriental symbols largely from the Shriners, a Masonic organization. It sought to create a community separate from whites, one that followed a strict moral code and the science of "New Thought," a branch of metaphysics that taught, among other things, that personal health depended on a mastery of one's own mental powers. Human beings, Ali said, could improve their health, their wealth, and other aspects of their worldly existence through meditation, prayer, and other spiritual

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[46] Ahmed I. Abu Shouk, J. O. Hunwick, and R. S. O'Fahey, "A Sudanese Missionary to the United States: Satti Majid, Shaykh al-Islam in North America, and His Encounter with Noble Drew Ali, Prophet of the Moorish Science Temple Movement," *Sudanic Africa* 8 (1997): 137–91.

practices. Members of the MSTA came to call this "Moorish Science," and they believed that it was both a form of ancient wisdom and a new revelation called Islam.[47]

Missionary Satti Majid begged to differ. He found the group positively heretical and sought a *fatwa*, or learned religious opinion, from scholars at al-Azhar Seminary in Cairo condemning the movement. Appealing to these international authorities in Cairo to settle a sectarian dispute in America, Majid complained that Ali had declared himself a prophet and wrote his own scripture, *The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple* (1927), that contained no Qur'anic verses or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad of Arabia. In November 1931, al-Azhar issued an English translation of its fatwa, which declared Ali to be an "unbeliever or a mentally-deranged person."[48]

There is no evidence to suggest that the fatwa, if it was ever distributed in the United States, had any effect on the growth of the MSTA whose membership numbered in the thousands by the 1940s. But the early attempt to stifle its growth through an appeal to religious authority helpfully reveals the differences among Muslim Americans by the 1920s. Shiʿa, Sunni, Ahmadi, and Moorish Muslim groups had an institutional presence in the United States by the end of the decade. The beginning of competition among them was a sign of Islam's arrival as an American religious denomination. Whether born in the United States or just visiting, Muslims in America had begun to recognize their religious differences. But in comparing themselves to one another, they also acknowledged the Muslim other as part of an emerging American religious denomination that they called "Islam." There had been contact and exchange, resulting in doctrinal disputation in a shared social space.

The transnational, interethnic contacts and exchanges that marked American Islam in the 1920s only accelerated in the 1930s. In 1930, W. D. Fard, a person of color whose origins are still hotly contested until today, established the Nation of Islam, a group inspired by the Moorish Science Temple that was geared toward black Americans. In 1931, James Lomax (1886–1957), a former member of the MSTA, traveled to Cairo, Egypt, where he studied Islam at the General Centre World Young Men Muslim Association. He returned to the United States as Muhammad Ezaldeen and in 1938 created the Addeynu Allahe Universal Arabic Association (AAUAA), an African American Sunni Muslim organization that spread

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[47] Edward E. Curtis IV, "Debating the Origins of the Moorish Science Temple," in Edward E. Curtis IV and Danielle Brune Siglers, eds., *The New Black Gods: Arthur Huff Fauset and the Study of African Americans Religions* (Bloomington, 2009), 70–90.

[48] Shouk, Hunwick, and O'Fahey, "Sudanese Missionary," 182.

along the East Coast.[49] In 1937, Wali Akram (1904–94), a former student of and leader within the Ahmadiyya movement, formed a Sunni mosque in Cleveland.[50] By 1939, Daoud Ahmed Faisal, who cultivated ties to Muslims from the Middle East and to black converts, had leased a brownstone for his inter-ethnic, international Sunni mission on State Street in Brooklyn, New York.[51] Then, in 1943, all of these black-led Sunni organizations met at the All Moslem and Arab Convention in Philadelphia to create the Uniting Islamic Society of America.[52]

By the end of the 1930s, African Americans likely accounted once again for the majority of self-identifying Muslims in the United States. The National Origins Act had severely restricted immigration from Muslim-majority countries, and many Muslim immigrants who had immigrated before did not necessarily continue to practice Islam. Most importantly, African Americans had created the institutions that became the public face of American Islam. Based on attendance at meetings, membership reports, and FBI surveillance, it seems that MSTA and the Ahmadiyya were likely the largest religious groups with perhaps ten thousand or more members between them.[53] This figure does not include the memberships of the AAUAA, the Midwestern mosques associated with Wali Akram, the New York-based Islamic Mission of Daoud Ahmed Faisal, and a growing Nation of Islam.

This growth of Islam resulted in sensational media coverage, scholarly scrutiny, police persecution, and government surveillance. In the early 1930s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified the Moorish Science Temple as a potential threat to the state, and from this point on conducted covert surveillance on this and other Muslim groups.[54] The transnational connections and diasporic consciousness of black Muslim Americans were seen as increasingly subversive during the Great Depression as thousands of African Americans, Muslim or not, came to entertain the messianic idea that the Empire of Japan might free them from the clutches of American racism through a military invasion. Before and during World War II, the

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[49] Michael Nash, *Islam among Urban Blacks, Muslims in Newark, NJ: A Social History* (Lanham, MD, 2008).

[50] Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam* (New York, 2002), 47–55, 92–6, 108–12, and Mbaye Lo, *Muslims in America: Race, Politics, and Community Building* (Beltsville, MD, 2004), 55–66.

[51] Ferris, "Immigrant Muslims in New York City," 212.

[52] Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage*, 47–8.

[53] Turner, *Islam*, 134, and "FBI File of the Moorish Science Temple of America," http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/moortemp.htm (accessed 8 July 2009).

[54] Sylvester Johnson, "Religion Proper and Proper Religion," in Curtis and Siglers, *New Black Gods*, 152–6.

Department of Justice prosecuted twenty African American religious and civic leaders for sedition, based largely on their alleged sympathies for the Japanese. Elijah Muhammad (1897–1975), longtime leader of the Nation of Islam, was one of them.[55]

This was another instance in which the social and political positions of Muslims exposed the ways in which state power was constructed during a certain period of U.S. history. Part of the government's argument was that Muslim groups such as the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the Moorish Science Temple were not legitimate religious movements, but "cults" that functioned as political organizations. A large part of American Islam was thus defined not as religion, but as politics, and deprived of the legal protections afforded to American religious denominations. Members of the NOI vigorously contested that claim when dozens of them, including leader Elijah Muhammad, faced charges of draft evasion in 1942. From their perspective, they were obeying the orders of God and his prophet, and should be granted protection from the nation-state's claim on their freedom of religion.[56] Of course, the Nation of Islam was a political as well as a religious organization, but this in and of itself did not distinguish it from other denominational bodies. No religious organization operated without regard to law enforcement agencies, tax codes, the courts, secretary of state offices, and other mechanisms of governance. The difference between most mainstream denominational bodies and minority groups such as the Moorish Science Temple and NOI was that some minority groups challenged the dominant ideology of the state and its role in preserving a socially unjust status quo.

Moreover, even when black Muslims supported the state's policies – as was the case when Wali Akram encouraged his followers to join the military during World War II – the black Americans' identification with Islam was still seen by the press and the FBI as the association of some domestic blacks with a foreign, potentially dangerous force. The press often framed black Muslims, whether Sunni or not, as claiming a false sense of ethnic identity. Simply put, the idea of black people freely associating with Asia and Allah did not jive with most black and white Americans' racial and religious expectations. Even more galling, their newly discovered ethnic and religious pride led not to a demand for a new colonization scheme but for greater social equality as Americans.

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[55] Ernest Allen, Jr., "When Japan Was 'Champion of the Darker Races': Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism," *Black Scholar* 24 (Winter 1994): 23–46.

[56] Claude Andrew Clegg III, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York, 1997), 90–3.

From the beginning of U.S. history, then, Muslim Americans have been part of local communities *and* global networks, part of national *and* transnational communities, disciplined by state power and influenced by Muslim persons and institutions abroad. The religious history of Muslim Americans illuminates the inadequacies of a national religious history that pays no attention to people and places outside U.S. borders. But it shows how Muslims have mattered to the central narratives of religion inside those borders, too. The writing of a transnational history of American religions may undermine the dualistic identification of various religious traditions and practices as American or un-American, domestic or foreign, assimilated or resistant, but it does not eliminate the need for a national history of American religions. It helps us tell that story better.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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ASIAN RELIGIONS IN THE UNITED STATES: THE ROLE OF THE 1893 WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS IN SHAPING AN EVOLVING PLURALIST IDEOLOGY

E. ALLEN RICHARDSON

Born in the colonial experience, the ideology of religious plurality was a consistent part of American life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[1] Nurtured by societal battles that emphasized diversity including slavery, immigration, and the role of alternative religions, the pluralist ideology drew increasing momentum from the first interfaith gathering on American soil – the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. As the first public interfaith conversation in the United States, the parliament not only gave voice to Asian religions but also held a mirror to American Christians, for the first time countering expressions of exclusivism that had been part of the Protestant missionary and evangelical traditions. This challenge to the homogeneous view of religious America was followed in the first quarter of the twentieth century by other voices who questioned the vision of the United States as a melting pot following the rapid growth of immigrant communities.

The presence of Asian immigrants in the United States began with the discovery of gold in Sutter's Creek in California in 1849 and with the rapid expansion of the railroads in the second half of the nineteenth century. The railroads and mines hired large numbers of Chinese who were exploited as a cheap source of labor. In California and the Northwest, Asian Indians came to work in the lumber industry following their early presence in Vancouver.

Many of the Indian immigrants were Sikh. Others were Hindu, often leaving India against the wishes of their extended families who were concerned that by traveling outside India they would incur ritualistic pollution. As a result, Hindus in transit on shipboard frequently kept to

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[1] See E. Allen Richardson, *Strangers in This Land: Religion, Pluralism and the American Dream* (Jefferson, NC, 2010).

themselves because of dietary restrictions and concern for pollution that emanated from caste regulations.

Chinese immigrants practiced varying forms of Buddhism and Taoism, frequently incorporating Confucian principles and traditions into their lifestyle. Like South Asians, they preferred minimal contact with Americans since their dietary, cultural, and religious traditions were often not understood. Religion was frequently home centered, although in some locations, such as Weaverville, California, where the Taoist community erected a Joss House, an institutional presence was established.[2]

By 1890 the presence of Chinese and Asian Indians in the United States had grown substantially. In California, the 1890 U.S. census reported 71,066 Chinese. By 1920, the number of Indians, Chinese, and Japanese in California had reached 123,387, with a growing dispersal of this same population in other states from the Midwest to the eastern seaboard.[3]

While most Americans were aware of the growth of Asian populations in the United States, their Joss Houses, temples, and gurdwaras were rarely encountered by persons outside the ethnic communities. However, through other sources, a growing number of Americans encountered Asian religions, heightening their curiosity. Between 1879 and 1910, the voluminous fifty-volume set of the *Sacred Books of the East* for the first time made scripture from the major world religions accessible.[4] The evolving literature of the Transcendentalists, including Thoreau, Emerson, and others, also brought visions of the Hindu Brahman (which was understood as a "world soul") within the reach of American religious communities, deeply influencing such evolving traditions as Unitarianism and nineteenth-century Spiritualism.[5]

At the same time a growing cadre of Orientalists had made unparalleled discoveries creating a lasting Asian mystic. Jean-Francois Champollion, Gardner Wilkinson, and others not only made ancient Egypt accessible to the West but also generated public interest so strong that popular trends in art and jewelry frequently copied Egyptian motifs. Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* was published in a number of editions and became standard reading throughout much of the Western world.[6]

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[2] E. Allen Richardson, *East Comes West: Asian Religions and Cultures in North America* (New York, 1983), 91.

[3] Census data from the 1890 U.S. census as collected by the University of Virginia Library. See http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/state.php (accessed 6 June 2009).

[4] F. Max Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. 1–50 (Oxford, 1879–1910).

[5] See, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Brahma," reprinted in Thomas R. Lounsbury, ed., *Yale Book of American Verse* (New Haven, 1912).

[6] J. Gardener Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians: Including Their Private Life, Government, Laws, Art, Manufactures, Religions, and Early History; Derived*

Sir William Jones made discoveries in Sanskrit, fostering increasing interest in Asia and eventually unearthing the origins of Buddhism in India. Meanwhile, in Iraq Austin Layard and Hormuzd Rassam uncovered the remains of Nimrud and Nineveh, capturing the interests of Americans and Europeans in the "exotic" East in the continuing attempt to prove the Bible. These ideas, and the increasing awareness of the presence of Asian peoples, helped give birth to a new idea – a gathering of representatives of world religions on American soil.

THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS: REVERSING THE LANGUAGE OF "THE OTHER"

The World's Parliament of Religions was a seventeen-day event that became part of the Columbian Exposition – a lavish World's Fair with a virtual city in stone on 686 acres on the shores of Lake Michigan. The setting of the fair was dubbed the "White City," and in its white gypsum construction it appeared much like the capital of a nation-state, establishing a vision of American exceptionalism that would also symbolize the dominance of the West. The Columbian Exposition became a monument to an etiological myth of origins on the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' expedition and the European "discovery" of North America. In short, the exposition constructed what Richard Seager has described as the "Columbian myth of America," which was meant to confirm the nation's divine right.[7]

The "halls" for the major exhibits from industrialized nations were akin to temples themselves, and for the first time in any World's Fair they were illuminated with electric lights. Once inside, the visitor was dazzled with displays of industrial might including the Krupp machine gun, the Edison engine and dynamo, and the largest boiler in the world, all intended to create a sense of awe in the face of the largest collection of Western industrial might ever assembled.[8]

As a way of complementing the uniqueness of the exposition, a vision of a World's Parliament of Religions had been proposed by organizer

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from a Comparison of the Paintings, Sculptures, and Monuments Still Existing, with the Accounts of Ancient Authors (London, 1837).

[7] The "Columbian myth of America" is discussed by Richard Seager in *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893,* rev. ed. (Bloomington, 2009). See also Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill, 2003), 21.

[8] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, as Viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893* (New York, 1894), 312–15.

Charles Bonney, who organized the World's Congresses within the fair.[9] Bonney's idea was developed by a Congregational minister, Dr. John Henry Barrows, who later became president of Oberlin College. For Barrows and the organizers of the Columbian Exposition, the parliament fit with the ethnocentric theme of the fair, which attempted to give the most exposure to industrialized nations in the center of the exposition's "White City," and at the same time to display undeveloped, often far poorer nations around the periphery. The plan developed as an exercise in Christian triumphalism in which the superiority of the faith would be demonstrated in an interfaith context.

Eric Ziolkowski concludes that the foremost aim of the parliament's Christian organizers "was to prove their own religious faith to be the fulfillment of all others."[10] This purpose was often identified beneath a barrage of ambiguous rhetoric. For example, in his opening address to the assembled parliament, Barrows concluded that the truth claims of Christianity could not be discredited.[11] At the same time, he argued that faiths were separated by ignorance and prejudice.

However, in the publication of the parliament papers, Barrows more clearly outlined his position, suggesting, "It may be safely said that participation in this meeting did not compromise any Christian speaker's position as a belief in the supremacy and universality of the Gospel. There was no suggestion on the part of Christian speakers that Christianity was to be thought of as on the same level with other religions."[12]

Through this lens, the organizers of the parliament saw the gathering as a fitting culmination to the nineteenth century which, four hundred years after the voyage of Columbus, had witnessed a Second Great Awakening, the development of the American Protestant missionary tradition, and the increasing dominance of evangelical Christianity. A variety of papers reiterated this theme, presenting such topics as George Pentecost's "The Invincible Gospel" and James Brand's "Christian Evangelism as One of the Working Forces in American Christianity."[13]

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[9] See Charles Carroll Bonney, "The Genesis of the World's Religious Congresses of 1893," *New Church Review* 1 (Jan. 1894): 73–100.

[10] Eric J. Ziolkowski, ed., *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions* (Atlanta, 1993), 9.

[11] John Henry Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, Held in Chicago in Conjunction with the Columbia Exposition of 1893* (Chicago, 1893), 1: 75 (hereafter *World's Parliament*).

[12] *Ibid.*, 2: 1573.

[13] George F. Pentecost, "The Invincible Gospel," in *ibid.,* 2: 1166–72; and James Brand, "Christian Evangelism as One of the Working Forces in American Christianity," in *ibid.,* 2: 984–6.

However, a number of papers presented something quite different from what the organizers expected. Instead of demonstrating Christian dominance, they recast the parliament as a powerful, lasting symbol of religious pluralism. This ideology, born in the colonial experiences in Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and New Amsterdam, had been nurtured by emancipation, by the promise of an open society, and by beliefs in freedom of religion.[14] The parliament provided further inspiration for this vision and broadened it by developing American interest in interfaith dialogue.

Building on this belief, a number of key presenters, swayed by centuries of colonial domination by Christian nations, identified the religion and culture of European imperialist powers as antagonistic. Frequently couching their anticolonial rhetoric in speeches that looked toward a vision of interfaith harmony, they leveled charges against the Christian West rarely heard in the United States. Through the voices of these individuals, who linked religion with nascent expressions of nationalism, the parliament also became the first public rebuttal in the United States to colonialism and Christian missions by representatives of Asian religions. In a fitting note of irony, these representatives from the "mission field" also used the parliament to establish their own faiths in the heartland of America, at the same time fueling a nascent American pluralism.

In particular, three of the invited participants in the parliament brought their substantial intellects to bear against Christian exclusivism. Vivekananda, the disciple of Ramakrishna, a nineteenth-century mystic and follower of the Hindu god Hanuman, emerged on the parliament floor as an eloquent spokesperson of Hinduism, freely casting aspersions against Christian triumphalism. Anagarika Dharmapala, a Sinhalese lay Buddhist, angry and frustrated with the force of Christian missions in Sri Lanka, claimed, "The missionary is intolerant; he is selfish."[15] Kinza Hirai emerged out of Meiji Japan, bristling with anti-Christian rhetoric that characterized the period as Japan struggled against the inroads of Western imperialism and with the attempt to protect and preserve its own religious traditions.

In a dramatic reversal of language, Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai used the parliament to apply the Hegelian concept of "the Other" to the Christian West, reversing the dominant paradigm of Western Orientalism. This paradigm, as described by Edward Said, was a European invention that had depicted the East as both exotic and fanciful.[16] The use of alterity

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[14] Richardson, *Strangers in This Land*, 1–51, 105–29.

[15] Anagarika Dharmapala, "Criticism and Discussion of Missionary Methods," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 1093.

[16] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1979), 1.

to culturally construct another had become a normative part of colonialism and had been used in Japan, the Middle East, India, and other parts of Asia.

James Ketelaar suggests that the oppositional language of "the Other" was applied to Asian religions for two reasons. First, it displayed them at a distance; but second, it also served to "incorporate their presence into the (almost) familiar."[17] Finally, by identifying Oriental religions with biblical imagery virtually in the tradition of the Magi, the developers of the parliament achieved a master stroke. They developed a way to assimilate differences into their singular, absolutist understanding of truth, thereby denying other traditions access to it.

In still other ways, the language of alterity had also come to identify everything that the West assumed that it was not. As the Oriental was exotic, so the West was practical and focused on reality. As the Asian was deceitful, so the West acted morally. Finally, as the Christian Occident was the guardian of religious truth, so the Orient could not lay claim to it and was immersed in error.

However, for Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai these assumptions could not be tolerated. For them, "the Other" was not the Hindu or the Buddhist who happened to worship an icon, but, as Vivekananda put it, Christians who made idols out of their churches.[18] For Dharmapala, it was the false images of salvation created by missionary schools in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) that completely rejected Buddhism and its seminal influence on that island nation.[19] For Hirai, it was the immorality of Western Christianity for subverting Buddhism in Japan.[20]

In their critique of the West, the three speakers were not alone – others echoed the same theme. Mohamed Russell Alexander Webb, an American who converted to Islam, reminded his audience, "It is a significant fact that the only Musselmans who drink whisky and gamble, are those who wear European clothing and emulate the appearance and habits of the Englishman."[21] In a somewhat gentler tone, B. B. Nagarkar concluded that the nature of Western culture was antithetical to the real practice of religion, claiming, "The ceaseless demand on your time and energy, the constant worry and hurry of your business activity and the superficial

[17] James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan* (Princeton, 1993), 153.
[18] See Vivekananda, "Hinduism," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 975–6.
[19] See Dharmapala, "Criticism and Discussion of Missionary Methods," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 1093.
[20] See Kinza Riuge Hirai, "The Real Position of Japan toward Christianity," in *World's Parliament,* 1: 448.
[21] Mohamed Webb, "The Influence of Islam on Social Conditions," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 1048.

conditions of your western civilization are all calculated to make you forget the personal presence of God."[22] In each case, the materialistic West was presented as pagan and so far removed from acceptable levels of morality that it could neither understand nor perceive the transcendent.

Ironically, this reversal of language was presented not in an atmosphere of exoticism, which the Orientalist paradigm would have reveled in, but instead in the very heart of the Western attempt to reify its symbolic strength – the four hundredth anniversary of the voyage of Columbus and a celebration of Western values and might. There, Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai dared to suggest that Western civilization had lost its way, betrayed by its reliance on Christian absolutism, by the inherent superficiality of its society, and by its ignorance of true religion.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

When Narendranath Dutta, or Swami Vivekananda, first addressed the assembled parliament, he presented an image of charisma and warmth that immediately resonated with his audience. In subsequent addresses to the assembled interfaith gathering, he spoke of tolerance and mutual understanding. However, by the ninth day, Vivekananda took another tact, attempting to hold a mirror up to his audience, asking them to see themselves in a very different way.

> As we find that somehow or other, by the laws of our constitution, we have got to associate our ideas of infinity with the ideal of a blue sky, or a sea; the omnipresence covering the idea of holiness with an idol of a church or a mosque, or a cross; so the Hindus have associated the ideas of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and all other ideas with different images and forms. But with this difference: upon certain actions some are drawn their whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines and doing good to their fellows. The whole religion of the Hindu is centered in realization. Man is to become divine, realizing the divine, and, therefore, idol or temple or church or books, are only the supports, the helps of his spiritual childhood, but on and on he must progress.[23]

Vivekananda's rapid rise to fame in the United States came not from this address, which surely caused a less than enthusiastic reaction, but to the lectures and addresses that followed as he built an international reputation

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[22] B. B. Nagarkar, "Spiritual Ideas of the Brahmo-Somaj," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 1227.

[23] Vivekananda, "Hinduism," in *World's Parliament*, 2: 975–6. Vivekananda's critique of Western missionary traditions has also been noted by Richard Hughes Seager in "Pluralism and the American Mainstream: The View from the World's Parliament of Religions," in Ziolkowski, *Museum of Faiths*, 211.

as a highly charismatic and evocative figure. Remaining in the United States after his parliament address, he conducted a series of lectures through mid-1895.[24] Again returning to the United States in 1899, he remained until July 1900.[25] During both of these periods, he was the subject in the American media of both euphoria as well as attack. He was dubbed both "the cyclonic Hindu" and a promoter of "heathen propaganda."[26] However, despite the enormous difficulty of engaging in such reverse missions, his work successfully rooted the Vedanta Society in America. Vivekananda, who died in 1902, was succeeded by other teachers who, building on the foundation that he had laid, firmly rooted Vedanta Centers in New York and San Francisco.

Vivekananda combined an educated, middle-class persona with a rejection of nineteenth-century colonial values. In India, these sentiments led to a spectrum of movements called the Hindu Renaissance, which became early expressions of Hindu nationalism. The early manifestations of the Renaissance included the Brahmo and the Prarthana Samaj, which borrowed Christian understandings of social reform. Later iterations, such as the Arya Samaj, sought to reestablish pride in a Hindu India, jettisoning Christian values, but still borrowed the missionary rejection of caste, icon worship, and pilgrimage.

In Vivekananda's case, the origins of his ill feelings toward the Christian West may well lie in a formidable influence on his career – the Rev. William Hastie who became principal of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta where Vivekananda was a student between 1881 and 1884. Hastie was a vociferous opponent of what he described as Hindu idolatry. Nowhere was his position about icon worship clearer than in this text, *Hindu Idolatry and English Enlightenment*.

> … no pen has yet adequately depicted all the hideousness and grossness of the monstrous system [of Hinduism]. It has been well described by one who knew it as … "Satan's master piece of ingenuity for the entanglement of souls," and as "the most stupendous fortress and citadel of ancient error and idolatry now in the world."… Hindu idolatry has ever been, and still is, the one chief cause of all the demoralization and degradation of India. Every Hindu home is still polluted with idols and the muttering of senseless incantations. The children drink in the hideous spirit of demons with their mother's milk.[27]

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[24] Carl T. Jackson, *Vedanta for the West: The Ramakrishna Movement in the United States* (Bloomington, 1994), 27.

[25] *Ibid.*, 32.

[26] *Ibid.*, 26–7.

[27] William Hastie, *Hindu Idolatry and English Enlightenment* (Calcutta, 1882), 30–3. Hastie's relationship with Vivekananda is described by Narasingha P. Sil in *Swami Vivekananda: A Reassessment* (Selinsgrove, PA, 1997), 30.

Vivekananda's speeches in America were recognized for their rejection of the type of Christian absolutism that Hastie typified. But in so doing, he also borrowed the voice of his oppressors, using the language of idolatry to describe the very people who for centuries had rejected his own faith tradition.

ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

Much like Vivekananda, Anagarika Dharmapala had become disillusioned with British imperialism and with English Christianity. Born as David Hewavitarne and educated in British mission schools in Sri Lanka, he had witnessed the consumption of alcohol and meat by missionaries and civil servants and had seen the pleasure they found in hunting – all values that were antithetical to the island's Hindu and Buddhist cultures.

Working as a junior clerk in the Department of Education, Hewavitarne was inspired by the work of Colonel Henry Olcott, cofounder of the Theosophical Society and staunch advocate of Buddhist education on the island.[28] Having adopted the robe and demeanor of a *bhikkhu*, a monastic member of the *sangha* or order of monks, Hewavitarne had changed his name to Anagarika Dharmapala (a "homeless," "defender of the faith") and had begun to learn Pali, the language of the Theravada canon. By January 1886 he had become general secretary of the Buddhist section of the Buddhist Theosophical Society and assistant secretary of the Buddhist Defense Committee, which became an early expression of nationalism, pride, and identity.[29]

In 1891, Dharmapala formed the Mahabodhi Society, which was organized to help free Buddhagaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment, from control of the British. While the effort was not successful, it brought Dharmapala to Calcutta where he had contact with Indian nationalists, further alienating him from the West.[30] The *Maha Bodhi Journal* was established in 1892, and for the first third of the twentieth century it carried Dharmapala's support of Buddhist nationalism and his critiques of what he understood as the debased and broken expression of Christianity.

The Parliament of Religions in 1893 gave Dharmapala an opportunity to bring these concerns directly to the United States. Rather than risk alienating his audience, he tempered his anti-Christian rhetoric with long

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[28] Ananda Guruge, ed., *Return to Righteousness: A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala* (Ceylon, 1965), xxxiv.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] H. L. Seneviratne, *The Work of Kings: The New Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (Chicago, 2000), 131.

speeches that attempted to introduce Buddhism. Despite this, the press described him as the "Other" in a classical expression of Orientalism.

> With his black curly locks thrown back from his broad brow, his keen, clear eye fixed upon the audience, his long brown fingers emphasizing the utterances of his vibrant voice [Dharmapala] looked the very image of a propagandist, and one trembled to know that such a figure stood at the head of the movement to consolidate all the disciples of Buddha and to spread "the light of Asia" throughout the civilized world.[31]

However, by the twelfth day of the parliament, and in the context of the scheduled section on "Criticism and Discussion of Missionary Methods," Dharmapala risked reversing this language of alterity. Employing the same lens through which Orientalists had viewed India, he cast the Christian West in the role of a failed religious tradition and linked that failure to immorality and selfishness. Dharmapala reminded his audience,

> For nineteen centuries you have had Christianity in Europe. Only during the last three centuries have attempts been made to propagate it in the East and with unsuccessful results. The platform you have built up must be entirely reconstructed if Christianity is to make progress in the East. You must send men full of unselfishness.... The missionaries sent to Ceylon, China or Burmah [*sic*], as a rule, have not the tolerance that we need. The missionary is intolerant; he is selfish.[32]

Following the parliament, Dharmapala became a global traveler, returning several times to the United States and increasing his anti-Christian rhetoric. Establishing a *vihara* or monastery in London, he quickly became an international spokesperson for Buddhism, often no longer seeking to make amends with Christianity. By 1922 he had even claimed, "The life of Jesus was an absolute failure."[33] In the same year, he had also further unleashed his fury against the British, claiming,

> We are blindly following the white man who has come here to demoralize us for his own gain. He asks us to buy his whisky, and we allow him to bamboozle us. He tells us that we should drink toddy and arrack separately, that we should teach our children Latin and Greek and keep them in ignorance of our own beautiful literature.[34]

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[31] Richard Hughes Seager, *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893* (LaSalle, IL, 1993), 420.

[32] "Address of Mr. H. Dharmapala," in *World's Parliament*, 2; "Criticism and Discussion of Missionary Methods," 2:1093.

[33] Anagarika Dharmapala, "Buddhist Studies in Ceylon," *Maha Bodhi Journal* 22 (Feb. 1914), in Guruge, *Return to Righteousness*, 500.

[34] Dharmapala, "A Message to the Young Men of Ceylon" in Guruge, *Return to Righteousness*, 509.

Dharmapala was, as defined by his very name, a "defender of the faith" whose mission was to regain a sense of pride in the past and to reestablish a Buddhist heritage that he felt years of European Christian oppression had decimated.

KINZA RIUGE M. HIRAI

Yet another Buddhist voice at the 1893 Parliament of Religions was Kinza Hirai, who in a paper titled "The Real Position of Japan toward Christianity" issued one of the severest critiques of Western Christianity in the parliament. Attacking the very fabric of Orientalism, Hirai critiqued the assumption that Japanese were either immoral or heathen.

> Another kind of apology comes from the religious source, and the claim is made that the Japanese are idolaters and heathen. Whether our people are idolaters or not you will know at once if you investigate our religious views without prejudice from the authentic Japanese source. But admitting for the sake of argument that we are idolaters and heathen, is it Christian morality to trample upon the rights and advantages of a non-Christian nation, coloring all their natural happiness with the dark stain of injustice?[35]

Continuing, he turned to Christian scripture suggesting some striking reversals.

> I read in the Bible, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right check, turn to him the other also"; but I cannot discover there any passage which says: "Whosoever shall demand justice of thee smite his right cheek, and when he turns smite the other also." Again, I read in the Bible: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"; but I cannot discover there any passage which says: "If thou shalt sue any man at the law, and take away his coat, let him give thee his cloak also." You send your missionaries to Japan, and they advise us to be moral and believe Christianity. We like to be moral, we know that Christianity is good; and we are very thankful for this kindness. But at the same time our people are rather perplexed and very much in doubt about their advice.[36]

Borrowing the vision of human rights from the heart of Christianity and lifting it up as a mirror, Hirai employed the language of alterity to question the destruction of Japanese society by the West.

Much like Dharmapala's warning to Christian missionaries, Hirai also implied that Western civilization had not lived up to the very principles

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[35] Hirai, "Real Position of Japan," 1: 448.
[36] *Ibid.*

implicit in its religious heritage. In its zeal to implant Christianity in Japan, Europeans themselves had acted immorally, dividing the nation in the civil war of 1637 and supporting the violent rebellion of converts against the shogun. Similarly, in 1858, the West had led the Japanese into a treaty that, Hirai argued, had deprived the Japanese of their "rights and advantages."[37] In short, the West had become "the Other." As American missionaries had attempted to bring morality and accurate interpretation of scripture to the East, so now Hirai quoted the Bible to Americans, helping them to see in their own terms what they had done.

THE LEGACY OF THE PARLIAMENT

The parliament was the first time that Americans encountered extreme religious diversity in public life. The seventeen-day event was part of the largest, most grandiose public event of its day and was understood as a seminal occasion in the history of the nation. The speakers at the parliament used the occasion to educate their Victorian audience about Eastern religions, and also to hold up a mirror so that American Christians could see themselves. They argued that the core of the Christian religion had been lost, that the words of Jesus had been misinterpreted, and that American Christians practiced idolatry in their own right. By reversing the metaphor of "the Other," they also took on some of the characteristics of the American missionary movement, setting the stage for their own missions in the United States. In the years that followed, a stream of Vedanta teachers, gurus, Granthis, and imams could be found among the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities in the United States.

While the parliament did initiate such examples of "reverse" missions, the larger attempt of Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai to call into question the fabric of American Christianity failed. Not the least of the persons who failed to accept their efforts was prime mover of the parliament, John Henry Barrows. After the parliament, Barrows embarked on what he called a "world pilgrimage."[38] Using a donation of $20,000 from supporter Caroline Haskell, Barrows lectured extensively in India and Japan, attempting to counter the invectives of Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai by emphasizing what he understood as the role of Christianity as a world religion.

> My second purpose was to lodge in the Hindu mind that Christianity is essentially a universal religion, divinely adapted to the spiritual needs of

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[37] *Ibid.*
[38] John Henry Barrows, *Christianity the World-Religion: Lectures Delivered in India and Japan* (Chicago, 1897), 17.

each man, whatever his race, rank or nation.... Christianity ... appeared to the Hindu mind chiefly as the religion of his English conquerors. Then he came to regard it as the faith belonging in various forms to the Western world of railroads and iron steamers, the world of fire-arms and materialistic science. He clearly saw some of the unlovely aspects of Christendom.... It was, therefore, my effort to show that Christianity, judged by any tests which bring out its true nature, is the universal religion.[39]

The position articulated by Barrows found a home in the growing sentiment in America that rejected diversity and instead demanded that ideals of citizenship be equated with a homogeneous white, Protestant culture. Within eleven years of Barrows' address this viewpoint had been articulated in a play that captured the nation's attention.

THE MELTING POT

Israel Zangwill's *The Melting-Pot* first appeared in American theaters in 1908 and presented a vision of the resistance to difference, finding support in the growing tide of homogenization.[40] Zangwill's work, which had not done well in theaters, had been performed on college campuses across the nation and had succeeded in popularizing a vision of the melting of differences radically different from the pluralist vision of Vivekananda, Dharmapala, and Hirai.

The play was developed around the experience of Russian Jews who had been persecuted under the Czars and who had found refuge in the United States. For Zangwill, both religion and ethnicity were divisive parts of Old World existence. Using the central character of the play, David Quixano, Zangwill describes the attack that resulted in the destruction of his family.

I was playing my cracked little fiddle. Little Miriam was making her doll dance to it.... My father flies in through the door, desperately clasping to his breast the Holy Scroll. We cried out to him to explain that in that beloved mouth of song there is no longer a tongue – only blood. He tries to bar the door – a mob breaks in – we dash out through the back into the street. There are the soldiers – and the Face.... When I came to myself, with a curious aching in my left shoulder, I saw lying beside me a strange shapeless Something. By the crimson doll in what seemed a hand I knew it must be Miriam. The doll was a dream of beauty and perfection beside the mutilated mass which was all that remained of my sister,

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[39] *Ibid.*, 15–16.
[40] Israel Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot: Drama in Four Acts* (New York, 1912).

of my mother, of greedy little Solomon. Oh! You Christians can only see
that rosy splendor [*sic*] on the horizon of happiness. And the Jew didn't
see rosily enough for you, ha! ha! ha! the Jew who gropes in one great
crimson mist.[41]

Zangwill developed an amalgamationist ideology in which cultural and
religious differences were not just assimilated into American society, but
completely reduced, resulting in a new level of primary identity. Zangwill
offered this as a solution to what he saw as the suffering that derived from
combative European ethnic and religious identities. *The Melting-Pot* pre-
sented this conclusion by drawing on the experiences of a Jewish family
that experienced the Russian pogroms.

In the first part of the play, David's father becomes a symbol of the
dominance of the tradition and the family's attachment to it. However,
by the onslaught of the pogrom, David begins to understand that reli-
gion was a source of continual suffering. Seeing his father carrying a scroll,
David erupted, saying, "We cried out to him trying to explain that in that
beloved song there is no longer a tongue – only blood."[42]

Zangwill was convinced that such blood feuds were inevitable unless,
in the context of a new nation, they could be prevented through a radical
process of altering the patterns of heredity and allegiance. The metaphor
that he constructed to illustrate this point drew on the eighteenth-
century work of J. Hector Saint John de Crevecoeur, which had first
described the melting pot.[43] However, Zangwill's imagery was even more
dynamic.

There she lies, the great Melting Pot – listen! Can't you hear the roaring and
the bubbling? There gapes her mouth – the harbour [*sic*] where a thousand
mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human
freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Tuton,
Greek and Syrian, – black and yellow....[44]

Using theological language, Zangwill concluded that in this cauldron "the
great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame" and that a
new creation, the American, would be born.[45]

[41] *Ibid.*, 168–9.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] J. Hector Saint John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer Describing Certain
Provincial Situations, Manners and Customs and Conveying Some of the Late and Present Interior
Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America* (London, 1782).
[44] *Ibid.*, 198–9.
[45] *Ibid.*, 199.

HORACE KALLEN AND THE REBUTTAL
TO MELTING POT IDEOLOGY

In its reversal of the Orientalist images of "the Other," the 1893 Parliament of Religions had widened and deepened the rhetoric of American pluralism. However, as the nation continued to struggle with its attitudes toward immigration and race, few advances were made in any further articulation of a pluralist philosophy. It was not until 1915 that a rebuttal to the amalgamationist philosophy of *The Melting Pot* emerged.

A Harvard graduate, Horace Kallen, entered the national debate about diversity in 1915, following publication of an article, "Democracy versus the Melting Pot" in *The Nation*.[46] Resisting the melting pot imagery, Kallen insisted that it was unsuitable for a democracy and incompatible with the American ideal. Instead, he proposed a metaphor of "the orchestra," which looked to harmony rather than an attempt to create the same sound.

> As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic group is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is played; in the symphony of civilization the playing is the writing, so that there is nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions as in music, so that within the limits set by nature they may vary at will, and the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful.[47]

While Kallen's rebuttal did not single out religion in the manner of the 1893 parliament, it did counter *The Melting Pot*'s assumption that attempts to create unity among religions through an umbrella-like vision of truth were deeply flawed. Instead, his metaphor of an orchestra assumed that harmony was the product of the role of each instrument playing its appropriate theme. In turn, this meant that a call for tolerance was also inappropriate since this idea was built on a hierarchical ordering of religions in which democratic values could not exist.

While the parliament had looked at religion separately from culture, emphasizing the plurality of belief systems, Kallen rejected this idea,

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[46] Horace Kallen, "Democracy versus the Melting Pot: A Study of American Nationality," *The Nation*, 25 Feb. 1915, 190–4, 217–22.

[47] *Ibid.*, vi.

seeing religion and ethnicity as interdependent. He also came to believe later in his career that any equality between faiths could only be achieved through a secular model of interfaith conversation.[48]

CONTINUING ASIAN IMMIGRATION: THE CALL FOR A HOMOGENEOUS SOCIETY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

The debate between Zangwill and Kallen fueled conflicting understandings of national identity. On one hand, in a reiteration of the American triumphalism that had been so much a part of the parliament, the nation was defined as a predominantly Christian culture. Yet Americans were also seen as refugees from tyranny with varying expressions of racial, ethnic, and religious identity.[49] National symbols of these opposing voices were not hard to find. In the New York harbor, as immigrants continued to pour through the gates of Ellis Island where they were encouraged to forgo their cultural origins, they also looked up to the beacon of the Statue of Liberty, which offered to protect their freedom.

This debate was not just a matter for philosophers. Instead, it struck at the heart of the American experience. Drawing on the language of alterity, the melting pot ideology soon created strong public outcries for a uniform society that resisted any further diversification. In 1913 California passed the Alien Land Act, targeting the number of Japanese in the state.[50] Similar laws followed in Washington and other states. This legislation, coupled with yellow journalism and fear of religious difference, produced a climate in which Orientalist images of "the Other" found continuing expression and support.

This fear was further escalated by a national attack on the movement that later would be identified as Jehovah's Witnesses. Drawing on the authority of Charles Taze Russell, who in the 1870s in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had predicted the imminent danger of Armageddon, his successor, Joseph Rutherford, wrote a text titled *The Finished Mystery* that predicted that the final onslaught would begin in 1918.[51] The book predicted anarchy, the widespread destruction of churches, and the dissolution of the dominant

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[48] *Ibid.*, http://www.exp098.msu.edu/people/Kallen.htm (accessed 12 June 2009).
[49] See Richardson, *Strangers in This Land*, 1–51, 105–29.
[50] Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights and the Asian American Experience* (Piscataway, NJ, 2006), 29.
[51] Charles Taze Russell, *The Finished Mystery*, vol. 7 in *Studies in Scriptures* (Brooklyn, 1917–20), 474, http://www.strictlygenteel.co.uk/finishedmystery/fme23.html (accessed 16 June 2009).

expressions of American Christianity. Taking the form of commentary on the apocalyptic visions of Ezekiel and Revelation, the text argued that American Protestantism would be destroyed.

In quick order, Rutherford's movement was condemned and labeled as un-American. Rutherford and seven of his supporters were arrested in 1918 for violating both the Selective Service Act of 1917 and the Espionage Act of 1917. Although the convictions were overturned the following year, the arrests fell within the pattern of an escalating national consciousness about religious diversity.

By 1917, the cry for an end to eastern hemisphere migration also reached a fever pitch. Congress passed a series of laws intended to make it virtually impossible for Asian peoples to enter the United States. The first of these laws, the Immigration Act of 1917, created a barred zone, aimed particularly at South Asia, that prevented further migration from India. Four years later, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1921, which limited further migration to the United States by establishing quotas based on 3 percent of persons of that nationality already residing in the country. The law was particularly targeted at Japanese farmers in California. Finally, in 1924 Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the Immigration Act of 1924, which effectively ended any further migration from the eastern hemisphere and which remained, essentially unaltered, until amended 41 years later in 1965, when this policy was reversed.

The immigration policy of the United States was now firmly rooted not only in assimilationist philosophy, but also in racism. The passage of the Johnson-Reed Act had been assisted by a racially based Supreme Court decision in 1923, the *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*.

Once again, the questions of ethnicity and religion had been conjoined in a national debate. Bhagat Singh Thind was a Sikh who, attempting to gain U.S. citizenship, had argued that as a person of Aryan descent, he should be considered Caucasian. Thind had come to the United States as a student. Before the war he had joined the Hindustan Association of the United States, a group of Indian nationalists in California who sought to end British rule in India. The movement was dubbed "Ghadr," or mutiny. However, Thind's student career and his activity in the Ghadr movement were curtailed when he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1918. Eventually rising to the rank of acting sergeant, Thind had a successful military career and was honorably discharged. Following the war, he received a citizenship certificate by a district court.[52] However, the local court's decision was

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[52] "Pioneer Asian Indian Immigration to the Pacific Coast Legislation," in "Sikh Pioneers: Indian American Pioneers to North America," http://www.sikhpioneers.org/legis.html (accessed 16 June 2009).

challenged by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Eventually the case was tried before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In writing for the majority, in responding to Thind's claim that as an Asian Indian of Aryan descent he should be considered Caucasian, Justice Sutherland concluded,

> What we now hold is that the words "free white persons" are the words of common speech, to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man, synonymous with the word "Caucasian" only as that word is popularly understood. As so understood and used, whatever may be the speculations of the ethnologist, it does not include the body of people to whom the appellee belongs.[53]

For Sutherland and for the court, racial distinctions could not be based on ancestry, but instead only on "understanding of the common man." Further, the court insisted that "Aryan" was a linguistic term and was therefore completely removed from the classification of race. The term "Caucasian" was also problematical since its scientific meaning would be "wholly unfamiliar to the original framers of the statute in 1790."[54] Therefore, the court was able to affirm that while some authorities might recognize Bhagat Singh Thind as Caucasian, in conventional usage this did not mean the same thing as white person.

The court's position was a final, authoritative restatement of the ideology of "the Other" and of the argument for American cultural homogeneity. As a Punjabi Sikh claiming to be of Aryan heritage, Bhagat Singh Thind was found by the court not to be a "free white person" and therefore, as an alien, ineligible for citizenship. The only "solution" to the problems of aliens from this point of view was either to eliminate them through closure of immigration systems or, as Israel Zangwill popularized in *The Melting Pot*,[55] to transform them into Americans so that they were indistinguishable. In the immigration legislation of the early twentieth century and the assimilationist policies that followed, America chose both options.

Following the closing of the nation's door to any further eastern hemisphere migration in 1924, Sikhs like Thind, who were increasingly isolated from their cultural context, became completely assimilated into American society, resulting in a dilution of their religious tradition. In the Stockton gurdwara, instead of sitting on the floor in traditional Sikh fashion, chairs were installed.[56] Head coverings used during the reading of the

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[53] *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, 261 U.S. 204 (1923), http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?navby=CASE&court=US&vol=261&page=204 (accessed 10 June 2009).

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot*.

[56] Richardson, *East Comes West*, 122–5.

Guru Granth Sahib were no longer mandatory. In Arizona and California, where Sikh men often found an absence of Indian women, intermarriage with Roman Catholic Hispanics became common. As a result, children often gravitated toward the religion of their mother, and all connections with Sikhism were lost.

REINVENTING THE PARLIAMENT: RENEWED CALLS FOR PLURALITY

This escalating call for a homogeneous America cast a pall on the ability of American pluralists to find much support for their position. Throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, the question of difference was frequently at odds with the dominant position of American society.

Again, religion, race, and ethnicity were conjoined as legislation began to place limits on marriage. In Arizona, the stereotype of Asian Indians as "Hindus" resulted in a prohibition against intermarriage with "Negroes, Hindus, Mongolians, members of the Malay race or Indians, and their descendents."[57] In a number of states, laws prohibiting intermarriage with nonwhites proliferated after 1924. In Georgia, a law enacted in 1927 listed "West Indian, Asiatic Indian, Maylay, Japanese, or Chinese." Other states including Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama, and Georgia added the designation "White Purity" to their miscegenation laws.[58]

During this period the interfaith vision of the 1893 parliament survived, but in weakened form. In 1933, a second Parliament of Religions was convened in Chicago under the leadership of Kedar Nath Das Gupta and Charles Weller.[59] Weller was a social worker and had started an interfaith group in 1918 called the League of Neighbors.[60] Das Gupta had accompanied Rabindranath Tagore to the United States in 1920 and decided to remain, starting a similar coalition, the Union of East and West. Forming yet another alliance called the Fellowship of Faiths, they agreed to organize another parliament on the same model as the first, this time coinciding with the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. In the end, the event did create some momentum and succeeded in attracting 44,000 people. Capitalizing on this success, a similar gathering, the World Congress of Faiths, was convened in 1936. Other interfaith coalitions had also emerged including the

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[57] Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York, 2009), 117–19.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Marcus Braybrooke, "The Beginning," World Congress of Faiths, http://www .worldfaiths.org/Beginning.htm (accessed 16 June, 2009).

[60] Wendell Thomas, *Hinduism Invades America* (Whitefish, 2003), 190.

Inter-Religious League, which had been organized in 1921 by the noted scholar Rudolph Otto.

However, for the majority of Americans, religious diversity was still a threat rather than a promise. Texts such as Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, which was rereleased in an incredible thirty-eight printings between 1927 and 1932, offered a barrage of stereotypical portraits of Asian Indians as "the Other," focusing on images of poverty, drug abuse, and abuse of women and children and terrifying images of Hinduism.[61]

In the text's introduction, Mayo describes an animal sacrifice. Describing the killing of a goat in Calcutta in terms designed to sicken the reader, Mayo records the shouts of "Kali! Kali! Kali!" to the Hindu mother goddess.[62] She continues,

> Meantime, and instantly, a woman who waited behind the killers of the goat has rushed forward and fallen on all fours to lap up the blood with her tongue – "in the hope of having a child." And now a second woman, stooping, sops at the blood with a cloth, and thrusts the cloth into her bosom, while half a dozen sick, sore dogs, horribly misshapen by nameless diseases, stick their hungry muzzles into the lengthening pool of gore.[63]

For the majority of Americans who read these diatribes in page after page of stereotypical images about Hinduism, there was little incentive to believe anything else other than the pagan nature of the tradition and its reliance on immorality.

Yet, the historical record amply demonstrates that in those periods when the belief in American homogeneity achieved a dominant voice, the pluralist vision also remained a consistent part of our experience. The debate between pluralism and homogeneity remains part of our national consciousness. It produced a furor over slavery and abolition, and it precipitated a struggle about the role of Native Americans. It engendered lasting symbols of difference in the battles for alternative religions fought by Roman Catholics and Mormons. In the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, against all odds and the wishes of its founders, diversity had achieved an important place in the changing American religious landscape. In this, the parliament had broadened the vision of plurality that more than 200 years after the founding of the nation had now become part of the American experiment. It also had reminded Western civilization of the dangers of its own absolutism and, in a theme that would be repeated in successive periods of American history, the ways in which a distant mirror can help us to see ourselves.

[61] Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (New York, 1927).
[62] *Ibid.*, 6.
[63] *Ibid.*

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METAPHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

CATHERINE L. ALBANESE

Ingredients for the metaphysical religiosity that pervaded American culture in the nineteenth century and afterward came from a variety of sources. They had been in place in early America from the seventeenth century in the confluence of European esotericism, European – and especially English – country magic, Native American ceremonial belief and practice, and African American worldviews and ritual behavior. In the contact and encounter between different peoples and cultures, ideas and enactments combined and blended without much attention paid to the process. People did what worked and did not stop to label precisely or count ideological costs. Thus across the panoply of cultures that met in the British North Atlantic colonies – and similarly in the other huge tracts of territory that would later become part of the United States – webs of interrelated assumptions and practices could be identified. Broadly labeled magical, these included such domains as astrology, treasure hunting, water witching, healing lore, love conjuration, divination of signs and omens, malediction making, and the like.

While at first glance the list seems anomalous and the invocation of magic dismissive in religious terms, closer scrutiny reveals that, at least for high culture aficionados, a sophisticated work of world construction underlay these and similar beliefs and practices. Magic existed as a form of religion, and the religion that magic expressed was and is metaphysical. What, then, makes religion metaphysical, and what are the governing assumptions that ground the metaphysical project? Making sense of this will better explain what happened in the nineteenth century when a series of important metaphysical movements congealed and when the culture as a whole took on a characteristic metaphysical hue that was often as invisible on the surface as it was penetrating beneath.

Here, as the term "metaphysical" already hints (literally, "beyond the physical"), the nebulous "object" that metaphysically minded people called "Mind" or labeled similarly (e.g., Intellect, Reason, Truth, Principle)

commanded first place. Mind was both cosmic and human; it existed in the nature of things and ruled both nonphysical and physical reality. It, in fact, was that reality, the Source of all, unfailing and omnipresent. The relationship of different aspects of the universe to one another, thus, was one best described in the theory of correspondence, which taught that pieces of the universe "fit" one another and that the universe echoed itself repeatedly. In the simplest – and probably most prevalent – expression of this idea, the microcosm of human life and society reflected and even contained, in a small-scale version, the larger, grander reality of the macrocosm – the world of Nature, the Cosmos, God, the Gods. Metaphysicians typically acknowledged their version of the theory by positing the Mind that individual human minds modeled and in which they participated. As above, so below ran the adage. As held in (human) mind, so in (divine) Mind or Source, said metaphysicians.

Not only was this a case of structural conformity, but an energetic relationship existed between the corresponding worlds. The larger one, or macrocosm, breathed life into the smaller – in a continuing process of influx or inflow without which the smaller reality could not exist. More energy meant more life, blocked energy signaled deficient life, and no energy bespoke death. So it was that metaphysicians – feeling neither fully alive nor certainly dead – set the agenda for their lives lived in the middle. With magic – which operated using the power of mind and imagination – as their tool, they worked according to the tenets of the theory of correspondence. Mind/imagination became the instrument that brought the good they desired. Salvation became, in this magical world, a power that they themselves controlled, and they thought of it increasingly as a form of healing. Literally anything could be "healed" – a body, a mind, an emotional complex, a soul, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, even a purse. The divine influx was always and everywhere abundant. The trick (of magic) was to unblock the floodgates or clean out the reservoir and let in the flow. It was a trick of mind and imagination that involved alignment, symmetry, and positive vision, all creating a sympathy with the Source that sent the flow. Made sufficiently "real" through faith, imagination, or will/mind, the energy that was Source and Supply spilled over into physically lived reality to induce the change that was desired.

This is at best a freeze-frame of magical theory and envisagement, an attempt to suggest the work of religious imagination that commanded the hearts and minds of the metaphysically inclined. What needs to be added, though, are the new cultural forms and events that captured mainstream life in the United States after the Revolutionary War and on into the early nineteenth century. Together these new cultural developments provided an important matrix for the growth of identifiable metaphysical movements

and the spread of a more general metaphysical sensibility in society. American historians have already rehearsed this tale, and it needs only to be summarized. In the heady post–Revolutionary War atmosphere – after the propaganda mills had effectively ground out their message of power to the people – government, medicine, and religion all felt the effects of the new ideology.

Even if the new United States was technically a constitutional republic and not a full democracy (consider the Electoral College and property, gender, and racial requirements for full citizen rights), the idea of democracy had become a shibboleth. The stage was already being set for the presidential arrival in 1828 of Andrew Jackson, the homespun hero of the War of 1812 and the man from frontier Tennessee. Meanwhile, a flurry of alternative and irregular medical practitioners, such as Thomsonian herbal healers with their Family Right plan, plied their optimistic trades. In religion, the new democratic ethos encouraged the appearance of a series of charismatic sectarians who announced new creeds and commitments for those willing and daring enough to throw off religious "experts" and traditions.

Add to this a burgeoning urbanism that brought people from family farms and small communities (where relatives and neighbors lived traditional lives) into larger industry-driven towns and cities. For the migrants, the anonymous other became a question (and answer) that challenged received wisdom and offered something new and something more in a situation of anomie and insecurity. At the same time, a communications revolution was adding to eighteenth-century newsprint and broadsides new technologies that promoted the spread of ideas quickly and efficiently. Stereotype printing made mass production easier and friendlier, even as steamboats and trains helped make delivery of products impressively quicker than before. Still more, an army of colporteurs, commissioned by sectarian groups and mainstream denominations alike, distributed religious literature of various stripes to the masses. Migrants and emigrants could absorb new religious information to match their uprooted locales. Indeed, there was something about frontier realities (e.g., the New West of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky) and mentalities that invited the creative religious imagination. Fresh ideas and practices suited new times and places. So a novel religious aesthetic was being born, and religious tastes were changing with the temporal and territorial changes.

Early-nineteenth-century hints of what was to come arrived in a variety of forms. The new sect of Universalists, for example, preached universal salvation and a God of love who also seemed to prize religious experiment, to invite borderline mental states, and to supply a steady stream of miracles and synchronicities. As notable was the heterodox Mormon growth after 1830. Mormon mystical and magical theology announced not only Joseph

Smith's "Gold Bible," but also such Hermetic good news as the Gods that humans were to become and, with the Swedenborgians (see below), the materiality of the heavenly realm. Yet again, the small but intense group popularly known as Shakers were experiencing by 1837 a revitalization movement that involved communication with the spirit of their founder, Ann Lee, as well as a host of other deceased Shakers, historical notables, and assorted Indians and blacks. In the meantime, Freemasons – who at the time of the American Revolution were stressing the Protestant ethic and behavior that was straight and square – had seen their fortunes plummet in the anti-Masonry crusade of 1826 and after. Undeterred and perhaps in part because of the new context, they were turning increasingly to more mystical and "spiritual" versions of their ritual in the development of Royal Arch Masonry.

Even as vernacular culture was thriving on these and similar forms of religious experiment and change, elites were participating in the new Romanticism imported from Europe and also indigenously active in the American Renaissance. Romantically inclined ministers like Hartford's Horace Bushnell were reading the life of seventeenth-century quietist Madame (Jeanne Marie Bouvières de la Mothe) Guyon and the writings of Archbishop François Fenelon of Cambray (France). They were also imbibing an evolving theology of feeling announced by German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, and they had learned that religion involved intuitive states of mind more than logically precise doctrinal formulas.

Among Unitarians – erstwhile Congregationalists with a theology not dissimilar to Universalism – salvation turned increasingly on self-culture. With their emphasis on the unity of God and the in-between nature of Jesus – more than human but less than the Father because he had been "begotten" – Unitarians were decidedly revising tradition. Sermons stressed the cultivation of moral states, and a high doctrine of human nature was subtly transforming Jesus from Redeemer to Elder Brother. But Unitarians, who flourished in the environs of Boston and the shadow of Harvard, were consummate rationalists. They read the Bible as factual record, and they looked to gospel miracles as external proofs of the mission of Jesus and the truth of the Christian message. Exceedingly wary of a Romanticism that exalted intuition over reason, they spawned their own left wing in the Transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, George Ripley, James Freeman Clarke, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, and others.

In the so-called miracles controversy of 1836, the group of dissidents who came to be known as Transcendentalists, most of them Unitarian ministers or (in Emerson's case) former ministers, rebutted Unitarian rationalism with their proclamation of the grounds for believing scripture. They

knew the Gospels told the truth not because of the evidence of miracles but intuitively, because their hearts burned within them as they read the biblical text. By contrast to the intuitions of the heart, the Christian churches were moribund and dead; the vitalism of inner and outer nature was not part of their reality. More than that, the natural world, as Emerson (1803–82) had proclaimed in his small but revolutionary book *Nature* (1836), was a sign or symbol of the inner world of spirit. Words were signs of natural facts, and natural facts were signs of spiritual ones in a grand analogy of human and divine creation that brought the theory of correspondence to the attention of a new generation. For their contemporaries, Emerson and the other Transcendentalists were speaking and writing in a decidedly different way based on unorthodox perceptions of the world and their place therein. At the same time, they were experimenting with different lifestyles that valorized Unitarian self-culture more thoroughly or tried out versions of communalism on utopian models. Underlying all that they taught and did were the basic metaphysical concepts that would run through a series of emergent movements in their time and later.

Ironically, even as the Transcendentalists – especially Emerson, Ripley, and Parker – bashed the rationalistic Unitarian reprise on miracles, they brought in their own magical and miraculous understandings. Emerson expressed "New School" views best in *Nature*. There he made it clear that miracles were the *natural* order that had been humanity's original condition, that now humans lived only half lives because they had shriveled drastically and did not operate, as once they had, out of their full powers. In that long-ago era, humans were permeated through and through by spirit. The source of the sun and the moon, humans – using the law of their minds – had brought the day and the night, the year and its seasons. But now the waters had ebbed, and humans were shrunken versions of their former selves. Still, occasional flashes of the original power came. Emerson supplied his list of such flashes, a cut-and-paste catalog that included the miracles of antiquity, the history of Jesus, another set of miracles such as those attributed to Emanuel Swedenborg and the Shakers, and animal magnetism or mesmerism. There were even the miracles of the moral order, such as revolutions and the end of the slave trade. In a final fillip, there were "prayer; eloquence; self-healing; and the wisdom of children."[1]

This rendition of the miraculous powers of mind already points to its energetic quotient. Indeed, the Transcendentalists as a group all participated in what might be termed a kinetic revolution. As they regarded

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[1] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in Alfred R. Ferguson et al., eds., *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, vol. 1 of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 42–3.

nature and saw its symmetries with Mind, they habitually perceived nature as on the move – streams flowing, fountains bubbling up, land-scapes flying by as one rode the wondrous new "railroad cars" of the day. Everything, seemingly, pointed to ferment and change; and on their lead-ing nineteenth-century edge, the Transcendentalists found an ethic for living in joining the stream and allowing its currents to carry them. In so doing, besides mirroring the historical ferment of their era, Emerson and the other Transcendentalists were grasped by ideologies that came espe-cially from two intellectual sources.

One was the theoretical framework supplied by Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815), which had been spread abroad in vernacular America – in small towns as well as large cities – by a growing cadre of animal magne-tists. With notions of an invisible fluid permeating all reality and the tidal cycles of this fluid, magnetists followed Mesmer in understanding illness as blockage in the flow. It was therefore the task of the animal magnetist to use his powers to entrance a willing, ailing subject, thus removing the obstacle and unblocking the flow. Nature did the rest. The other source was the the-ology of the then-renowned Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish Leonardo da Vinci whose brilliant intellectual powers were matched by his mystical ones. In a series of voice-visions that came to him from his middle years, Swedenborg taught his influential doctrine of the divine influx, an immediate and continuing flow that held each existent life and inanimate object in existence. According to Swedenborgian teaching, if the influx were to be withdrawn, a being – all beings – would perish.

Both mesmerism and Swedenborgianism, with their conceptual frames of free flow and consequent wholeness, pointed the path toward an emer-gent view of "salvation" in Transcendental rhetoric and life. Perhaps best instantiated in the Transcendental Club of 1836 and after, as well as in Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's conversations for the public in 1833 and Margaret Fuller's later "conversations" from 1839 to 1844 in the back room of Peabody's bookstore, the Transcendentalists found healing wis-dom in the ritual of speech. Conversation, for them, circulated spiritual currents and unblocked obstructions to unity; it represented a heightened exercise of self-culture. Indeed, it was the model of the conversation, with life flowing into life, that set the agenda for the two Transcendentalist ven-tures in experimental communities – that of George Ripley's Brook Farm from 1841 to 1847 (as a Fourierist phalanx for its last three of these years) and Amos Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands in 1843.

For a small group of elite New Englanders, the Transcendentalists enjoyed a surprising vernacular following. Publications abounded, and Emerson at least sold his essays with considerable success. More to the propaganda point, Emerson and Parker (1810–60), especially, were renowned public

speakers: Emerson played his part as a kind of secular sermonist who traveled hither and yon to lecture at public lyceums, and Parker in turn played his as a radical preacher who embraced antislavery as well as a Father-Mother God. Even Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) engaged in a modest amount of lyceum activity, while Transcendentalist ministers such as Clarke, with his Cincinnati-based periodical, *The Western Messenger*, spread the new views in a subtler, denomination-friendly form.

More widespread in its vernacular notice, however, was Swedenborgianism, the Hermetic teaching from Sweden that, as we have seen, had been a major influence on the emergence of Transcendentalism. The name of Emanuel Swedenborg was almost a household commodity from early on in nineteenth-century America. In fact, addressing the influence of Swedenborg's ideas for Mormons, D. Michael Quinn has pointed to the widespread familiarity of the upstate New York public with Swedenborg through material available in the public library as well as through the small-town newspaper.[2] Meanwhile, Swedenborg's followers, like the fabled Johnny Appleseed, fanned out across rural America with their own tracts and pamphlets. With this seemingly ubiquitous presence, Swedenborg's writings had first made their way into the United States among elites in the wake of the Revolutionary War. By the late 1780s, some of Swedenborg's writings were being printed in English (he had originally written them in Latin) in Philadelphia and New York, and by the 1790s in Boston, where Unitarian readers made them a fashion. Sampson Reed became the foremost American interpreter of Swedenborg, and his *Observations on the Growth of the Mind* (1826) enjoyed marked attention and influence. Emerson himself had been among those who had studied it carefully and learned from the Swedenborgian theory of correspondence there propounded.

Swedenborg had come from Lutheran roots – in fact, he was the son of a Lutheran bishop and from a family ennobled because of the episcopal appointment. As he advanced his metaphysical teaching – his own appropriation of the Hermeticism of post-Renaissance Europe – he did so with an originality and force that reconstituted the teaching with particular attention to biblical and Protestant Christian concerns. While the Church of the New Jerusalem (or the New Church as it was popularly called) had begun (after Swedenborg's death) in London in 1787 and had quickly spread to America, the real impact of Swedenborg's ideas came not through an ecclesial organization but through his writings. Moreover, as Swedenborgian ideas spread, they mixed and mingled with vernacular notions advanced by both elites and nonelites.

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[2] D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City, 1987), 12–13.

If we examine the Swedenborgian theology taught in the corpus of his works, we find a series of metaphysical teachings that, by the nineteenth century, made their way into a surprising number of cultural corners. We have already noticed the Swedenborgian doctrine of influx as it helped to catalyze Transcendentalist thinking. Still more, Emerson's own ideas of correspondence between different aspects of the world – language, nature, spirit most notably – had largely been suggested to him by Swedenborg via Sampson Reed. Swedenborg's writings, in the twelve volumes of his *Arcana Coelestia* available in English from 1784, had applied the theory of correspondence to scriptural texts, eschewing a surface meaning for a deeper symbolic and moral import. Emerson to be sure had turned away from the Bible for his own applications of the idea of correspondence, but the later metaphysical movement – notably in its New Thought version from the end of the nineteenth century – would be indebted to Swedenborg for its "metaphysical" Bible studies.

And there was more. Swedenborg understood God as the Divine Human, collapsing the deity and a collective humanity in a mystical union meant not to demote divinity but to exalt it. The ramifications of this essentially mystical comprehension would be important to nineteenth-century and later America in increasingly pervasive theories of divine immanence – theories shared by groups as far ranging as Mormons, metaphysicians, and Protestant liberals. Thus, for metaphysical believers the theory of correspondence signaled that humans were made of the same "stuff" as divinity, and their deified status took on meaning in increasingly literal terms: God exists in me *as me*.

At the same time and perhaps paradoxically, the abstract quality of a Divine Human left a vast gulf between humans and their God. Swedenborg himself had talked continually to angelic beings in his visions, and they had taken him on tours of heaven and hell and acted the role of eager docents in his spiritual travels. For Swedenborgianism and the various metaphysical systems it influenced, the distance between God and earthbound humanity thus became increasingly bridged by angelic and, as well, human spirits. Implicitly challenging the growing evangelical emphasis on Jesus of Nazareth, Swedenborgians and other metaphysicians introduced a new familiarity with an army of "buffer" beings, who as the nineteenth century melted into the twentieth, became multiplied and still more important. In the trajectory of the metaphysical systems, God became ever more remote as a personality and character even as divinity came increasingly to reside in the human heart and mind. Now, though, when spiritual seekers wanted a world outside their own divine selves, they turned to angels and spirits (and, by the late twentieth century, also to channeled "entities").

In yet another legacy that Swedenborg's teaching imparted, the heavenly and hellside tours had demonstrated the palpable, tangible nature of these metaphysical spaces. Swedenborg had delighted in intricate descriptions of heavenly mansions, complete with accounts of table settings and silver service therein and flowers in heavenly gardens. He had recounted in exquisite detail the clothing that the angels wore. And he had gloried in the sensuousness of color and structure and the satiation of the senses. Indeed, in his book *Conjugial Love* (1768) he had spread the good news, even, of etherealized sex in heaven.

The materialism of heavenly landscapes also brought built-in notions of progress. The idea of influx already guaranteed this, but Swedenborg and his disciples saw the influx as continually improving the spirit beings in their heavenly situations. Moreover, Swedenborg's American disciples would especially turn to the need for spiritual and moral progress even in their earthly situation. So there was movement and change, desire being sought and gratified, energy being expanded seemingly everywhere in the Swedenborgian universe. Its translation into categories of healing and, over all, of Mind would take place notably in a series of American developments. We have already seen some of this in the combined Swedenborgian-mesmeric categories that yielded a theory of illness and health in terms of the blockage of energy flow and its release. That the agent of such release was the dominant mind and self of an animal magnetizer already pointed the way toward the metaphysical future. But the mediating movement for bringing these themes and practices together would be mass spiritualism or, as it was called at the time, "modern spiritualism."

American spiritualism had both experimental and philosophical beginnings, but when contemporaries and advocates spoke of mass spiritualism or modern spiritualism, they meant the experimental version. Here were the séance sitters who attended on mediums in small circles with hopes of visiting, usually, with deceased loved ones. Contemporary chroniclers of the spiritualist movement, including some – such as spiritualist Emma Hardinge who called the Shakers "John the Baptists" for mass spiritualism – noticed the Shaker-spiritualist connection.[3] Also noticeable was the relationship between radical Quakers and the early manifestations by the Fox sisters, which began the mass movement. After the young Kate and Maggie Fox claimed contact with a buried peddler at their rented house in Hydesville, New York, in 1848, they moved to Rochester to be with their older sister Leah. Her strong relationship with radical, breakaway Quakers was perhaps fortuitous. With a legacy of spiritualist beliefs *and* a

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[3] Emma Hardinge, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* (New York, 1870), 27.

strong reform agenda featuring antislavery and other issues, the Quakers proved to be a nurturing matrix for spiritualist belief and practice. Quaker theology – especially in its radical articulation – easily accommodated emergent spiritualist beliefs about the goodness of God and the divinity within; Quakers, after all, had been teaching about the "inner light" from their inception. The already progressive spiritual realms of Swedenborg grew more progressive still in this American manifestation, and progressive religion went hand in hand with the progressive politics and social policies the Quakers advanced. So spiritualism sprang up, seemingly like a wild growth, at the far edge of religious orthodoxy and quickly embraced a social reform agenda to match its radical religion.

Earlier than the widely reported activities of the Fox sisters and others who quickly began to emulate them, philosophical or speculative spiritualism had had its beginnings in a world suffused with mesmerism and Swedenborgianism. With Andrew Jackson Davis (1826–1910), often called the "Poughkeepsie seer," as its major advocate, philosophical spiritualism acquired its éclat under Davis' designation of it as the "harmonial philosophy." When the teenage Davis discovered after a public lecture on mesmerism in Poughkeepsie, New York, that he was an easy subject for magnetic induction, he began a long career as a trance physician, marriage and women's rights reformer, vernacular philosopher, lecturer, and polemical activist. Significantly, Emanuel Swedenborg became his ideological partner, although he turned Swedenborg's views in a decidedly American direction.

As a revisionary Swedenborgian, Davis in 1847 published a series of 157 trance-produced lectures as *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind*. Here Davis extolled human reason with enthusiasm, yet managed to modulate it into a different, more Romantic and mystical key in which magnetism and clairvoyance could be clearly identified. God became the Ur Magnet and Mind in a cosmos charged with magnetic energies. Reverberating through all the spheres of existence with its positive powers, this Magnet and Mind united a sympathetic chain of existences that received "impressions" from sources far or near. Still more, humans like Davis could communicate with spirits because spirits, in Davis' reading, were refined forms of matter. In what looked like an inversion of divine energy, Davis saw matter producing mind producing spirit. And matter, in the Davis cosmology, meant Nature.

In a specific innovation on received Swedenborgian doctrine, Davis took Swedenborg's six spheres – three of heaven and three of hell – and turned the spheres into spiritual planes. En route to a divine and magnetic Sun, a "Univercoelum" that – in Davis' profligate mix of metaphors – was also an ocean of liquid fire, these planes could be traversed by the likes of Davis, who could communicate new revelation. They were also the paths of

progression for all humanity, who after death moved from sphere to sphere until, when all had done so, the spheres deconstructed to give way to a new set of spheres. In other words, Davis' cosmos was one of eternal progress; literally, the road to "heaven" had become heaven.

With his facility in traveling through the spheres and to other planetary sites, Davis could confide to auditors and then readers a metaphysical roadmap to places beyond earth. He visited the planets, as Swedenborg had done, and described their inhabitants. Meanwhile, here on the terrestrial plane, he could expand on a variety of issues and circumstances. Among them were concerns regarding love and marriage. Harmonialists (i.e., followers of Davis), in general, were known for both their theoretical and practical enthusiasm for free love. Davis had gleaned from Swedenborg's teachings, especially in *Conjugial Love*, the belief that each soul had its twin, or counterpart – its other half to which/whom it needed to be joined to be complete. Davis' work as a women's rights advocate and marriage reformer, thus, had a strong metaphysical flavor. But in contrast to Swedenborg, Davis displayed a strong antipathy to Christianity and its scriptures. Knowledge in the Bible was partial at best, and in Davis' naturalistic rendering the sectarian record of Christianity was a dark mark on a planet that should be celebrating the light of reason and divine truth.

With clergy counting in Davis' view as the most abominable of all professions – the cause of all misery, conflict, and war – he proclaimed a way out of human pain through a selective appropriation of the socialism of French reformer Charles Fourier. Davis extolled the laws of association (later metaphysicians would render them more broadly as the laws of attraction) that brought cooperative communities into being. Here all jobs and professions were filled as each individual gravitated toward a preferred vocational choice that also, in the aggregate, guaranteed the perfectly sized and suited workforce for society. It was, in the end, love that made the mechanism move, and the love – as in Swedenborg's visions – was ever linked to wisdom.

The utopian passion that animated Davis seems, at first glance, far removed from the everyday concerns of experimental spiritualists seeking reunion with lost loved ones. But Davis was revered among them, even if many remained good and faithful Christians and eschewed Davis' anti-Christian diatribes. The spiritualist seer, in book after book, had much to say that explained how spiritualist phenomena occurred, and after the Civil War – when the fraud within spiritualist ranks (always there) grew more blatant – he vociferously condemned the scandals. By then, he and others could speak to a large population of spiritualists, for the movement had caught on in a major way among the American public. For the mid-1850s, contemporary observers were estimating the numbers of devotees in the

millions – from one to two million usually. Generally agreeing for the middle of the decade, historian Ernest Isaacs in 1983 offered the conservative estimate of one in twenty-eight million Americans who had identified with spiritualism as a new religion. For the following decade, Emma Hardinge enthusiastically proclaimed a figure of eleven million. She reported that by 1867 spiritualists had become one quarter of the U.S. population and also, in a still more inflated figure, cited a Baltimore church convention in which Catholics expressed their fears that spiritualists constituted, in fact, one-third of the population.[4]

Meanwhile, at the vernacular level, it was women who became spiritualist leaders – mediums who led séance circles or who gave trance-produced lectures at a time when no respectable woman would speak from a stage on her own authority. Women who became mediums were often retiring, passive individuals, described by contemporaries as sickly, given to cold physically, pale and slender in form. Yet, as Ann Braude has shown, mediumship – which gave these women permission to speak out in public – in many cases prepared them for later careers as female suffrage activists.[5] Clearly, reform functioned as a major part of spiritualist mentality, and spiritualists continued to be reformers in many contexts.

Still more, as Davis' appeal to reason hinted from the first, spiritualists regarded themselves as on the leading edge of science – the strong partner in any agenda promoting progress. Emma Hardinge, in an architectural metaphor, had called spiritualism the coronel glory on the column of the sciences. The spiritualist promotion of natural law would suggest the sympathy among spiritualists for scientific endeavor and the likelihood that they would see themselves as science friendly. Indeed, the history of spiritualism offers a good number of cases in which mediums invited scientific scrutiny in hopes of demonstrating the natural wonders in which humans were involved. When well-known chemist Robert Hare (1781–1858) turned to spiritualism in his senior years and invented a machine to verify spirit visits, spiritualists hailed and lionized him, even if many of his professional colleagues were embarrassed by what he had done. Hare was not alone among the prominent in embracing spiritualism. Historians of the movement readily point to New York State Supreme Court judge John Edmonds and former U.S. senator and governor of Wisconsin Nathaniel P. Tallmadge to signal a significant number of elite and highly placed individuals who became spiritualists.

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[4] Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven, 2007), 220–1.

[5] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, 2001).

Openness to science and to reform would continue to characterize metaphysical religiosity. After the Civil War, when fraudulent spiritual phenomena became ever more noticeable – with spirits, especially of American Indians, materializing (i.e., appearing in physical form) at séances – the call for reform among spiritualists turned inward toward their own community. Perhaps the most significant result was the birth of Theosophy among former and reforming spiritualists. In a New York City milieu thickly inhabited by artists and literary folk, the Russian immigrant Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831–91) and the former agriculturalist, journalist, civil service reformer, and lawyer Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) formed the Theosophical Society in 1875. The two had met at the farm of William and Horatio Eddy in Chittenden, Vermont, much publicized for its spiritualist materializations, in which spirits took on visible form. Olcott well summarized his and Blavatsky's view of the phenomena in his *People from the Other World*, published the same year. Spiritualist mediums were the slaves of the spirits who controlled them. Spiritualist reform should guarantee a better way, and Blavatsky (and now Olcott) would reveal the new gospel that could save. Instead of being controlled by spirits, mediums and others would learn to control spirits and get them to do humans' biddings. In the early Theosophical Society, which the two formed with Irish immigrant and lawyer William Quan Judge (1851–96) and with a series of others from the spiritual, literary, and art avant-garde, natural powers over nature became occult arts to be understood and investigated. At the same time, Blavatsky introduced Olcott and others to a series of mysterious figures whom she called the "Masters" or "Mahatmas." These were Asian adepts skilled in occultism, who lived in places like the Himalayas, apparently deathless and able to intervene with higher wisdom for Blavatsky and those in her circle. She regarded them as indispensable to humanity's welfare. In an ironic twist, those rescued from control by spirits were now being introduced to Elder Brothers, who in their own benign way engineered a subtle form of control.

Still, the new theosophical movement had achieved its goal of reforming spiritualism, taking what theosophists regarded as the best elements of their former commitment and disregarding the rest. As Stephen Prothero has argued, the liberal elements in spiritualism had been retained with its criticisms of Calvinism, clergy, and dogma, its championing of the individual and especially of women, and its aspirations toward a new and utopian heaven on earth. The "crudities" of spiritualism, however, had gone on the chopping block – there would be no more preoccupation with spirits, with free love, and with ubiquitous female mediums.[6]

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[6] Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington, 1996), 53–4.

By 1878, with the original version of the Theosophical Society flagging and with the publication of Blavatsky's monumental *Isis Unveiled* (1877), the society made a major course correction, expanding its ambitions and goals. With its declaration that spiritualism under the control of an adept became magic, *Isis Unveiled* had synthesized the Hermeticism of the West and also bowed to Asia. The stage was set for the new trifold vision of the group. They would continue to study the unknown mysteries of nature in occult science; they would form together a universal brotherhood – a model and beacon for the rest of the world; and tellingly, they would revive Asian literature and philosophy. Three months after this announcement, Blavatsky and Olcott sailed to India, even as they acknowledged themselves to be Buddhist adepts. An older spiritualist agenda was giving way to a transformed sense of mission – one that brought to other Americans a metaphysically inflected version of Asian teaching. From their international base, it was Blavatsky and other Theosophists who gave Americans the language of karma and reincarnation, introduced notions of yoga as a meditation discipline and a physical one, and generally promoted their own readings of already westernized Hindu and Buddhist teachings. Blavatsky's huge and definitive *Secret Doctrine* (1888), which claimed to be based on a Tibetan manuscript that she alone of Westerners had seen, chronicled a grand spiritual evolution that countered the Darwinian version. With its message echoing fictional narratives like Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871), *The Secret Doctrine* told of root races and rounds (cycles) in humanity's progressive journey. It pointed to Brahmanism and later Buddhism as the source of all religion and the source, as well, from which all later philosophy and science came. Here, with the impersonal Be-ness of an Unmoved Mover and Rootless Root, was the wisdom of a panentheistic cosmos in which all souls claimed unity with an Oversoul. Here, too, were the workings of karma in the law of becoming and its outcomes in a continuing cycle of rebirths.

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century world, Theosophy flourished, and spiritualism waned. Spiritualists by then had created an elaborate choreography of spirit presences who assisted mediums in their séances – Indian Chiefs, who functioned as Gate Keepers to keep undesired spirits from interrupting proceedings, and Spirit Doctors, who lectured and advised on a series of spiritual concerns. Materializations abounded, and some mediums, too, were claiming healing powers that flowed through their fingers. But on the matter of organization, spiritualists had major problems, splintering into factions devoted to one or another medium or group of mediums. Some spiritualists embraced reincarnational beliefs that they had learned from Theosophists. Others rejected the belief in reincarnation, as had Andrew Jackson Davis before them. Those who still adhered

to Davis' more conservative views and kept touch as well with Christianity by 1893 formed the National Spiritualist Association of Churches. With its congregational polity in which independent churches belonged to state organizations, it never became large or strong. Other associations of spiritualists were even more diffuse.

If Theosophy, the new metaphysical movement supplanting spiritualism, flourished, it, too, was organizationally small and weak – with only fifty thousand theosophists in forty countries by 1930, ten thousand of them in the United States. Even while Blavatsky and Olcott were still alive, differences and tensions grew among members, exacerbated by the Society for Psychical Research's investigation – and proof – of fraud in the production of Mahatma letters to theosophists. After Blavatsky's death, still other tensions sparked between Olcott and William Judge. Independent offshoots of the parent Theosophical Society multiplied in the United States, even as British Annie Besant (1847–1933) led the original society. Theosophists themselves were upper class or upper middle class, and, at their inception, artistic and literary as well as more generally metaphysical in inclination. But the story of their organization and size misses their importance hugely. It was Theosophy that gave late-nineteenth and twentieth-century metaphysicians a language and a plausible cosmology – indeed, one so compelling that it spilled over Theosophical boundaries into the general culture. Notions of karma and reincarnation became commonplace as the twentieth century progressed. So did the practice of yoga (both meditation and physical forms), introduced in large measure by theosophists. And so, too, did ideas regarding the lost continents of Atlantis and Lemuria and a host of related beliefs that spun an alternate (from the Bible) creation story for Americans. Theosophists, in short, reinforced a process begun by spiritualists, making a public and exoteric metaphysical commodity out of what in other times and cultures would have been considered esoteric.

An important part of this cultural diffusion must be attributed to a series of theosophical breakaway groups and their leaders in the early and middle years of the twentieth century. Theosophical lineages sprang up around figures like Alice Bailey (1880–1949), the one-time theosophist who was excluded from the American headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Krotona, California, when she claimed to be receiving the texts of new theosophical works from the "Tibetan" Master Djwhal Kuhl. In effect, she was producing continuing revelation in an age after the passing of Blavatsky. At the same time, she had launched criticisms of the Esoteric Section of the society, an insider group in the larger body. With Foster Bailey, the society's former national secretary whom she married, she founded the Arcane School in New York in 1923. Meanwhile, Alice Bailey produced book after book as the amanuensis of the Tibetan. She wove

explicitly Christian themes into her new version of revealed teaching, even as she elaborated a doctrine (found in germ in Blavatsky) of seven distinct rays of light, each with different spiritual characteristics, manifesting on earth. She likewise promoted a social message that relied on metaphysical agency through group meditation to move the social and political world in more peaceful directions.

Still another theosophical lineage group followed the teachings of Guy Ballard (1878–1939), who combined Theosophy with New Thought, which as we shall see below, permeated the metaphysical world of the early twentieth century. Ballard's "autobiography" *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934) reads as a work of didactic fiction, in which Ballard acquires a wild panther as guardian and meets a mysterious stranger while hiking alone on Mount Shasta in northern California. Offering Ballard a magical liquid charged with unearthly energy, the stranger – who we learn is Saint-Germain, an Ascended Master (the evolving version of Blavatsky's Masters or Mahatmas) – leads Ballard on a series of journeys into mines that descend to untold depths in the earth. Here Ballard meets his own former lives and associates, and here the echoes of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* are unmistakable. So, too, is the presence of the New Thought notion of a mysterious Supply ever available for those who affirm and decree its readiness. Ballard, with his wife Edna and his son Donald, went on to found the I Am Religious Activity as a form of metaphysical religiosity with distinct Christian strands. While the notorious mail fraud case in the years after Ballard's death brought the I Am group significant woes, U.S. Supreme Court decisions (in 1944 and 1946) overturned the lower court convictions of Edna and Donald Ballard. Still it was 1954 before the group was able to use the mail, and three years later before its tax-exempt status was restored. With all of its troubles, the I Am movement hung on. Moreover, it spawned its own collections of offshoots, the most well known of which is Elizabeth Clare Prophet's Church Universal and Triumphant, exalting Saint-Germain as Ascended Master and bringing Christianity into service to metaphysics.

Other theosophical lineages proliferated, as the students of breakaway teachers started followings of their own. By midcentury, Ascended Masters had become space commanders, and contact with extraterrestrials had entered the mix of metaphysical belief and behavior. Metaphysics was well on its way to its manifestation, by the later twentieth century, in the New Age movement. As significant in the new exotericism was the companion metaphysical movement of the late nineteenth century and afterward that came to be called New Thought. Initially known as mind cure or the mental cure, New Thought grew out of a form of Christian Science

that had incorporated Theosophy as well as biblical teachings. In fact, it is important to acknowledge here that the Christian Science founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) in 1875 was itself a metaphysical movement – one that in its combinativeness linked a form of Calvinist and Edwardsean Christianity to the Platonism and Neoplatonism flourishing at the edge of Swedenborgian, spiritualist, and liberal Protestant circles. Scholars have long pointed to Eddy's "physician" and teacher Phineas P. Quimby (1802–66), the Swedenborgian, spiritualist, and magnetic doctor who discovered the power of the mind for healing and health. Quimby's short and often muddled writings as he explored the power of the mind for healing took something from Swedenborg to be sure. But he pushed his interest in the mind in decidedly American directions. More than that, his patients, who were also his students, included not only Eddy (herself an Americanizer) but others who became leading Americanizing thinkers (Warren Felt Evans) and organizers (Julius and Annetta Dresser) in the growing New Thought movement.

In Eddy's case, the Calvinism that she combined with Platonic and Neoplatonic monism meant that her reading of metaphysics retained traditional Christian beliefs about sin, the cross of Jesus, and the value of suffering. Stephen Gottschalk's *Rolling Away the Stone*, with its close reading of Eddy's writings in her later years, makes abundantly clear how very much she was immersed in an Edwardsean theological world.[7] This was the case even as she translated parts of that world into a new language that included concepts such as "mortal mind" for the tendency to sin and "malicious animal magnetism" for the malice that individuals sometimes offered to others. Important here, far and beyond Swedenborg and even Quimby, Eddy taught a return to the healing gospel of the early church in which complete and utter belief in the power of Jesus brought relief from sin and wellness to the body. As she clothed the biblical message in the Neoplatonic language she had absorbed, she saw healing as constituted by the healer's true vision of the ailing individual as he or she appeared (i.e., whole) in the sight of God. For her, this was the bottom-line message of the Christian gospels, and her life and teaching became a commitment to restore the true gospel for nineteenth-century times. What the message of Christian confidence obscured, though, was the subtle way that seemingly miraculous powers were becoming available to individuals leading ordinary lives. Healing no longer depended on "experts," and, in fact, for a time Eddy went so far as to teach classes in obstetrics from a Christian Science point of view.

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[7] Stephen Gottschalk, *Rolling Away the Stone: Mary Baker Eddy's Challenge to Materialism* (Bloomington, 2006).

Eddy's combinativeness, however, went only so far. In a milieu in which the Neoplatonism that she incorporated came replete with Swedenborgianism, spiritualism, and then Theosophy, she eschewed these connections with a force that led her to draw a line between herself and many others, especially women, drawn to her movement. Emma Curtis Hopkins (1849–1925) was one such woman. Hopkins left her schoolteacher husband to join Eddy with the help of a scholarship that the Christian Science founder gave her. Hopkins soon had a job as unpaid editor of Eddy's *Journal of Christian Science*, but in only thirteen months she was dismissed from the job and ordered out of her lodgings. Hopkins' 1885 editorial "Teachers of Metaphysics," with its embrace of a panoply of world religions and claim of quasi-mystical experience – as well as her friendship with Christian Science student Mary Plunkett, who challenged Eddy in many ways – no doubt led to the dual action.[8]

Hopkins now made her way to Chicago and began her own Christian Science seminary, for the first time ordaining women and men who would become early New Thought ministers and leaders. Graduates of Hopkins' seminary fanned out across the Midwest and Far West, giving the lie to readings of New Thought that saw it, following Horatio Dresser (son of Julius and Annetta Dresser), as a more or less exclusively East Coast phenomenon. Not only that, but Hopkins made a radical imprint on the incipient New Thought movement with her blend of Eddy Christian Science with theosophical and mystical sources. She became the teacher of the major teachers of New Thought – Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, who founded Unity; H. Emilie Cady, who wrote Unity's major textbook; Nona Brooks, who cofounded the Church of Divine Science; Annie Rix Militz, who created the Homes of Truth; Ernest Holmes, who began Religious Science; Frances Lord, who brought New Thought to England; and Helen Van Anderson, who in 1894 began the "Church of the Higher Life" in Boston.

What Hopkins had been reading besides Eddy's authoritative *Science and Health* (1875) was, notably, the work of Warren Felt Evans (1817–89). After twenty-five years as a Methodist minister, during which he searched for guidance in French quietistic writings and in American Holiness religion and especially Oberlin perfectionism, Evans sent in his ordination credentials. A few months later, with his wife he officially became a member of the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem. From there, his Swedenborgian preoccupation with angels became a concern about spirits and also, perhaps under the influence of Quimby, a confidence in

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[8] The best single source on the dismissal is Gail M. Harley, *Emma Curtis Hopkins: Forgotten Founder of New Thought* (Syracuse, NY, 2002).

mind cure. Evans' spiritual journal, in fact, discloses his chronic bouts with illness, which had kept him from preaching a good deal of the time during his Methodist years. The relationship with Quimby apparently changed his life, since after that Evans returned to his New Hampshire moorings and then went on to Boston to lead a new life as a successful mental healer.

Evans' published writings – six major books on mental healing and four earlier ones on aspects of Swedenborgian theology – chronicle his religious and intellectual changes. They demonstrate his movement from a Swedenborgian and spiritualist worldview with an openness to mental healing to a full-scale endorsement of theosophical ideas and points of views. An apparently voracious reader and eclectic thinker, Evans brought Theosophy (and Hermeticism and German and Berkeleyan idealism) into contact with his own brand of esoteric Christianity and, in the process, rendered it exoteric and distinctly American, with a clear leaning toward the works of Emerson. Unlike Eddy, whose sights remained fixed on the power of God, Evans pointed the way to the characteristic New Thought endorsement of the divinity within each person. This endorsement carried with it the news that humans had power. They could heal themselves and, in the case of healers, they could help one another.

Understanding mysticism in an increasingly pragmatic – and material – way, Evans promoted the use of affirmations – short declarative statements that functioned to pronounce as accomplished the healing change the individual desired. He understood absent healing as a distinct possibility and could even relate his own experience with that modality. Prayer, as it evolved in his thinking, became itself affirmative. It operated with a conviction of the goodness of matter and the importance of declaring in spirit the good that the self – both higher *and* ego based – desired. Indeed, Evans articulated the "I Am" consciousness that would later inform the work of Ballard, and he likewise championed the later New Thought language of "the silence," the space in which one met God and one's God-Self.

Evans, in short, through his published writings, through Hopkins, and through others whose lives he touched, deeply influenced the direction of the New Thought movement. By the 1890s, then, former Christian followers and others in the mental healing world had, in fact, begun to adopt the New Thought designation for their burgeoning subculture. (Eddy's copyright on the Christian Science name manifestly increased the need for a different designation for Christian Science renegades and for the new movement as a whole.) New Thought followers were mostly middle class and white, predominately women, and also at first predominately progressive on social issues. By the twentieth century, however,

major lines of division could be seen between two different versions of the movement.[9]

The older version, seen among many of the followers of Emma Curtis Hopkins, was strongly affective in orientation. From a biblical base, it promoted healing and stood ready to serve the needs of families and communities. Socially progressive, it articulated a feminist agenda and sometimes criticized capitalism and even turned to socialism. Above all, it expressed practical relational concerns in an everyday world in which there were vulnerable children, sick people, poor people, and lawbreakers. Hopkinsian New Thought had grown up in a vernacular environment with roots in midcentury spiritualism with its well-known reform agenda. It had absorbed many of the overtures of Theosophy, with its own ideal of human brotherhood. The Hopkins-style New Thought, with its Midwestern and Far Western bases, encouraged a more progressive politics than that of the East. But over all of this, the theological foundations of New Thought – in ideas of the immanence of God and the divinity of humans as manifestations of the divine – pointed toward a "love-thy-neighbor" ethic even stronger perhaps than that of traditional Christianity. Thus, this older New Thought held to a vision of unity in all things even as it translated the religious ideology of unity into programmatic action.

A second version of New Thought, however, evolved out of this earlier style. Ironically, it was Hopkins herself who gave the new construction its first impetus. She had never forgotten her inability to pay her way into Eddy's organization. Ordination sermons at her Chicago seminary and other early writings show a Hopkins who began to envision God as Supply and Source of abundance. It is significant here that Hopkins clearly saw God as Mother and therefore a font of nurturance and of life support. God the Mother could be counted on to bestow on her children everything that they needed – gifts both spiritual and material, gifts of healing as well as gifts of means. So Hopkins began to think of God as the one who supplied prosperity and abundance in material affairs. The transition was seamless; the theology an easy glide.

The abundance theology easily melded with ego-based concerns that included self-assertion for women in a male-dominated world and the use of a language, as in the case of Hopkins' student Helen Wilmans, less masculine in its articulation. This "noetic" style, as Gary Ward Materra has termed it, stressed the business and science of self-mastery with rationalist precision.[10] It embraced a single-minded commitment to one's success

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[9] See Gary Ward Materra, "Women in Early New Thought: Lives and Theology in Transition, from the Civil War to World War I" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1997).

[10] *Ibid.*, esp. 106, 302.

and an ultimate Self-aggrandizement in a mystical pragmatism that fused "Higher Self" with ego self. With ever-increasing links to Theosophy, it announced a vernacular magic that could make thought a tool in the acquisition of wealth, turning this early-twentieth-century New Thought into the prosperity thinking that made a permanent mark on the movement. Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) is its monument. Along the way, New Thought women turned to the new message as a manifesto for the fulfillment of desire. Elizabeth Towne, for example, announced the healing of her purse even as she became the founder of a highly successful publishing house. More than that, as Beryl Satter has shown, the fulfillment of desire meant the pursuit of pleasure in erogenous zones that gave the lie to the Victorian vision of the "pure" and self-sacrificing woman.[11]

By the early twentieth century, too, New Thought had acquired an institutional structure, however weak. New Thought denominations were flourishing – Unity (which, with Charles Fillmore kept reading itself in and out of the New Thought movement), Religious Science, and Divine Science, all continuing into the twenty-first century. Other New Thought organizations, which would later disappear, were holding their own in apparent good health – for example, Annie Rix Militz's West Coast Homes of Truth and Helen Wilmans' scattered Mental Science Temples. For all the decentralization, by 1914 the International New Thought Alliance was in place, and it continued to play a unifying role among New Thought followers. The larger impact of New Thought, however, would come not from its organizational structure but from the imaginative hold it had on mainstream Americans. The legacy of positive thinking, so much a part of the most casual of self-help agendas in the twentieth century and after, must be laid ultimately at the doorstep of New Thought. Indeed, the cultural enormity of what New Thought has done for the American imaginary is hard to overestimate.

In sum, metaphysical religiosity in general needs not be seen as an also-ran among American spiritual options. It became, rather, in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries so major a constituent of mainstream culture that it became, quite literally, invisible. It permeated society as a thoroughly unself-conscious part of the world construction of ordinary Americans, and as such it became, alongside mainstream denominational organizations and evangelicalism, a major ideational and behavioral strand of American spiritual life.[12] The nation's culture would be profoundly different without the presence of metaphysics.

[11] Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920* (Berkeley, 1999).

[12] See Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), for the period before 1865.

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Section IV

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO MODERN LIFE AND THOUGHT

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RELIGION AND IMMIGRATION, 1865–1945

JEFFREY M. BURNS

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the United States underwent profound and at times traumatic social change occasioned by the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. The United States was transformed from a rural, agricultural nation into an urban, industrial nation. In 1899, industrial exports surpassed agricultural exports for the first time, and by 1920, more Americans lived in urban settings than in rural. Fueling this transformation were the millions of immigrants who arrived to become the raw materials for this expansion. The massive influx of immigrants presented the churches in the United States with enormous pastoral, physical, and human challenges, and the churches responded in a variety of ways.

Immigration, which had slowed during the first several years of the Civil War, picked up again in 1864 and exploded by the end of the nineteenth century. The immigration immediately following the war was similar to prewar immigration with the largest groups still coming from Germany, Ireland, and Great Britain. By 1910 the face of immigration had dramatically changed. Immigrants now poured in from Italy, Russia, and Austro-Hungary, which included Austrians, Hungarians, Galician Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Rusins, Ukrainians, Slovenes, Croatians, and Serbians. Significant numbers also came from the Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. The unsettled and changing economic conditions in Eastern, Southern, and Central Europe led to a new immigration. The disastrous *Kulturkampf* in German-controlled lands and the brutal pogroms directed against Russian Jews sent many more.

The "new immigrants," as they were called, shifted the locus of origin away from Northern and Western Europe to Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, a shift that disturbed many Americans. The new immigrants seemed more foreign than earlier groups, their language stranger and their customs more troubling. They seemed more radical, as many suspected them of being behind the labor unrest of the 1880s and 1890s

that wracked America. Their religion – the vast majority were Catholics and Jews – also challenged an America that continued to see itself primarily in Protestant terms. Anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish impulses run like a thread throughout the era. But the new immigrants also challenged the established Catholic and Jewish communities that already had substantial numbers of second- or third-generation immigrants who were somewhat acculturated and fearful that the new immigrants would call their own status as Americans into question.

More troubling to Americans was the increase of immigration from Asia. The first significant Asian immigration began in the 1850s with immigrants from China arriving, drawn by the California Gold Rush. Reaction to the Chinese was harsh, and by 1882 a Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, ending all but a trickle of Chinese immigrants. Japanese immigration picked up in the 1890s, but was curtailed in 1907 by the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan. Filipino immigration grew following the Spanish American and Philippine War, reaching its height in the 1920s. In 1934 Filipino immigration was also all but ended.

Mexican immigration increased in the early twentieth century, as industries and farms sought cheap labor south of the border. Disruptions set off by the Mexican Revolution in 1911 ignited a flood of immigrants. During the Depression, Mexican immigration was curtailed, and many Mexicans were "repatriated." World War II created a demand for more workers, and the Bracero Program was initiated, laying the groundwork for postwar immigration, legal or otherwise.

As early as the 1890s, movements to end open immigration began to organize. Beginning in 1917 and culminating in 1924, the United States enacted a series of laws that sought to restrict immigration. In 1924, the National Quota Act put in place the national origins quota system that limited the number of immigrants who could enter the United States in any one year and assigned each nation a "quota." Northern and Western European nations were preferred, and Asian immigration was restricted.[1]

Within this context the churches in the United States tried to respond to the enormous human and social demands generated by the massive immigration. Immigrants confronted the challenges associated with leaving their old home and culture, as well as the difficulty of adapting to a new culture, a culture that was at best ambivalent toward them. Historian John McClymer has observed that immigrants not only had to contend with the host culture but they also had to contend with previous and other

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[1] For a general history of U.S. immigration, see Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, 1990).

immigrant groups. He calls this "cultural triangulation."[2] The immigrant had to relate to his or her own cultural traditions, to the host culture, and to other immigrant groups. But the situation was even more complicated: new immigrants had to negotiate with different generations of immigrants from their own homeland, second- and third-generation immigrants with far different concerns than their first-generation compatriots. Religion complicated things even further. German immigrants were divided religiously among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and freethinkers. Thus one had to negotiate with the host culture, other immigrant groups, and the different faith traditions within one's own culture. In addition, significant differences existed within religious traditions. Irish Catholics found themselves at odds with German, Polish, and Italian Catholics; German Jews conflicted with later arriving Russian Jews. Further complicating matters was the perception of Protestant immigrants that they were part of the host culture. McClymer talks of a "Protestant partnership" where native Protestants looked after their new immigrant coreligionists. "Swedes and other Protestant groups claimed a fundamental affinity for American culture."[3] Such a perception enabled Protestants to adapt more readily to American culture while Catholics and Jews remained outsiders.

Whatever the faith tradition, religion played an integral role in the life of the immigrant. In his classic study *The Uprooted*, Oscar Handlin asserted that religion assisted the immigrant in coping with the trauma associated with immigration. More recently, Charles Hirschman has agreed with Handlin that the immigrant church provided "cultural continuity and psychological benefits" to the immigrant community, but it did more than that. "The centrality of religion to immigrant communities can be summarized as the search for refuge, respectability, and resources."[4] The church offered refuge from the hostile larger culture, and from the regular buffeting of everyday immigrant life. The church provided respectability as it gave working-class immigrants opportunities to obtain leadership positions not available to them in the larger society. In addition, participation in church societies and rituals built up the immigrants' self-respect and gave their lives purpose. And it provided resources for economic advancement as ethnic churches provided social insurance of different kinds as well as much needed services. The immigrant community also supplied a ready market for the distribution of goods. In the

[2] John McClymer, "Religion and Ethnicity," in Reed Ueda, ed., *A Companion to American Immigration* (Malden, MA, 2006), 515.

[3] *Ibid.*, 516. McClymer borrows the term "Protestant partnership" from Kenneth J. Moynihan.

[4] Charles Hirschman, "The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States," *International Migration Review* 38 (2004): 1229.

midst of a disturbing and difficult world, the immigrant church provided these crucial supports.

THE CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE

Catholics were the largest number of new immigrants in the period 1865–1924. Catholics had also led the way in the pre–Civil War era with the vast migration of Irish and Germans, making the Catholic Church the single largest denomination in American society by 1860. By the time of the new immigration, the Irish and Germans were well established, with the Irish dominating the Church hierarchy. These groups directed the Catholic response to the new immigration.

While significant German and Irish Catholic immigration persisted through the end of the nineteenth century, the source of Catholic immigration shifted. Poles and Italians became the two largest Catholic immigrant groups by 1910, but significant numbers of Slovaks, Lithuanians, Czechs, Hungarians, French Canadians, Portuguese, and eastern-rite Catholics also swelled the rolls of the Catholic Church in the United States. By the 1920s large numbers of Latino and Filipino Catholics added to the mix. The diversity and enormity of the immigration called for a multilayered response. As with other immigrant groups, the new Catholic immigrants needed assistance in adjusting to their new environment, but the primary concern of church leaders was the preservation of the immigrants' faith.[5] To achieve this, temporal support also needed to be provided, meeting the immigrants' physical, social, and psychological needs as well as the religious. Historian Richard Linkh put it simply: "During the first quarter of the twentieth century virtually every ethnic group with a sizeable Catholic population had established Catholic organizations to care for the spiritual and material needs of the immigrants."[6] Of note, many separate Catholic institutions had been established in the first half of the nineteenth century in response to the virulent anti-Catholicism directed at the early immigrants, and these institutions also remained to assist the new immigrants in the late nineteenth century.

The Catholic Church had an advantage over other denominations in the United States in that it had a centralized authority structure and a clear chain of command. Many Protestant groups were so splintered that concerted action was difficult at times.

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[5] See Gerald Shaughnessy, *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith? A Study of Immigration and Catholic Growth in the United States, 1790–1924* (New York, 1925).

[6] Richard M. Linkh, *American Catholicism and European Immigrants (1900–1924)* (Staten Island, 1975), 98.

The primary institution to assist the new Catholic immigrants was the parish, more particularly, the "national" or "language" parish. Since the Council of Trent, Catholics throughout the world had been divided into territorial parishes. A Catholic was supposed to attend his or her neighborhood parish. However, the diversity of the U.S. Church gave rise to a special, nonterritorial parish that was based on language and ethnicity rather than location, and it was dubbed a "national parish." Any person who spoke the language of the national parish could become a member of the parish regardless of where he or she lived. The first such national parish was founded by Germans in Philadelphia in 1787 – Holy Trinity Parish. The parish enabled the German community to celebrate German culture and devotions, to use the German language, and to allow for a measured Americanization. The national parish served as a buffer to a hostile American society and to what was perceived as a hostile Irish American Church, but it did not merely isolate the German community. As historian Philip Gleason notes, paraphrasing W. I. Thomas, "Ethnic institutions such as churches, far from isolating newcomers from American life, actually provide the organizational vehicles that allow them to participate in it."[7] The parish merely slowed the pace of assimilation. Or as German advocate Father Peter Abbelen advised in 1886, "Let the 'Americanization' of the Germans be a slow and natural process; let it not be hastened to the prejudice of the religion of the Germans."[8] The importance of the language was reflected in the oft-repeated dictum pronounced by Archbishop Martin Henni of Milwaukee, "Language saves faith." If the mother tongue were abandoned or the culture lost, it was feared the faith would go with it. By 1900 there were 336 German Catholic parishes in the United States.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the national parish was the primary institution used to meet the needs of the diverse new immigrant groups. By 1920 there were 404 Polish and 257 Italian parishes.[9] In their classic study of Polish immigrant life, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki stressed the centrality of the parish to the Polish immigrant community; their analysis could be applied to many groups. "The parish is, indeed, simply the old primary community, reorganized and concentrated.... In its institutional organization it performs the functions which in Poland are fulfilled by both parish and the commune." The parish provided an emotional and physical grounding in the new setting.[10] At times the connection between

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[7] Philip Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1992), 251.

[8] Quoted in Jeffrey M. Burns, Ellen Skerrett, and Joseph M. White, *Keeping Faith: European and Asian Catholic Immigrants* (Maryknoll, NY, 2000), 65.

[9] James S. Olson, *Catholic Immigrants in America* (Chicago, 1987), 122.

[10] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 141.

the old community in Europe and the new community could be quite literal as when the Polish community established in Panna Maria, Texas, brought the crucifix from their parish church in Poland to establish their new parish in America. Oftentimes, parishes were established by groups of laymen and women who would come together, raise money, build a church, and then ask the bishop to recognize them. The national parish succeeded in providing Hirschman's refuge, respectability, and resources. It was particularly useful to groups such as the Italians, whose piety so differed from the Irish, German, and Polish expressions of the faith.[11] The national parishes gave immigrants the freedom to express their cultural differences, and a host of devotional societies, often rooted in Old World traditions, flourished. Different forms of this institution – the national parish – were present in all the faith traditions in the United States.

Equally important to most Catholic immigrant communities was the development of the Catholic school. Initially, Catholic schools were established in the first half of the nineteenth century to combat and provide an alternative to what was perceived as the anti-Catholic, stridently Protestant tone of the public school. While that motivation still obtained with Catholic immigrant groups at the turn of the twentieth century, the school was now also to preserve the language and culture for the second generation. Polish activist Father Waclaw Kruszka put it simply, "The Polish school stands right next to the church in importance in America. In the full sense of the word, it is the foundation of the Polish church abroad."[12] Germans and Poles often built their schools before they built their parish churches.

One feature of the Catholic immigrant Church that distinguished it from Protestant groups was the manner in which foreign influences affected its service to the new immigrants. Most significant was the role of the pope in Rome; the pope was kept regularly informed of the Church in the United States, and he often expressed concern for its treatment of Catholic immigrant groups, particularly Italian Catholic immigrants. The U.S. Catholic bishops regularly addressed the issue of immigration at their national meetings. Besides having to answer to an international authority, the Catholic Church in the United States also benefited from foreign beneficiaries: Catholic societies in Austria, Bavaria, and France supplied money to the American Church to assist it in ministering to immigrants. European nations also provided the workforce for immigrant institutions in the form of clergy and women religious. Thousands of priests and women

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[11] See Robert Anthony Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1890–1950* (New Haven, 1985).
[12] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 147.

religious became immigrants themselves to minister to the needs of immigrants in the United States. In 1842, All Hallows Missionary College was established in Dublin, Ireland, to produce missionaries to follow the Irish throughout the world. All Hallows joined with other Irish seminaries in supplying a steady stream of Irish priests for the United States. In 1887, Italian bishop Giovanni Scalabrini of Piacenza in northern Italy created an order with the specific intent of caring for Italian immigrants in the United States, the Missionary Society of St. Charles Borromeo, which came to be known as the Scalabrinians; they ultimately established a seminary on Staten Island. Virtually every immigrant group received immigrant priests to work in their communities: the Polish Congregation of the Resurrection, the Italian Salesians and Jesuits, the German Franciscans and Benedictines, to name but a few. In some cases the priests were exiles and refugees themselves, such as the Franciscans from the Saxony province in Germany, who fled the *Kulturkampf* in the 1880s and expanded Franciscan ethnic ministry in the Midwestern United States.[13] In the 1920s, Mexican clergy fled the persecution of the anticlerical Mexican government and served in parishes in California and Texas that had been established for the newly arrived Mexican population.

Catholic Sisters from Europe also came in large numbers to provide the workforce for Catholic immigrant institutions. The whole Catholic social welfare infrastructure in the United States was built on the back of women religious: schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly, homes for working girls, employment bureaus, magdalen asylums, day care centers, and other institutions of charity. By 1924 more than one hundred different orders from different parts of Europe had established themselves in immigrant communities. For example, in 1854 Mother Mary Baptist Russell led the Sisters of Mercy from Ireland to San Francisco where the Mercies staffed a hospital, taught in schools, and established a home for the elderly poor, a magdalen asylum, and several other institutions that served a largely, but not exclusively, Irish American population. In 1885, Mother Francis Siedliska brought the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth to Chicago where they established an orphanage and schools. Their arrival brought joy to Polish immigrant women, as the Sisters recorded: "The Polish women came to be acquainted with us.... Seeing us they cried with joy, calling us the good sisters from their native land."[14] In 1889 Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini brought her Sisters of the Missionary Society of the

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[13] See Kirsten R. Schmies and Stephan Scherfenberg, *Gregor Janknecht and the Franciscans in Nineteenth-Century United States and Europe,* trans. Stephan Scherfenberg (Berkeley, 2008).

[14] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 148.

Sacred Heart from Italy to New York City where, she asserted, "Our object is to rescue the Italian orphans of the city from the misery and dangers that threaten them."[15] Many of the service and charitable ministries to immigrants depended on the Roman Catholic sisterhood, many of whose members were immigrants themselves.

European Catholics also developed societies to protect the immigrants from the beginning to the end of their journeys. On both sides of the Atlantic, every step of the immigrant's journey was fraught with danger. In 1871, German merchant Peter Paul Cahensly founded the St. Raphael Society (*St. Raphaelsverein*) for Protecting German Immigrants. The society hired agents to assist immigrants in the dangerous European port cities. In 1883 the society extended itself across the ocean, establishing a branch in New York City that sought to assist German immigrants upon their arrival in the United States. The society provided financial aid and temporary housing, aided immigrants in connecting with relatives already in America, assisted in finding jobs, and supplied other services. The society was so successful that by the 1890s it had expanded to furnish services for Italian, Belgian, and Austrian immigrants, and by 1910 for Slovenes and Slovaks. In 1889 the society established Leo House in New York City to minister to newly arriving immigrants. Cahensly's sympathy with the immigrants embroiled him and the society in a conflict with Irish American bishops. The society urged the Church to take better care of its immigrant population, claiming that as many as sixteen million Catholic immigrants had been lost to the faith as a result of the neglect of the immigrants. The Irish Americans denied the allegation and denounced what they perceived as foreign meddling in the U.S. Church. The encounter played a major role in the developing Americanist controversy.[16]

Concerns also emanated from elsewhere in Europe about the care of immigrants. Irish Catholic convert Charlotte Grace O'Brien became particularly concerned about the plight of immigrant women. O'Brien was appalled by the conditions on immigrant ships, which exposed women to "moral and physical degradation."[17] In 1883, she succeeded in inspiring the establishment of Our Lady of the Rosary Mission for the Protection of Immigrants under the direction of Father John Riordan in New York City. The mission hired an agent who met the young women first at Castle Garden, and later at Ellis Island after it was established in 1892. The mission intended first to protect young women on the steamship lines, and

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[15] Quoted in *ibid.,* 166.

[16] See Colman J. Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans* (Milwaukee, 1953).

[17] Deirdre M. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 91.

subsequently at the landing depot; it then provided temporary shelter for them until they could be reunited with relatives or placed in a job. Finally, it gave them access to the "good offices of the priest who alone can bring confidence, encouragement and hope to the heart of the Irish exile."[18] By 1910 the mission had assisted more than one hundred thousand women and placed twelve thousand in jobs, primarily as domestics in Catholic homes. The mission was entirely dependent on charity, charging its guests nothing.

Immigrant aid societies could be found in most of the major ports: New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and New Orleans. One Catholic agency that was not primarily an immigrant aid society but that provided significant assistance at the ports and in immigrant communities was the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The society was a lay organization founded in France and brought to the United States in 1845. Located in parish conferences, it served the local poor, which in the nineteenth century was most often the immigrant poor. The society supported agencies and information centers to assist immigrants.

One important agency that assisted Catholic immigrants as they confronted their new situation was the mutual aid society. The mutual aid society supplied a number of vital services to an immigrant, working-class community. First, it provided sick and death benefits; as yet no social insurance programs were funded by the government. As such it offered important economic support to the immigrant community. Second, the society was not a charity, but rather a mutual help agency. Each member contributed to the success of the society, financially and otherwise, so no one member was beholden to another.[19] Third, the society usually supplied cultural and social benefits, as well as religious. Fourth, the society gave working-class people a chance to take on leadership roles. In short, the mutual aid society provided resources and respectability. Virtually every immigrant group had several mutual aid societies. Most were relatively small, but some grew into major institutions.

In 1855, several German mutual aid societies came together in Baltimore to form the German Roman Catholic Central Union of North America, which came to be known simply as the Central Verein. The Verein was essentially a national organization made up of parish mutual aid societies. The union, however, gave the Central Verein a national voice. By the turn of the century, the Central Verein was in dire financial trouble as its women's and orphan's funds had collapsed. In 1905 the Verein reinvented

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[18] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 13.
[19] Daniel Soyer, "Mutual Aid Societies and Fraternal Orders," in Ueda, *Companion*, 529–30.

and reinvigorated itself by focusing on social justice issues and promoting the social teachings of the Church.[20]

Catholic mutual aid societies sometimes competed with non-Catholic societies. As Daniel Soyer points out, mutual aid societies might transcend region, but not religious or political divisions.[21] The most famous conflict of this sort occurred between two Polish groups, the Polish Roman Catholic Union (PRCU), founded in 1873, and the Polish National Alliance (PNA), founded in 1880. The PRCU saw Polish identity as inextricably connected with Catholicism, while the PNA, still largely Catholic, was more inclusive allowing socialists, Jews, and schismatics to join – its main concern was the independence of Poland. The PRCU was founded by Polish clergy, and the PNA was founded by laymen. Both groups wanted to establish a national Polish organization to assist Polish immigrants in the United States and to support the establishment of an independent Poland. The PNA supported educational programs establishing a Polish Library in Chicago and, in 1912 a liberal arts college, Alliance College, in Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, which offered special courses on the Polish language and culture. It also established an Immigrants House in New York City. The PRCU focused on promoting institutional Catholic life by promoting Polish parishes and schools. But it also addressed social needs, having as one of its goals to take care of "widows and orphans." The PRCU started a hospital and an orphanage. Both the PRCU and the PNA began as fraternal organizations, but both added insurance programs in the mid-1880s, the PNA in 1885 and the PRCU in 1886. Despite the similarity in goals and the largely Catholic membership, each association began to view the other with suspicion. For the PNA, the PRCU was "priest-ridden" and ineffective. For the PRCU, the PNA was "secular and anti-clerical." At an 1896 National Polish Catholic Congress in Buffalo, the PNA was roundly condemned in the following statement: "Another plague that afflicts us is the Polish National Alliance, an organization which spreads pernicious principles, infidelity, and thrusts the people to impiety and the denial of the faith of their fathers."[22] The societies continue in uneasy coexistence to the present time.

Catholics played only a limited role in the settlement house movement inspired by Jane Addams in 1889. By 1914 there were only twenty-seven Catholic settlement houses. The settlement houses served immigrant communities: Italians at the Madonna Center in Chicago, Eastern

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[20] See Philip Gleason, *The Conservative Reformers: German-American Catholics and the Social Order* (Notre Dame, 1968).

[21] Soyer, "Mutual Aid Societies," 538.

[22] Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 39, and quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 150.

Europeans and Germans at St. Elizabeth in St. Louis, and Mexican immigrants at Brownson House in Los Angeles. Catholic settlement work was hindered by a number of factors. First, Catholics placed a greater emphasis on parishes, schools, hospitals, and orphanages in serving the immigrant community. Second, settlement houses tended to be run by lay women. An active lay women's apostolate was still a novelty for American Catholics as most social work was done by clergy and women religious. One settlement worker concluded that settlement houses could have "been a valuable adjunct of Catholic immigrant life everywhere in America had there been fewer intransigents among our clergy and laity."[23]

With the onset of World War I, two developments affected service to immigrants: First, a national office, the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC), initially the War Council, then following the war the Welfare Conference was established, the first national organization of U.S. bishops. It gave the bishops a national voice and allowed for national planning. Second, diocesan Catholic Charities offices were established to centralize and professionalize the myriad Catholic charities operating within each diocese. Both Boston and New York Catholic Charities had established immigrant welfare bureaus by 1923.

During the war, the NCWC organized citizenship training courses for new immigrants along with other patriotic endeavors. Following the war, according to historian Dierdre Moloney, the NCWC eclipsed most localized immigrant programs, establishing a comprehensive national bureau in Washington, D.C., with satellite programs at European departure ports.[24] It essentially took over the services provided by the St. Raphael's Society. The NCWC also lobbied on behalf of Catholic immigrants, especially as debates raged over immigrant quotas and restrictions.

While the Catholic Church nationalized, new Catholic immigrants began to arrive from non-European countries. After 1911, heavy immigration from Mexico swelled the Mexican American population in Texas, California, and the Southwest. Although the Catholic Church has been accused of neglecting its Latino population – an accusation based in some truth – the Church responded with its traditional approach to immigrant groups, namely, the parish model. Mexicans were ministered to through the parish. Oftentimes it was not a national parish, and the Mexican community felt treated like second-class parishioners in Anglo parishes. In such cases, Mexican devotional societies played an important role in validating the community. In his examination of the Cathedral parish in San Antonio, Timothy Matovina noted that parishioners established and

[23] Mary Amberg quoted in Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 142.
[24] *Ibid.*, 111.

promoted a number of societies and associations. And while most had a religious focus, many also went beyond that. "[T]hese associations provided social networks and activities, communal support during time of illness or critical need, the consolation of collective presence and prayer at funerals for deceased members, and ... enabled congregations ... to engender 'a sense of belonging to human-size communities.'"[25] Gina Marie Pitti makes it clear that devotional societies were more than religious. In San Jose, California, the Guadalupana Societies, formed to properly celebrate the major national feast, the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, also served a variety of "social and community functions," in one case even serving as a mutual aid society.[26] In Los Angeles, the traditional answer of Catholic schools was employed as Archbishop James Francis McIntyre redirected funds intended to build a new cathedral to the construction of schools in the barrio parishes. Education was to be a way up and out of the barrio.

Nationally, the bishops began to take note of the growing concern over Mexican immigration with the creation of a national office in 1944, the Bishops Committee for the Spanish Speaking. The bishops tried to establish a national plan for the growing Latino presence.

Filipino immigration also increased during the 1920s. Unlike earlier immigrant groups, no national parishes were established for Filipinos during this era. Filipinos had to integrate into regular parishes, where they often encountered discrimination. In San Francisco and Seattle, the Church established Catholic Filipino Clubs in the 1920s to minister to the predominantly male community. The clubs provided lodging, wholesome entertainment, and educational opportunities to deflect the attraction of vice.[27]

THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

The Jewish immigrant experience was very similar to that of Catholics. Jewish immigrants who arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century experienced various forms of anti-Semitism and so set up a parallel system of Jewish institutions to provide for the Jewish community: orphanages, hospitals, day care centers, homes for the elderly, and other institutions of charity. In 1852, Mount Sinai Hospital was begun in Manhattan, in part because Jews were not allowed admittance to many other hospitals,

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[25] Timothy Matovino, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, 2005), 105–6.

[26] Gina Marie Pitti, "The Sociedades Guadalupanas in the San Francisco Archdiocese, 1942–1962," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21 (Winter 2003): 85–6.

[27] See Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 263–6.

nor were Jewish doctors allowed to practice freely. Equally important, the hospital was set up to care for "indigent Jews," a population that would expand in the second half of the nineteenth century with the onset of mass immigration.

As had been the case with Catholics, a significant Jewish immigration occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the largest group coming from Germany. Between 1881 and 1915 more than two million Eastern European Jews flooded into the United States, settling primarily in New York City and on the eastern seaboard. The settled German community greeted the newly arriving European immigrants with some ambivalence. In 1894, the *New York Hebrew Standard* could opine, "The thoroughly acclimated American Jew … has no religious, social, or cultural sympathies with them [Eastern European Jews]. He is closer to the Christian sentiment around him than the Judaism of these miserable, darkened Hebrews."[28] Tensions were further exacerbated by differences in piety: the German community preferred Reformed Judaism for the most part, while the new arrivals were more Orthodox. Nonetheless, the Jewish value of what Moses Rischin calls "pure loving kindness," or what Hasia Diner calls *tzedakah*, a profound responsibility, prompted the older community to care for the new. As Diner put it, "In the nineteenth century philanthropy became the glue that held American Jewry together." Or as Jonathan Sarna stated, citing an old rabbinic saying, "All Israel is responsible for one another."[29] In 1881, German Jews established the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society in New York City and, the following year, the Hebrew Sheltering Society. Between 1881 and 1883 they assisted more than fourteen thousand Russian Jews.[30] The society disbanded in 1884, however. More successful was the United Hebrew Charities (UHC) founded in 1874 during the Panic of 1873, which consolidated a number of separate Jewish charities. The UHC provided temporary shelter, meals, medical aid, free burial, and an employment service. By 1885, the UHC had processed more than three thousand job seekers.[31]

In the period 1889–93 three agencies – the Hebrew Free School Association, the Young Men's Hebrew Association, and the Aguilar Free

[28] Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 97.

[29] *Ibid.*, 104; Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley, 2004), 135; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 220; Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880, Jewish People in America*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1992), 100.

[30] Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920, Jewish People in America*, vol. 3 (Baltimore, 1992), 49.

[31] Rischin, *Promised City*, 99.

Library Society – merged to form the Educational Alliance in New York. The alliance operated like a settlement house providing Americanization services and educational opportunities for the new arrivals.

Like Catholics, Jews received important monetary support from European sources. Most notably, in 1892 the Jewish community benefited from the beneficence of German Jew Baron Maurice de Hirsch and his wife, Clara, who established a major fund to assist emigrating Jews once they arrived in the United States. The fund encouraged immigrants to learn trades in order to support themselves. It encouraged colonization – an experimental community in Woodbine in southern New Jersey was established. In 1893 Woodbine Agricultural School was created to assist Jewish immigrants settling on the land. The fund also paid for port agents to assist immigrants. It provided funds for scholarships, the Educational Alliance, and United Hebrew Charities, and other charitable and educational endeavors.

The Eastern European Jews were never totally satisfied with being served by the older German American community, and they began developing self-help agencies of their own. An 1894 Yiddish newspaper observed,

> In the philanthropic institutions of our aristocratic German Jews you see beautiful offices, desks … but strict, hard, angry faces. Every poor man is questioned like a criminal.... When the same Russian Jew is in an institution of Russian Jews, no matter how poor and small the building, it will seem to him big and comfortable. He feels at home among his own brethren who speak his tongue, understand his thoughts, and feel his heart.[32]

By the late 1880s, Eastern Europeans had begun establishing their own communal charities such as burial societies and immigrant aid societies.

According to historian Gerald Sorin, the first "major institution" set up by Eastern European Jews was the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society in 1892 in New York. The society "mediated" between immigrants and immigrant officials.[33] The society provided meals, temporary housing, employment counseling, and clothing. They hired port agents to assist the new immigrants. In 1904, a bureau was established on Ellis Island as agents assisted immigrants through the screening process. In 1911, a kosher kitchen was established to allow arriving Jews to abide by Jewish dietary laws. By 1914, the society had branches in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington.

The most basic and popular institution created by the new immigrants was the *landsmanschaftn*. The landsmanschaftn was a type of mutual aid society created by people from the same region or hometown in Europe

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[32] *Ibid.*, 105.
[33] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 49.

who gathered together for mutual support. For instance, the first lands-manschaftn was created in 1868 by immigrants from the Polish city of Bialystok. By the end of the century, New York City hosted more than forty Bialystok landsmanschaftn, with other societies in Newark, Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia.[34] The landsmanschaftn served the religious, social, and cultural needs of the immigrant community, providing cultural connections to the Old World, while allowing the community to adapt to the new. In many respects it functioned in the same ways as the national parish did for Catholics. As Sorin notes, the landsmanschaftn "was a context for reconciling American and eastern European identities. It served as a sanctuary from the strains of acculturation.... [I]t gave immigrants breathing space, a place to be themselves ... and also a place to play a game of pinochle."[35] Like the parish, it reestablished communal elements and ties brought from Europe. But the landsmanschaftn also served a host of practical needs of great importance to an urban, working-class population. As noted earlier, the mutual aid society emphasized self-help, not charity. It provided sick and death benefits, unemployment insurance, interest-free loans, burial assistance, and educational opportunities. It hosted social gatherings. Many of the landsmanschaftn also served a religious function as well, providing religious services outside the synagogue. On occasion, synagogues grew out of the landsmanschaftn. However, by the turn of the century, "far more of the city's Jews belonged to lands-manschaftn than to synagogues." And increasingly these institutions were devoid of any connection to synagogues; many began to operate in the manner of American fraternal orders. By 1910 more than two thousand landsmanschaftn operated in New York City, while more than six hundred operated in Chicago.[36]

Earlier in the century, in 1843 another institution was created, B'nai B'rith, which was similar to an American lodge, providing sickness and death benefits. According to Hasia Diner, it came to operate as a "secular male alternative to the synagogue."[37] B'nai B'rith allowed for Jewish unity outside the context of the synagogue.

Unlike the Catholic community, the Jewish community did not develop an independent Jewish school system; rather by 1900 it had come to depend on the public school in the United States. By that time the sectarian quality of American public schools had declined, and the need for a separate Jewish system diminished. The public school seemed the best way for the

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[34] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 139.
[35] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 97.
[36] *Ibid.*, 97; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 169; Rischin, *Promised City*, 105.
[37] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 141.

Jewish immigrant community to advance and to succeed in the United States. As Lloyd Gartner put it, "The public school was viewed as the symbol and guarantee of Jewish equality and full opportunity in America."[38] Still, there was concern that religious values and education needed to be passed to the next generation. After-school programs were developed to provide basic religious education, while Talmud Torah schools developed to provide more rigorous religious training. Most synagogues developed the "Sunday school model," offering religious instruction one day a week, thus mimicking the Christian example.[39]

As with the Catholic experience, Jewish women played a crucial role in providing services to the immigrant community. Though most landsmanschaftn were primarily male, women auxiliaries often performed important tasks. Jewish charitable work initiated by synagogues relied largely on the efforts of women. In 1887, the Federation of Temple Sisterhoods was formed at Temple Emanu-El in New York City. Jonathan Sarna calls these groups "sisterhoods of personal service," as they cared for the temporal and social needs of the immigrant community. By 1896, every major uptown synagogue in New York City had a temple sisterhood.[40] In 1893, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was formed, and it quickly had offices in major cities across the United States. The NCJW oversaw port programs, provided immigrants with medical care, day nurseries, and orphanages, and ran settlement homes. Following World War I, the sisterhoods began to fade; as had happened with Catholics, professional social workers began to provide services previously performed by the sisterhoods.

THE PROTESTANT EXPERIENCE

The Protestant immigrant experience does not allow for easy generalizations due to the multiplicity of denominations and divisions within the denominations. As with Catholics and Jews, religion played a central role in the lives of the new immigrants. During the period 1865–1924, the largest Protestant immigrant groups were Germans and Scandinavians – Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes. The majority of these belonged to the Lutheran and Methodist churches, but the Baptist and Reformed communities also had significant numbers. Many of the Germans and Scandinavians settled in the Midwest, particularly the upper Midwest, though a significant number of Germans remained along the eastern seaboard as well. Congregations were established around nationalities, such

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[38] Quoted in Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 265.
[39] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 80.
[40] *Ibid.*, 142–3.

as the Norwegian Lutheran Church or the Swedish Methodist Church. The result was what might be called "national congregations" that were very similar to Catholic national parishes, though on a larger scale. These national congregations were loosely affiliated with their American core-ligionists as Protestant denominations, for the most part, lacked the central authority structure present in the Catholic Church. However, greater unity and structure were reflected in some of the Lutheran synods, such as the Missouri Synod which was largely German, or the Augustana Synod which was largely Swedish.

As with Catholics, however, the local congregation was the center of immigrant life. As Philip Gleason summarized Swedish Lutheran historian, George Stephenson, "[T]he Lutheran Church … constituted the essential institutional nucleus around which the group life of Swedish immigrants structured itself. The same could be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of most other immigrant groups."[41] The "national congregation" sought to preserve the language, heritage, and faith of the immigrant.[42] Some groups, particularly German Lutherans, founded schools to achieve this task. Many congregations looked to their homelands to obtain ministers for their congregations.

In New York City in the 1880s, the Broome Street Tabernacle, funded by the New York City Mission and Tract Society, gathered a congregation of nine nationalities. It provided a library, a cooking school, a gym, and lectures. The emphasis, however, Aaron Abell noted, was on religious service. "The Society's method of handling the foreign-born became an object lesson for other groups. It consisted in organizing for Germans, Italians, and Jews special churches in charge of ministers speaking the appropriate languages, and the services were held in the edifices of the regular congregations with a view to as speedy Americanization as possible."[43]

Like other immigrant groups, a whole array of mutual aid and fraternal societies developed to attend to the practical needs of the immigrant community. Protestants established groups such as the Lutheran Brotherhood, the Slovak Evangelical Union founded in 1893, and the Slovak Calvinist League in 1901, to name but a few. The mutual aid societies operated as they did for other groups, offering important support for the immigrant groups.

[41] Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 251.
[42] See Reinhard R. Doerries, "Immigrants and the Church: German Americans in Comparative Perspective," in Wolfgang Helbich and Walter O. Kamphofner, eds., *German American Immigration and Ethnicity in Historical Perspective* (Madison, WI, 2004), 3–17.
[43] Aaron Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865–1900* (Hamden, CT, 1962), 140–1.

Like other groups, Protestants attempted to provide services at the point of entry, at the ports, notably in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. As early as 1845, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in New York supported the "Bethel Ship Harbor Mission," which assisted Scandinavian sailors and immigrants from the mission ship, *John Wesley*, providing evangelization and social services. Or German Lutheran missionary Stephan Keyl founded the Immigrant Mission in 1868 in New York, which assisted over 27,000 immigrants by 1883, finding work for over 1,000 and providing interest-free loans of over $47,000 collectively. In 1883 the mission founded the Lutheran Pilgrim House, which provided temporary lodging and meals and assisted in finding employment for immigrants. Other immigrant aid houses were established by Swedish and German Lutherans and by German and Scandinavian Methodists. Several churches supplied port agents to help the immigrants navigate entry into the United States. In Boston in the 1880s Scandinavian churches supplied nine agents, which were supported by the Swedish Congregational Society, the Lutheran Swedish Society, the Norwegian Congregational Church, the Danish Lutheran Society, and the Women's Home Missionary Society.[44] The Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association also sponsored port agents.

Much concern and effort were put into ministry to immigrants, but Protestants worried that their ministry was not as effective as that of the Catholic Church.[45] Indeed, in the late nineteenth century the Social Gospel began to grow in Protestant churches and raised the question as to whether or not the church had not done enough to engage the problems of immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. The Social Gospel called for a Protestant presence among the poor and destitute, largely immigrant communities of the inner cities. One tangible outgrowth of this was Protestant participation in the settlement house movement. Though the settlement house did not have religious roots and though the majority of houses were not religious, more than 165 of the 400-plus houses were. Young, middle- and upper-class college-educated women provided the bulk of the workforce. Houses were established in poor immigrant neighborhoods and provided a host of services – child care, job training, adult education, Americanization classes, and legal advice.

Asian immigration presented a major problem to the established churches as most Asians, save Filipinos, were non-Christian. Protestants and Catholics responded by setting up missions to proselytize the Asian groups and to provide services in the process. Asian religions – Buddhism,

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[44] Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 103, 224.
[45] See Doerries, "Immigrants and the Church," 12.

Taoism, Confucianism – did not provide much practical help for their immigrant communities. As one historian concludes, "Chinese religions did not provide any practical help to improve most Chinese Americans' lives."[46] Rather the Chinese relied more on "district or clan" associations that were voluntary organizations of people from the same family or region that helped one another. In many ways they operated like the landsmanschaftn of the Jewish community.

THE END OF MASSIVE IMMIGRATION, 1914–1945

The massive numbers of immigrants to the United States began to ebb with the coming of World War I in 1914. During the war, German Americans faced a great deal of hostility and aggressive Americanization programs. Many German bilingual schools and parishes/congregations disappeared during the war. Following the war, massive immigration resumed, but it was cut short by the move to immigrant restriction. In 1921, and more lastingly in 1924, immigrant restriction legislation was passed, seriously curtailing the number of immigrants and creating a quota system that preferred Northern and Western European immigrants to other nations. Catholic and Jewish leaders argued against the quota system, which seemed to target their newest members, but they had little effect.

The reduction of new immigrants gave churches in the United States a chance to consolidate their efforts and to reassess their services to immigrants. Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish social services continued to become more professional and centralized during this time period. With the onset of the Depression, immigration was further diminished. Immigrant aid agencies, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, opened their facilities to those needing food and shelter, whether immigrant or not.[47] With the onset of World War II, immigrants looked with angst toward their ancestral homes. The Jewish community became particularly concerned as news of the oncoming Holocaust began to trickle in. They had little success in getting the United States interested in their plight. National parishes, national congregations, and ethnic mutual aid societies persisted, though most became increasingly Americanized. By 1945 the era of mass immigration was clearly at an end.

Following the war, large numbers of refugees came to the United States, most notably displaced persons or "DPs." In 1965, immigrant reform legislation set off another era of mass immigration. By 2000, immigration

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[46] Shih-Deh Chang Chou, "Religion and Chinese Life in the United States," *Studi Emigrazione: Etudes Migrations* 103 (1991): 457.
[47] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 256.

had reached levels equal to those of the previous century, and churches once again geared up to respond to the human and social traumas attendant upon the new mass immigration.

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RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO MODERN LIFE AND THOUGHT

RELIGION AND IMMIGRATION, 1865–1945

JEFFREY M. BURNS

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the United States underwent profound and at times traumatic social change occasioned by the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. The United States was transformed from a rural, agricultural nation into an urban, industrial nation. In 1899, industrial exports surpassed agricultural exports for the first time, and by 1920, more Americans lived in urban settings than in rural. Fueling this transformation were the millions of immigrants who arrived to become the raw materials for this expansion. The massive influx of immigrants presented the churches in the United States with enormous pastoral, physical, and human challenges, and the churches responded in a variety of ways.

Immigration, which had slowed during the first several years of the Civil War, picked up again in 1864 and exploded by the end of the nineteenth century. The immigration immediately following the war was similar to prewar immigration with the largest groups still coming from Germany, Ireland, and Great Britain. By 1910 the face of immigration had dramatically changed. Immigrants now poured in from Italy, Russia, and Austro-Hungary, which included Austrians, Hungarians, Galician Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Rusins, Ukrainians, Slovenes, Croatians, and Serbians. Significant numbers also came from the Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. The unsettled and changing economic conditions in Eastern, Southern, and Central Europe led to a new immigration. The disastrous *Kulturkampf* in German-controlled lands and the brutal pogroms directed against Russian Jews sent many more.

The "new immigrants," as they were called, shifted the locus of origin away from Northern and Western Europe to Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, a shift that disturbed many Americans. The new immigrants seemed more foreign than earlier groups, their language stranger and their customs more troubling. They seemed more radical, as many suspected them of being behind the labor unrest of the 1880s and 1890s

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that wracked America. Their religion – the vast majority were Catholics and Jews – also challenged an America that continued to see itself primarily in Protestant terms. Anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish impulses run like a thread throughout the era. But the new immigrants also challenged the established Catholic and Jewish communities that already had substantial numbers of second- or third-generation immigrants who were somewhat acculturated and fearful that the new immigrants would call their own status as Americans into question.

More troubling to Americans was the increase of immigration from Asia. The first significant Asian immigration began in the 1850s with immigrants from China arriving, drawn by the California Gold Rush. Reaction to the Chinese was harsh, and by 1882 a Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, ending all but a trickle of Chinese immigrants. Japanese immigration picked up in the 1890s, but was curtailed in 1907 by the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan. Filipino immigration grew following the Spanish American and Philippine War, reaching its height in the 1920s. In 1934 Filipino immigration was also all but ended.

Mexican immigration increased in the early twentieth century, as industries and farms sought cheap labor south of the border. Disruptions set off by the Mexican Revolution in 1911 ignited a flood of immigrants. During the Depression, Mexican immigration was curtailed, and many Mexicans were "repatriated." World War II created a demand for more workers, and the Bracero Program was initiated, laying the groundwork for postwar immigration, legal or otherwise.

As early as the 1890s, movements to end open immigration began to organize. Beginning in 1917 and culminating in 1924, the United States enacted a series of laws that sought to restrict immigration. In 1924, the National Quota Act put in place the national origins quota system that limited the number of immigrants who could enter the United States in any one year and assigned each nation a "quota." Northern and Western European nations were preferred, and Asian immigration was restricted.[1]

Within this context the churches in the United States tried to respond to the enormous human and social demands generated by the massive immigration. Immigrants confronted the challenges associated with leaving their old home and culture, as well as the difficulty of adapting to a new culture, a culture that was at best ambivalent toward them. Historian John McClymer has observed that immigrants not only had to contend with the host culture but they also had to contend with previous and other

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[1] For a general history of U.S. immigration, see Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York, 1990).

immigrant groups. He calls this "cultural triangulation."[2] The immigrant had to relate to his or her own cultural traditions, to the host culture, and to other immigrant groups. But the situation was even more complicated: new immigrants had to negotiate with different generations of immigrants from their own homeland, second- and third-generation immigrants with far different concerns than their first-generation compatriots. Religion complicated things even further. German immigrants were divided religiously among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and freethinkers. Thus one had to negotiate with the host culture, other immigrant groups, and the different faith traditions within one's own culture. In addition, significant differences existed within religious traditions. Irish Catholics found themselves at odds with German, Polish, and Italian Catholics; German Jews conflicted with later arriving Russian Jews. Further complicating matters was the perception of Protestant immigrants that they were part of the host culture. McClymer talks of a "Protestant partnership" where native Protestants looked after their new immigrant coreligionists. "Swedes and other Protestant groups claimed a fundamental affinity for American culture."[3] Such a perception enabled Protestants to adapt more readily to American culture while Catholics and Jews remained outsiders.

Whatever the faith tradition, religion played an integral role in the life of the immigrant. In his classic study *The Uprooted*, Oscar Handlin asserted that religion assisted the immigrant in coping with the trauma associated with immigration. More recently, Charles Hirschman has agreed with Handlin that the immigrant church provided "cultural continuity and psychological benefits" to the immigrant community, but it did more than that. "The centrality of religion to immigrant communities can be summarized as the search for refuge, respectability, and resources."[4] The church offered refuge from the hostile larger culture, and from the regular buffeting of everyday immigrant life. The church provided respectability as it gave working-class immigrants opportunities to obtain leadership positions not available to them in the larger society. In addition, participation in church societies and rituals built up the immigrants' self-respect and gave their lives purpose. And it provided resources for economic advancement as ethnic churches provided social insurance of different kinds as well as much needed services. The immigrant community also supplied a ready market for the distribution of goods. In the

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[2] John McClymer, "Religion and Ethnicity," in Reed Ueda, ed., *A Companion to American Immigration* (Malden, MA, 2006), 515.

[3] *Ibid.*, 516. McClymer borrows the term "Protestant partnership" from Kenneth J. Moynihan.

[4] Charles Hirschman, "The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States," *International Migration Review* 38 (2004): 1229.

midst of a disturbing and difficult world, the immigrant church provided these crucial supports.

THE CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE

Catholics were the largest number of new immigrants in the period 1865–1924. Catholics had also led the way in the pre–Civil War era with the vast migration of Irish and Germans, making the Catholic Church the single largest denomination in American society by 1860. By the time of the new immigration, the Irish and Germans were well established, with the Irish dominating the Church hierarchy. These groups directed the Catholic response to the new immigration.

While significant German and Irish Catholic immigration persisted through the end of the nineteenth century, the source of Catholic immigration shifted. Poles and Italians became the two largest Catholic immigrant groups by 1910, but significant numbers of Slovaks, Lithuanians, Czechs, Hungarians, French Canadians, Portuguese, and eastern-rite Catholics also swelled the rolls of the Catholic Church in the United States. By the 1920s large numbers of Latino and Filipino Catholics added to the mix. The diversity and enormity of the immigration called for a multilayered response. As with other immigrant groups, the new Catholic immigrants needed assistance in adjusting to their new environment, but the primary concern of church leaders was the preservation of the immigrants' faith.[5] To achieve this, temporal support also needed to be provided, meeting the immigrants' physical, social, and psychological needs as well as the religious. Historian Richard Linkh put it simply: "During the first quarter of the twentieth century virtually every ethnic group with a sizeable Catholic population had established Catholic organizations to care for the spiritual and material needs of the immigrants."[6] Of note, many separate Catholic institutions had been established in the first half of the nineteenth century in response to the virulent anti-Catholicism directed at the early immigrants, and these institutions also remained to assist the new immigrants in the late nineteenth century.

The Catholic Church had an advantage over other denominations in the United States in that it had a centralized authority structure and a clear chain of command. Many Protestant groups were so splintered that concerted action was difficult at times.

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[5] See Gerald Shaughnessy, *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith? A Study of Immigration and Catholic Growth in the United States, 1790–1924* (New York, 1925).

[6] Richard M. Linkh, *American Catholicism and European Immigrants (1900–1924)* (Staten Island, 1975), 98.

The primary institution to assist the new Catholic immigrants was the parish, more particularly, the "national" or "language" parish. Since the Council of Trent, Catholics throughout the world had been divided into territorial parishes. A Catholic was supposed to attend his or her neighborhood parish. However, the diversity of the U.S. Church gave rise to a special, nonterritorial parish that was based on language and ethnicity rather than location, and it was dubbed a "national parish." Any person who spoke the language of the national parish could become a member of the parish regardless of where he or she lived. The first such national parish was founded by Germans in Philadelphia in 1787 – Holy Trinity Parish. The parish enabled the German community to celebrate German culture and devotions, to use the German language, and to allow for a measured Americanization. The national parish served as a buffer to a hostile American society and to what was perceived as a hostile Irish American Church, but it did not merely isolate the German community. As historian Philip Gleason notes, paraphrasing W. I. Thomas, "Ethnic institutions such as churches, far from isolating newcomers from American life, actually provide the organizational vehicles that allow them to participate in it."[7] The parish merely slowed the pace of assimilation. Or as German advocate Father Peter Abbelen advised in 1886, "Let the 'Americanization' of the Germans be a slow and natural process; let it not be hastened to the prejudice of the religion of the Germans."[8] The importance of the language was reflected in the oft-repeated dictum pronounced by Archbishop Martin Henni of Milwaukee, "Language saves faith." If the mother tongue were abandoned or the culture lost, it was feared the faith would go with it. By 1900 there were 336 German Catholic parishes in the United States.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the national parish was the primary institution used to meet the needs of the diverse new immigrant groups. By 1920 there were 404 Polish and 257 Italian parishes.[9] In their classic study of Polish immigrant life, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki stressed the centrality of the parish to the Polish immigrant community; their analysis could be applied to many groups. "The parish is, indeed, simply the old primary community, reorganized and concentrated.... In its institutional organization it performs the functions which in Poland are fulfilled by both parish and the commune." The parish provided an emotional and physical grounding in the new setting.[10] At times the connection between

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[7] Philip Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1992), 251.

[8] Quoted in Jeffrey M. Burns, Ellen Skerrett, and Joseph M. White, *Keeping Faith: European and Asian Catholic Immigrants* (Maryknoll, NY, 2000), 65.

[9] James S. Olson, *Catholic Immigrants in America* (Chicago, 1987), 122.

[10] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 141.

the old community in Europe and the new community could be quite literal as when the Polish community established in Panna Maria, Texas, brought the crucifix from their parish church in Poland to establish their new parish in America. Oftentimes, parishes were established by groups of laymen and women who would come together, raise money, build a church, and then ask the bishop to recognize them. The national parish succeeded in providing Hirschman's refuge, respectability, and resources. It was particularly useful to groups such as the Italians, whose piety so differed from the Irish, German, and Polish expressions of the faith.[11] The national parishes gave immigrants the freedom to express their cultural differences, and a host of devotional societies, often rooted in Old World traditions, flourished. Different forms of this institution – the national parish – were present in all the faith traditions in the United States.

Equally important to most Catholic immigrant communities was the development of the Catholic school. Initially, Catholic schools were established in the first half of the nineteenth century to combat and provide an alternative to what was perceived as the anti-Catholic, stridently Protestant tone of the public school. While that motivation still obtained with Catholic immigrant groups at the turn of the twentieth century, the school was now also to preserve the language and culture for the second generation. Polish activist Father Waclaw Kruszka put it simply, "The Polish school stands right next to the church in importance in America. In the full sense of the word, it is the foundation of the Polish church abroad."[12] Germans and Poles often built their schools before they built their parish churches.

One feature of the Catholic immigrant Church that distinguished it from Protestant groups was the manner in which foreign influences affected its service to the new immigrants. Most significant was the role of the pope in Rome; the pope was kept regularly informed of the Church in the United States, and he often expressed concern for its treatment of Catholic immigrant groups, particularly Italian Catholic immigrants. The U.S. Catholic bishops regularly addressed the issue of immigration at their national meetings. Besides having to answer to an international authority, the Catholic Church in the United States also benefited from foreign beneficiaries: Catholic societies in Austria, Bavaria, and France supplied money to the American Church to assist it in ministering to immigrants. European nations also provided the workforce for immigrant institutions in the form of clergy and women religious. Thousands of priests and women

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[11] See Robert Anthony Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1890–1950* (New Haven, 1985).
[12] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 147.

religious became immigrants themselves to minister to the needs of immigrants in the United States. In 1842, All Hallows Missionary College was established in Dublin, Ireland, to produce missionaries to follow the Irish throughout the world. All Hallows joined with other Irish seminaries in supplying a steady stream of Irish priests for the United States. In 1887, Italian bishop Giovanni Scalabrini of Piacenza in northern Italy created an order with the specific intent of caring for Italian immigrants in the United States, the Missionary Society of St. Charles Borromeo, which came to be known as the Scalabrinians; they ultimately established a seminary on Staten Island. Virtually every immigrant group received immigrant priests to work in their communities: the Polish Congregation of the Resurrection, the Italian Salesians and Jesuits, the German Franciscans and Benedictines, to name but a few. In some cases the priests were exiles and refugees themselves, such as the Franciscans from the Saxony province in Germany, who fled the *Kulturkampf* in the 1880s and expanded Franciscan ethnic ministry in the Midwestern United States.[13] In the 1920s, Mexican clergy fled the persecution of the anticlerical Mexican government and served in parishes in California and Texas that had been established for the newly arrived Mexican population.

Catholic Sisters from Europe also came in large numbers to provide the workforce for Catholic immigrant institutions. The whole Catholic social welfare infrastructure in the United States was built on the back of women religious: schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the elderly, homes for working girls, employment bureaus, magdalen asylums, day care centers, and other institutions of charity. By 1924 more than one hundred different orders from different parts of Europe had established themselves in immigrant communities. For example, in 1854 Mother Mary Baptist Russell led the Sisters of Mercy from Ireland to San Francisco where the Mercies staffed a hospital, taught in schools, and established a home for the elderly poor, a magdalen asylum, and several other institutions that served a largely, but not exclusively, Irish American population. In 1885, Mother Francis Siedliska brought the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth to Chicago where they established an orphanage and schools. Their arrival brought joy to Polish immigrant women, as the Sisters recorded: "The Polish women came to be acquainted with us.... Seeing us they cried with joy, calling us the good sisters from their native land."[14] In 1889 Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini brought her Sisters of the Missionary Society of the

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[13] See Kirsten R. Schmies and Stephan Scherfenberg, *Gregor Janknecht and the Franciscans in Nineteenth-Century United States and Europe,* trans. Stephan Scherfenberg (Berkeley, 2008).

[14] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 148.

Sacred Heart from Italy to New York City where, she asserted, "Our object is to rescue the Italian orphans of the city from the misery and dangers that threaten them."[15] Many of the service and charitable ministries to immigrants depended on the Roman Catholic sisterhood, many of whose members were immigrants themselves.

European Catholics also developed societies to protect the immigrants from the beginning to the end of their journeys. On both sides of the Atlantic, every step of the immigrant's journey was fraught with danger. In 1871, German merchant Peter Paul Cahensly founded the St. Raphael Society (*St. Raphaelsverein*) for Protecting German Immigrants. The society hired agents to assist immigrants in the dangerous European port cities. In 1883 the society extended itself across the ocean, establishing a branch in New York City that sought to assist German immigrants upon their arrival in the United States. The society provided financial aid and temporary housing, aided immigrants in connecting with relatives already in America, assisted in finding jobs, and supplied other services. The society was so successful that by the 1890s it had expanded to furnish services for Italian, Belgian, and Austrian immigrants, and by 1910 for Slovenes and Slovaks. In 1889 the society established Leo House in New York City to minister to newly arriving immigrants. Cahensly's sympathy with the immigrants embroiled him and the society in a conflict with Irish American bishops. The society urged the Church to take better care of its immigrant population, claiming that as many as sixteen million Catholic immigrants had been lost to the faith as a result of the neglect of the immigrants. The Irish Americans denied the allegation and denounced what they perceived as foreign meddling in the U.S. Church. The encounter played a major role in the developing Americanist controversy.[16]

Concerns also emanated from elsewhere in Europe about the care of immigrants. Irish Catholic convert Charlotte Grace O'Brien became particularly concerned about the plight of immigrant women. O'Brien was appalled by the conditions on immigrant ships, which exposed women to "moral and physical degradation."[17] In 1883, she succeeded in inspiring the establishment of Our Lady of the Rosary Mission for the Protection of Immigrants under the direction of Father John Riordan in New York City. The mission hired an agent who met the young women first at Castle Garden, and later at Ellis Island after it was established in 1892. The mission intended first to protect young women on the steamship lines, and

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[15] Quoted in *ibid.,* 166.
[16] See Colman J. Barry, *The Catholic Church and German Americans* (Milwaukee, 1953).
[17] Deirdre M. Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 91.

subsequently at the landing depot; it then provided temporary shelter for them until they could be reunited with relatives or placed in a job. Finally, it gave them access to the "good offices of the priest who alone can bring confidence, encouragement and hope to the heart of the Irish exile."[18] By 1910 the mission had assisted more than one hundred thousand women and placed twelve thousand in jobs, primarily as domestics in Catholic homes. The mission was entirely dependent on charity, charging its guests nothing.

Immigrant aid societies could be found in most of the major ports: New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and New Orleans. One Catholic agency that was not primarily an immigrant aid society but that provided significant assistance at the ports and in immigrant communities was the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The society was a lay organization founded in France and brought to the United States in 1845. Located in parish conferences, it served the local poor, which in the nineteenth century was most often the immigrant poor. The society supported agencies and information centers to assist immigrants.

One important agency that assisted Catholic immigrants as they confronted their new situation was the mutual aid society. The mutual aid society supplied a number of vital services to an immigrant, working-class community. First, it provided sick and death benefits; as yet no social insurance programs were funded by the government. As such it offered important economic support to the immigrant community. Second, the society was not a charity, but rather a mutual help agency. Each member contributed to the success of the society, financially and otherwise, so no one member was beholden to another.[19] Third, the society usually supplied cultural and social benefits, as well as religious. Fourth, the society gave working-class people a chance to take on leadership roles. In short, the mutual aid society provided resources and respectability. Virtually every immigrant group had several mutual aid societies. Most were relatively small, but some grew into major institutions.

In 1855, several German mutual aid societies came together in Baltimore to form the German Roman Catholic Central Union of North America, which came to be known simply as the Central Verein. The Verein was essentially a national organization made up of parish mutual aid societies. The union, however, gave the Central Verein a national voice. By the turn of the century, the Central Verein was in dire financial trouble as its women's and orphan's funds had collapsed. In 1905 the Verein reinvented

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[18] Quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 13.
[19] Daniel Soyer, "Mutual Aid Societies and Fraternal Orders," in Ueda, *Companion*, 529–30.

and reinvigorated itself by focusing on social justice issues and promoting
the social teachings of the Church.[20]

Catholic mutual aid societies sometimes competed with non-Catholic
societies. As Daniel Soyer points out, mutual aid societies might transcend
region, but not religious or political divisions.[21] The most famous conflict
of this sort occurred between two Polish groups, the Polish Roman Catholic
Union (PRCU), founded in 1873, and the Polish National Alliance (PNA),
founded in 1880. The PRCU saw Polish identity as inextricably connected
with Catholicism, while the PNA, still largely Catholic, was more inclu-
sive allowing socialists, Jews, and schismatics to join – its main concern
was the independence of Poland. The PRCU was founded by Polish clergy,
and the PNA was founded by laymen. Both groups wanted to establish
a national Polish organization to assist Polish immigrants in the United
States and to support the establishment of an independent Poland. The
PNA supported educational programs establishing a Polish Library in
Chicago and, in 1912 a liberal arts college, Alliance College, in Cambridge
Springs, Pennsylvania, which offered special courses on the Polish language
and culture. It also established an Immigrants House in New York City.
The PRCU focused on promoting institutional Catholic life by promoting
Polish parishes and schools. But it also addressed social needs, having as
one of its goals to take care of "widows and orphans." The PRCU started a
hospital and an orphanage. Both the PRCU and the PNA began as frater-
nal organizations, but both added insurance programs in the mid-1880s,
the PNA in 1885 and the PRCU in 1886. Despite the similarity in goals
and the largely Catholic membership, each association began to view the
other with suspicion. For the PNA, the PRCU was "priest-ridden" and
ineffective. For the PRCU, the PNA was "secular and anti-clerical." At an
1896 National Polish Catholic Congress in Buffalo, the PNA was roundly
condemned in the following statement: "Another plague that afflicts us
is the Polish National Alliance, an organization which spreads pernicious
principles, infidelity, and thrusts the people to impiety and the denial of
the faith of their fathers."[22] The societies continue in uneasy coexistence to
the present time.

Catholics played only a limited role in the settlement house movement
inspired by Jane Addams in 1889. By 1914 there were only twenty-seven
Catholic settlement houses. The settlement houses served immigr-
ant communities: Italians at the Madonna Center in Chicago, Eastern

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[20] See Philip Gleason, *The Conservative Reformers: German-American Catholics and the Social
Order* (Notre Dame, 1968).

[21] Soyer, "Mutual Aid Societies," 538.

[22] Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 39, and quoted in Burns et al., *Keeping
Faith*, 150.

Europeans and Germans at St. Elizabeth in St. Louis, and Mexican immigrants at Brownson House in Los Angeles. Catholic settlement work was hindered by a number of factors. First, Catholics placed a greater emphasis on parishes, schools, hospitals, and orphanages in serving the immigrant community. Second, settlement houses tended to be run by lay women. An active lay women's apostolate was still a novelty for American Catholics as most social work was done by clergy and women religious. One settlement worker concluded that settlement houses could have "been a valuable adjunct of Catholic immigrant life everywhere in America had there been fewer intransigents among our clergy and laity."[23]

With the onset of World War I, two developments affected service to immigrants: First, a national office, the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC), initially the War Council, then following the war the Welfare Conference was established, the first national organization of U.S. bishops. It gave the bishops a national voice and allowed for national planning. Second, diocesan Catholic Charities offices were established to centralize and professionalize the myriad Catholic charities operating within each diocese. Both Boston and New York Catholic Charities had established immigrant welfare bureaus by 1923.

During the war, the NCWC organized citizenship training courses for new immigrants along with other patriotic endeavors. Following the war, according to historian Dierdre Moloney, the NCWC eclipsed most localized immigrant programs, establishing a comprehensive national bureau in Washington, D.C., with satellite programs at European departure ports.[24] It essentially took over the services provided by the St. Raphael's Society. The NCWC also lobbied on behalf of Catholic immigrants, especially as debates raged over immigrant quotas and restrictions.

While the Catholic Church nationalized, new Catholic immigrants began to arrive from non-European countries. After 1911, heavy immigration from Mexico swelled the Mexican American population in Texas, California, and the Southwest. Although the Catholic Church has been accused of neglecting its Latino population – an accusation based in some truth – the Church responded with its traditional approach to immigrant groups, namely, the parish model. Mexicans were ministered to through the parish. Oftentimes it was not a national parish, and the Mexican community felt treated like second-class parishioners in Anglo parishes. In such cases, Mexican devotional societies played an important role in validating the community. In his examination of the Cathedral parish in San Antonio, Timothy Matovina noted that parishioners established and

[23] Mary Amberg quoted in Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 142.
[24] *Ibid.*, 111.

promoted a number of societies and associations. And while most had a religious focus, many also went beyond that. "[T]hese associations provided social networks and activities, communal support during time of illness or critical need, the consolation of collective presence and prayer at funerals for deceased members, and . . . enabled congregations . . . to engender 'a sense of belonging to human-size communities.'"[25] Gina Marie Pitti makes it clear that devotional societies were more than religious. In San Jose, California, the Guadalupana Societies, formed to properly celebrate the major national feast, the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, also served a variety of "social and community functions," in one case even serving as a mutual aid society.[26] In Los Angeles, the traditional answer of Catholic schools was employed as Archbishop James Francis McIntyre redirected funds intended to build a new cathedral to the construction of schools in the barrio parishes. Education was to be a way up and out of the barrio.

Nationally, the bishops began to take note of the growing concern over Mexican immigration with the creation of a national office in 1944, the Bishops Committee for the Spanish Speaking. The bishops tried to establish a national plan for the growing Latino presence.

Filipino immigration also increased during the 1920s. Unlike earlier immigrant groups, no national parishes were established for Filipinos during this era. Filipinos had to integrate into regular parishes, where they often encountered discrimination. In San Francisco and Seattle, the Church established Catholic Filipino Clubs in the 1920s to minister to the predominantly male community. The clubs provided lodging, wholesome entertainment, and educational opportunities to deflect the attraction of vice.[27]

THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

The Jewish immigrant experience was very similar to that of Catholics. Jewish immigrants who arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century experienced various forms of anti-Semitism and so set up a parallel system of Jewish institutions to provide for the Jewish community: orphanages, hospitals, day care centers, homes for the elderly, and other institutions of charity. In 1852, Mount Sinai Hospital was begun in Manhattan, in part because Jews were not allowed admittance to many other hospitals,

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[25] Timothy Matovino, *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore, 2005), 105–6.

[26] Gina Marie Pitti, "The Sociedades Guadalupanas in the San Francisco Archdiocese, 1942–1962," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21 (Winter 2003): 85–6.

[27] See Burns et al., *Keeping Faith*, 263–6.

nor were Jewish doctors allowed to practice freely. Equally important, the hospital was set up to care for "indigent Jews," a population that would expand in the second half of the nineteenth century with the onset of mass immigration.

As had been the case with Catholics, a significant Jewish immigration occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the largest group coming from Germany. Between 1881 and 1915 more than two million Eastern European Jews flooded into the United States, settling primarily in New York City and on the eastern seaboard. The settled German community greeted the newly arriving European immigrants with some ambivalence. In 1894, the *New York Hebrew Standard* could opine, "The thoroughly acclimated American Jew … has no religious, social, or cultural sympathies with them [Eastern European Jews]. He is closer to the Christian sentiment around him than the Judaism of these miserable, darkened Hebrews."[28] Tensions were further exacerbated by differences in piety: the German community preferred Reformed Judaism for the most part, while the new arrivals were more Orthodox. Nonetheless, the Jewish value of what Moses Rischin calls "pure loving kindness," or what Hasia Diner calls *tzedakah*, a profound responsibility, prompted the older community to care for the new. As Diner put it, "In the nineteenth century philanthropy became the glue that held American Jewry together." Or as Jonathan Sarna stated, citing an old rabbinic saying, "All Israel is responsible for one another."[29] In 1881, German Jews established the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society in New York City and, the following year, the Hebrew Sheltering Society. Between 1881 and 1883 they assisted more than fourteen thousand Russian Jews.[30] The society disbanded in 1884, however. More successful was the United Hebrew Charities (UHC) founded in 1874 during the Panic of 1873, which consolidated a number of separate Jewish charities. The UHC provided temporary shelter, meals, medical aid, free burial, and an employment service. By 1885, the UHC had processed more than three thousand job seekers.[31]

In the period 1889–93 three agencies – the Hebrew Free School Association, the Young Men's Hebrew Association, and the Aguilar Free

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[28] Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 97.

[29] *Ibid.*, 104; Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley, 2004), 135; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 220; Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880, Jewish People in America*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1992), 100.

[30] Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920, Jewish People in America*, vol. 3 (Baltimore, 1992), 49.

[31] Rischin, *Promised City*, 99.

Library Society – merged to form the Educational Alliance in New York. The alliance operated like a settlement house providing Americanization services and educational opportunities for the new arrivals.

Like Catholics, Jews received important monetary support from European sources. Most notably, in 1892 the Jewish community benefited from the beneficence of German Jew Baron Maurice de Hirsch and his wife, Clara, who established a major fund to assist emigrating Jews once they arrived in the United States. The fund encouraged immigrants to learn trades in order to support themselves. It encouraged colonization – an experimental community in Woodbine in southern New Jersey was established. In 1893 Woodbine Agricultural School was created to assist Jewish immigrants settling on the land. The fund also paid for port agents to assist immigrants. It provided funds for scholarships, the Educational Alliance, and United Hebrew Charities, and other charitable and educational endeavors.

The Eastern European Jews were never totally satisfied with being served by the older German American community, and they began developing self-help agencies of their own. An 1894 Yiddish newspaper observed,

> In the philanthropic institutions of our aristocratic German Jews you see beautiful offices, desks … but strict, hard, angry faces. Every poor man is questioned like a criminal.... When the same Russian Jew is in an institution of Russian Jews, no matter how poor and small the building, it will seem to him big and comfortable. He feels at home among his own brethren who speak his tongue, understand his thoughts, and feel his heart.[32]

By the late 1880s, Eastern Europeans had begun establishing their own communal charities such as burial societies and immigrant aid societies.

According to historian Gerald Sorin, the first "major institution" set up by Eastern European Jews was the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society in 1892 in New York. The society "mediated" between immigrants and immigrant officials.[33] The society provided meals, temporary housing, employment counseling, and clothing. They hired port agents to assist the new immigrants. In 1904, a bureau was established on Ellis Island as agents assisted immigrants through the screening process. In 1911, a kosher kitchen was established to allow arriving Jews to abide by Jewish dietary laws. By 1914, the society had branches in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington.

The most basic and popular institution created by the new immigrants was the *landsmanschaftn*. The landsmanschaftn was a type of mutual aid society created by people from the same region or hometown in Europe

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[32] *Ibid.*, 105.
[33] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 49.

who gathered together for mutual support. For instance, the first landsmanschaftn was created in 1868 by immigrants from the Polish city of Bialystok. By the end of the century, New York City hosted more than forty Bialystok landsmanschaftn, with other societies in Newark, Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia.[34] The landsmanschaftn served the religious, social, and cultural needs of the immigrant community, providing cultural connections to the Old World, while allowing the community to adapt to the new. In many respects it functioned in the same ways as the national parish did for Catholics. As Sorin notes, the landsmanschaftn "was a context for reconciling American and eastern European identities. It served as a sanctuary from the strains of acculturation.... [I]t gave immigrants breathing space, a place to be themselves ... and also a place to play a game of pinochle."[35] Like the parish, it reestablished communal elements and ties brought from Europe. But the landsmanschaftn also served a host of practical needs of great importance to an urban, working-class population. As noted earlier, the mutual aid society emphasized self-help, not charity. It provided sick and death benefits, unemployment insurance, interest-free loans, burial assistance, and educational opportunities. It hosted social gatherings. Many of the landsmanschaftn also served a religious function as well, providing religious services outside the synagogue. On occasion, synagogues grew out of the landsmanschaftn. However, by the turn of the century, "far more of the city's Jews belonged to landsmanschaftn than to synagogues." And increasingly these institutions were devoid of any connection to synagogues; many began to operate in the manner of American fraternal orders. By 1910 more than two thousand landsmanschaftn operated in New York City, while more than six hundred operated in Chicago.[36]

Earlier in the century, in 1843 another institution was created, B'nai B'rith, which was similar to an American lodge, providing sickness and death benefits. According to Hasia Diner, it came to operate as a "secular male alternative to the synagogue."[37] B'nai B'rith allowed for Jewish unity outside the context of the synagogue.

Unlike the Catholic community, the Jewish community did not develop an independent Jewish school system; rather by 1900 it had come to depend on the public school in the United States. By that time the sectarian quality of American public schools had declined, and the need for a separate Jewish system diminished. The public school seemed the best way for the

[34] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 139.
[35] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 97.
[36] *Ibid.*, 97; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 169; Rischin, *Promised City*, 105.
[37] Diner, *Jews of the United States*, 141.

Jewish immigrant community to advance and to succeed in the United
States. As Lloyd Gartner put it, "The public school was viewed as the sym-
bol and guarantee of Jewish equality and full opportunity in America."[38]
Still, there was concern that religious values and education needed to be
passed to the next generation. After-school programs were developed to
provide basic religious education, while Talmud Torah schools developed
to provide more rigorous religious training. Most synagogues developed
the "Sunday school model," offering religious instruction one day a week,
thus mimicking the Christian example.[39]

As with the Catholic experience, Jewish women played a crucial role in
providing services to the immigrant community. Though most landsman-
schaftn were primarily male, women auxiliaries often performed important
tasks. Jewish charitable work initiated by synagogues relied largely on the
efforts of women. In 1887, the Federation of Temple Sisterhoods was formed
at Temple Emanu-El in New York City. Jonathan Sarna calls these groups
"sisterhoods of personal service," as they cared for the temporal and social
needs of the immigrant community. By 1896, every major uptown syna-
gogue in New York City had a temple sisterhood.[40] In 1893, the National
Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was formed, and it quickly had offices
in major cities across the United States. The NCJW oversaw port pro-
grams, provided immigrants with medical care, day nurseries, and orphan-
ages, and ran settlement homes. Following World War I, the sisterhoods
began to fade; as had happened with Catholics, professional social workers
began to provide services previously performed by the sisterhoods.

THE PROTESTANT EXPERIENCE

The Protestant immigrant experience does not allow for easy generaliza-
tions due to the multiplicity of denominations and divisions within the
denominations. As with Catholics and Jews, religion played a central
role in the lives of the new immigrants. During the period 1865–
1924, the largest Protestant immigrant groups were Germans and
Scandinavians – Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes. The majority of these
belonged to the Lutheran and Methodist churches, but the Baptist and
Reformed communities also had significant numbers. Many of the Germans
and Scandinavians settled in the Midwest, particularly the upper Midwest,
though a significant number of Germans remained along the eastern sea-
board as well. Congregations were established around nationalities, such

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[38] Quoted in Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 265.
[39] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 80.
[40] *Ibid.*, 142–3.

as the Norwegian Lutheran Church or the Swedish Methodist Church. The result was what might be called "national congregations" that were very similar to Catholic national parishes, though on a larger scale. These national congregations were loosely affiliated with their American core-ligionists as Protestant denominations, for the most part, lacked the central authority structure present in the Catholic Church. However, greater unity and structure were reflected in some of the Lutheran synods, such as the Missouri Synod which was largely German, or the Augustana Synod which was largely Swedish.

As with Catholics, however, the local congregation was the center of immigrant life. As Philip Gleason summarized Swedish Lutheran historian, George Stephenson, "[T]he Lutheran Church ... constituted the essential institutional nucleus around which the group life of Swedish immigrants structured itself. The same could be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of most other immigrant groups."[41] The "national congregation" sought to preserve the language, heritage, and faith of the immigrant.[42] Some groups, particularly German Lutherans, founded schools to achieve this task. Many congregations looked to their homelands to obtain ministers for their congregations.

In New York City in the 1880s, the Broome Street Tabernacle, funded by the New York City Mission and Tract Society, gathered a congregation of nine nationalities. It provided a library, a cooking school, a gym, and lectures. The emphasis, however, Aaron Abell noted, was on religious service. "The Society's method of handling the foreign-born became an object lesson for other groups. It consisted in organizing for Germans, Italians, and Jews special churches in charge of ministers speaking the appropriate languages, and the services were held in the edifices of the regular congregations with a view to as speedy Americanization as possible."[43]

Like other immigrant groups, a whole array of mutual aid and fraternal societies developed to attend to the practical needs of the immigrant community. Protestants established groups such as the Lutheran Brotherhood, the Slovak Evangelical Union founded in 1893, and the Slovak Calvinist League in 1901, to name but a few. The mutual aid societies operated as they did for other groups, offering important support for the immigrant groups.

[41] Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 251.
[42] See Reinhard R. Doerries, "Immigrants and the Church: German Americans in Comparative Perspective," in Wolfgang Helbich and Walter O. Kamphofner, eds., *German American Immigration and Ethnicity in Historical Perspective* (Madison, WI, 2004), 3–17.
[43] Aaron Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865–1900* (Hamden, CT, 1962), 140–1.

Like other groups, Protestants attempted to provide services at the point of entry, at the ports, notably in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. As early as 1845, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in New York supported the "Bethel Ship Harbor Mission," which assisted Scandinavian sailors and immigrants from the mission ship, *John Wesley*, providing evangelization and social services. Or German Lutheran missionary Stephan Keyl founded the Immigrant Mission in 1868 in New York, which assisted over 27,000 immigrants by 1883, finding work for over 1,000 and providing interest-free loans of over $47,000 collectively. In 1883 the mission founded the Lutheran Pilgrim House, which provided temporary lodging and meals and assisted in finding employment for immigrants. Other immigrant aid houses were established by Swedish and German Lutherans and by German and Scandinavian Methodists. Several churches supplied port agents to help the immigrants navigate entry into the United States. In Boston in the 1880s Scandinavian churches supplied nine agents, which were supported by the Swedish Congregational Society, the Lutheran Swedish Society, the Norwegian Congregational Church, the Danish Lutheran Society, and the Women's Home Missionary Society.[44] The Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association also sponsored port agents.

Much concern and effort were put into ministry to immigrants, but Protestants worried that their ministry was not as effective as that of the Catholic Church.[45] Indeed, in the late nineteenth century the Social Gospel began to grow in Protestant churches and raised the question as to whether or not the church had not done enough to engage the problems of immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. The Social Gospel called for a Protestant presence among the poor and destitute, largely immigrant communities of the inner cities. One tangible outgrowth of this was Protestant participation in the settlement house movement. Though the settlement house did not have religious roots and though the majority of houses were not religious, more than 165 of the 400-plus houses were. Young, middle- and upper-class college-educated women provided the bulk of the workforce. Houses were established in poor immigrant neighborhoods and provided a host of services – child care, job training, adult education, Americanization classes, and legal advice.

Asian immigration presented a major problem to the established churches as most Asians, save Filipinos, were non-Christian. Protestants and Catholics responded by setting up missions to proselytize the Asian groups and to provide services in the process. Asian religions – Buddhism,

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[44] Moloney, *American Catholic Lay Groups*, 103, 224.
[45] See Doerries, "Immigrants and the Church," 12.

Taoism, Confucianism – did not provide much practical help for their immigrant communities. As one historian concludes, "Chinese religions did not provide any practical help to improve most Chinese Americans' lives."[46] Rather the Chinese relied more on "district or clan" associations that were voluntary organizations of people from the same family or region that helped one another. In many ways they operated like the landsmanschaftn of the Jewish community.

THE END OF MASSIVE IMMIGRATION, 1914–1945

The massive numbers of immigrants to the United States began to ebb with the coming of World War I in 1914. During the war, German Americans faced a great deal of hostility and aggressive Americanization programs. Many German bilingual schools and parishes/congregations disappeared during the war. Following the war, massive immigration resumed, but it was cut short by the move to immigrant restriction. In 1921, and more lastingly in 1924, immigrant restriction legislation was passed, seriously curtailing the number of immigrants and creating a quota system that preferred Northern and Western European immigrants to other nations. Catholic and Jewish leaders argued against the quota system, which seemed to target their newest members, but they had little effect.

The reduction of new immigrants gave churches in the United States a chance to consolidate their efforts and to reassess their services to immigrants. Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish social services continued to become more professional and centralized during this time period. With the onset of the Depression, immigration was further diminished. Immigrant aid agencies, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, opened their facilities to those needing food and shelter, whether immigrant or not.[47] With the onset of World War II, immigrants looked with angst toward their ancestral homes. The Jewish community became particularly concerned as news of the oncoming Holocaust began to trickle in. They had little success in getting the United States interested in their plight. National parishes, national congregations, and ethnic mutual aid societies persisted, though most became increasingly Americanized. By 1945 the era of mass immigration was clearly at an end.

Following the war, large numbers of refugees came to the United States, most notably displaced persons or "DPs." In 1965, immigrant reform legislation set off another era of mass immigration. By 2000, immigration

[46] Shih-Deh Chang Chou, "Religion and Chinese Life in the United States," *Studi Emigrazione: Etudes Migrations* 103 (1991): 457.
[47] Sorin, *A Time for Building*, 256.

had reached levels equal to those of the previous century, and churches once again geared up to respond to the human and social traumas attendant upon the new mass immigration.

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RELIGION AND THE MODERN CITY, 1865–1945

ROBERT A. ORSI

Moral philosophers, theologians, scholars of religion, and historians until recently have traced the trajectory of modern urban religious history as a tragic story of decline and loss. To cite a prominent and influential example of this way of thinking, conservative Christian moralist Alasdair MacIntyre writes,

> When the working class were gathered from the countryside into the industrial cities, they were finally torn from a form of community in which it could be intelligibly and credibly claimed that the norms which govern social life had universal and cosmic significance, and were God-given. They were planted [botanical metaphors are common in discussions of religion and immigration] instead in a form of community in which the officially endorsed norms so clearly are of utility only to certain partial and partisan human interests that it is impossible to clothe them with universal and cosmic significance.

Viewed from the perspective of antiurban moralists, modern cities are great engines of secularization. They give us urban religious history as sacred noir, with God's body outlined in yellow police chalk on a city sidewalk.[1]

The great historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, likewise thought that all that remained of humankind's great religious traditions in modern cities were degraded and decadent survivals. Life in the city is about speed, efficiency, function, and novelty, Eliade and others following his lead believed; caught up in this frenzy of overstimulation, city people are disconnected from the ontological grounds of human experience, alienated from being itself, as being is revealed in nature, in the rhythms of the moon, the cycles of the seasons, and the pulse of the oceans. What is there of the holy on street corners or apartment buildings, amid the commerce and excitements

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Secularization and Moral Change* (New York, 1967), 14–15.

of the city, with all its dark distractions and attractions? The history of urban religion is the story of religion's diminishment and disappearance.[2]

But the fact is that much of what is characteristic of modern American religion developed in its cities. It was in religious idioms – inherited, improvised, and newly invented – that immigrants and migrants made lives for themselves and their families in the industrial city as they contended with the ambivalent pull of memory, the pressure of moral and religious obligations to family left behind, the unfamiliarity of their own American-born or raised children, and the harsh realities of work in the most brutal period of American industrial capitalism. Urban media of communication and transportation facilitated the rise to prominence of a number of new religious movements, such as Pentecostalism, the Nation of Islam, and Christian Science. Drawing on the economic and intellectual resources available in cities, religious leaders and congregations found ways of integrating tradition and modernity. It was in cities that Americans encountered and embraced Asian religions at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century – the signal moment of this meeting of Eastern and Western religions was the World Parliament of Religions at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago – even as indigenous practitioners of these faiths were being excluded from the country by laws motivated by racism and fear. Much of what constitutes the distinctive character of modern American Protestantism arose in response to the cities. The African American Great Migration north in the twentieth century proved to be the occasion for a great outpouring of religious creativity, generating new deities, musical forms, rituals, images, and leaders. The people caught up in this exodus from the South interpreted it as a religious event, a pilgrimage out of the wilderness, and another chapter in the salvation history of African Americans.

So religions thrived in the modern American industrial city. The twentieth-century American city and modern American religion developed in relation to each other, and this encounter of religion with the spaces and times of the industrial and then postindustrial city continues to shape contemporary American culture. That such statements about religion and the city still seem to defy common sense, however, shows the lingering power of the idea of the modern city as the agent of secularization, antithetical to religion, the place of moral chaos, cosmic confusion, and sacred loss, and of the agrarian countryside as the place where the "real America" is to be found. Such idealized visions of the pristine and ethical countryside

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[2] See, for example, Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1957; repr., New York, 1961), 13, 24, 51, 116–59, 178–9, and 201–13.

masked the exploitation and ruination of American farms by corporations and finance in those same years. The truth of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was that farms and cities were ever more dependent on each other, and both were equally exposed to the depredations of capitalism. So the religious history of the modern city begins with the history of the city itself as a moral and religious idea as well as a political trope.[3]

It is common even today after three decades of urban economic revitalization to hear middle-class white Americans say that they lived in the city, whatever city they were living in, until their children were born when they decamped for the suburbs or for a small town beyond the city's limits, which are "good places to raise children," meaning better places for this purpose than cities. Cities are fine places for bringing up children, one might argue. They offer extensive cultural resources and a rich diversity of people and experiences; learning to navigate cities helps youngsters develop the social and practical skills they need for living in the mostly urbanized contemporary world. The argument that children need more space and greenery than cities offer makes sense only on the assumption that children are creatures of field and wood, which is an inheritance of nineteenth-century Romanticism. (Advocates of playgrounds and parks in the early twentieth century made sure, in any event, that urban children would have ample grounds for romping and yelling.) But American wisdom is still that the city is desirable when people are young and unencumbered, which implies that the city is an exciting place for pleasure, exploration, self-discovery, perhaps self-indulgence, even irresponsibility, but it is no place for bringing up children, which suggests that the city is bad for children's health, bad for their growing minds and bodies, and perhaps bad for their moral character.

This moral ambivalence about the city and its inhabitants – what makes cities either compelling or threatening, exotic or vicious, good for children or bad for them, but for the people who live there – is an old story in American civilization that goes back at least to the early nineteenth century. It has had real-world consequences for cities and city people, shaping how Americans thought about cities and city people in the great era of urbanization following the Civil War, driving campaigns of moral reform, control, and surveillance. Typical of such efforts was the Charity Organization Society, founded in Buffalo, New York, in 1877. The mission of the COS was premised on suspicion and mistrust of the urban poor. By

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[3] On the interdependence of country and city in this period and its ideological masking, see Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (New York, 2009), 133–66.

the mid-1890s, the Charity Organization Society of New York City had compiled dossiers on 170,000 indigent families, implementing what one COS official described at the time as "moral oversight for the soul," and it made these available to banks, landlords, and other relief agencies. Moral apprehensions about the city and mistrust of city people oriented urban architecture and landscaping too. Among the issues bedeviling the design of Central Park were not only how to keep poor people and their amusements out of the park, but also how to make the park itself an instrument for the management and civilizing of the poor and working classes who managed to make their way into it. City governments in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries effectively deployed recently implemented municipal codes and ordinances to control the public behaviors of city people on sidewalks and streets, which were being defined ever more exclusively after the Civil War as conduits of goods and services in the capitalist economy. This included outdoor religious practice too.[4]

Accounts of the "mysteries and miseries" of cities were a staple of popular reading before the Civil War, serving up sensationalistic and titillating tales of urban depravity, mostly having to do with rum and Roman Catholics, both together cast as threats to American democracy, Protestantism, and civic virtue. The country's earliest pornography included graphic exposes of urban vice that helpfully included addresses and maps, a sign of the deep subterranean connection between righteous outrage at city vice and the lust to partake of it that haunts the hearts of moral reformers to this day. (The 1988 arrest for prostitution of Pentecostal televangelist and prophet Jimmy Swaggart in a motel along the old Airline Highway connecting Baton Rouge and New Orleans is a latter-day example of this enduring dilemma.) Popular journalism, evangelical temperance tracts, Protestant anti-Catholic fantasies, and depictions of Irish immigrants as degraded all contributed to the construction of the city in American minds before the Civil War as the enemy of family life, women's virtue, and individual character, the symbol of everything frightening and out of control in American life, and the antithesis of all that was good.

This view of the city persisted into the twentieth century, attaining the level of national paranoia, xenophobia, and terror after World War I when, despite military victory overseas, Americans felt themselves threatened in the wake of war by the aliens in their cities, as they suddenly seemed – Catholics, Jews, African Americans, and political radicals. This

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[4] On the Charity Organization Society, see Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1978), 145. For a different understanding of their work, see Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York, 1956).

led to a season of concerted assaults on the city and city people. The federal government in 1919 deported numbers of urban political activists. State legislatures sought to shut down or take control of Catholic schools. The old linkage of rum and Rome was key to the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant hysteria was likewise responsible for the Immigration Act of 1924 that set restrictive quotas on immigration from Southern and Eastern (but not Northern) Europe. The decade closed with the execution of immigrant radicals Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 and the public humiliation a year later of Catholic presidential candidate, New York Governor Al Smith, who hailed from and was unmistakably identified with New York's immigrant streets. His campaign song was "On the Sidewalks of New York." All this was at the very moment that more Americans were living in cities than in rural areas for the first time, as reported by the 1920 census. Animus against the city and its peoples waned in the 1930s and 1940s, when grave economic and political challenges called for the concerted effort of all Americans in common cause, but never completely disappeared. It returned in the 1960s with a sharpened racist edge.

A major contributing factor to this anticity spirit was the spatial distance within cities between middle-class Americans and poor and working-class immigrants and migrants that had been widening since before the Civil War. (This preceded the later divide between city and suburb that would also have moral and religious resonance.) The proprietors of small shops and businesses in colonial-era towns had lived and worked alongside their employees, but in the early republic, during the nation's first industrial revolution, the new urban middle class instituted a sharp distinction between work and home, in fact and in ideology, moving out of city quarters filling up with immigrants and workers to more pleasant and tranquil areas outside the cities, just then becoming accessible on expanding urban transportation lines. The new class mapping of the city carried large meanings: the public world of the center city was characterized as the place of competition, work, and conflict, the rank den of Roman Catholic sacramental excess, and the domain of lascivious, sensuous, uncontrolled, and dangerous lower orders, in explicit contrast to the domestic world of the suburbs, imagined as the space of nurture, civility, Protestant propriety, civilization, and domesticity.

The fault line running through social classes in the cities, separating races and religions (Catholics from Protestants, working-class Southern Baptist and Pentecostal migrants from middle- and upper-class mainline Protestants, the Jesus of mainline African American Protestants from the Jesus of the streets and storefronts), continued to widen in the later nineteenth century as industrialization disrupted by the war resumed. Older

urban Protestant congregations after the Civil War tended to be wealthier than the people living around, but not attending their churches. Church-sponsored studies in Pittsburgh and Allegheny in the 1880s found that business and professional men made up less than 10 percent of the populations of these areas but accounted for 60 percent of Protestant congregations. The moral meaning imputed to these social facts sharpened in the Gilded Age. Committed to economic and moral individualism and laissez-faire, middle- and upper-class city Protestants sitting in grand old church edifices listened to a smug "gospel of wealth" from comfortable pastors who assured them with scripture and racist pseudo-science that their comforts and the suffering of the poor were equally merited. The self-satisfaction of mainline Protestantism dwindled as the century and the multiple crises of the city became more urgent, but traces of moral and religious judgment and suspicions of the poor lingered, giving a distinctively resentful and sour cast to American social responsibility in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and beyond.[5]

Reformers of all sorts, those explicitly motivated by Christian faith and principles as well as the new professional social workers whose ranks were beginning to grow in these years proposed multiple solutions to what they saw as the moral danger and threat of the city after the Civil War. One was to remove vulnerable but as yet uncorrupted populations from the city to morally wholesome and civilizing rural environments. The New York Children's Aid Society, founded by Charles Loring Brace in 1853, and the Salvation Army, which came to the United States after the war, developed such programs. The youngsters rescued were treated harshly and exploited by their sponsors and hosts, inevitably so given the contempt that inspired such campaigns in the first place. Another solution was to bring nature and the morally beneficent ethos of the small town into the big city. The architecture of the American Catholic parish in the Northeast in the early twentieth century represented for many German and Irish priests a "miniature form of the medieval pastoral world . . . an enclosed haven," as one historian writes, that stood for "a harmonious social ideal against the corruptions of the urban environment." Ernest Thompson Seton, a founder of American scouting, maintained that learning woodcraft and forest lore at "rooftop campouts" in the city would transform street urchins into upright citizens. In Sunday schools and adult Bible classes (and at subsequent reunions of their graduates), at urban big-tent revivals, in YMCA reading rooms (the YMCA came to the United States from London in 1851), and at World

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[5] The church studies are cited in Aaron Ignatius Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865–1900* (Cambridge, MA, 1943), 62; see also Boyer, *Urban Masses,* 133–42.

Temperance Sunday rallies, middle-class Christians sought to re-create the idealized moral ethos of the countryside where people knew and recognized each other and kept track of each other's doings for the benefit of the ambitious young people who had just moved to the dangerously – and thrillingly – anonymous city. Revivalists and reformers were deft at exploiting the disorientations of newcomers to the city, intensifying the sense of city as alien and forbidding, in contrast to which the moral probity of the countryside glowed ever brighter.[6]

The irony of all this is that it was the spaces, crowds, media, and excitement of the city itself that made such massive Protestant antiurban gatherings possible as great public religious spectacles. Evangelical revivalist Billy Sunday's turn-of-the century tirades against the city – "wear rubber gloves," he warned God, when dealing with city folk – contributed to his popularity, but his success on the very competitive urban revival circuit reflected his deft manipulation of the idioms of urban popular culture and his mastery of the modern arts of communication, marketing, and self-promotion. The same was true of the darling of global Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century, Aimee Semple McPherson, whose friend Charlie Chaplin helped to design her Los Angeles temple. Religious figures like Sunday and McPherson exploited modern city culture for their own celebrity as they railed against it to their urban followers, which became a common strategy in modern American religion.[7]

Another response was to accept the challenge of the industrial city as a unique Christian responsibility and calling. This impulse was not free from the culture's punishing view of the city, but it was not exhausted by it either. While Christian idealism in the city was always mixed with other motives – for instance, to teach working-class immigrants how to behave in ways acceptable to the middle class, to convert Catholics to Protestantism (a persistent ambition that met with no success anywhere), likewise to police the amusements of the working class, and generally to "Americanize" the foreign populations of cities – this urgent and principled engagement with the city profoundly transformed American Protestantism as it accomplished much good in the cities.

The call to moral stewardship in the industrial city after the Civil War was first sounded in 1865 by the American Christian Commission, known

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[6] The urban parish as pastoral world is from Paula M. Kane, *Separatism and Subculture: Boston Catholicism, 1900–1920* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 111, 113; on the rooftop campouts, see Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, 1998), 108.

[7] Sunday's epidemiological caution is quoted in Roger A. Bruns, *Preacher: Billy Sunday and Big-Time American Evangelism* (New York, 1992), 147. On Chaplin and McPherson, see Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 75–6.

as the United States Christian Commission during the war, exemplifying
the spirit of generosity, fear, real social concern, and xenophobia that char-
acterized mainstream American Protestant responses to the city for the next
fifty years. The commission urged American denominations to transcend
their differences in order to meet the pressing challenges of the city, recog-
nizing that as social needs grew and the old Protestant city churches shrank,
individual congregations and denominations would not be able to cope on
their own. The urban crisis after the Civil War seemed to hold the promise
for the reorganization and renewal of American Protestantism itself in a
new American age. The institutional church movement called for attention
to the whole person in his or her environment, undermining the otherwise
resolute individualism of post-Civil War American Protestantism. African
American churches had functioned as social centers since before the Civil
War, and as African Americans moved north they brought this tradition of
community churches with them, although the predominance of Holiness
and Pentecostal churches in the migration, more apolitical in their engage-
ment with the fallen world, was an obstacle to the further development of
African American institutional churches. But the great African American
Baptist and Methodist city churches nurtured many prominent political
leaders of the twentieth century, among them New York's Adam Clayton
Powell, Jr., pastor of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, a position he
inherited from his father, and the community's congressman from 1945
to 1972.[8]

Service to the industrial city became a way for young middle-class and
college-educated Protestant men and women, many of whom had quietly
rejected their parents' Christianity, to act in faith with the social cove-
nant they been raised to acknowledge and accept in Calvinist childhoods.
Jane Addams is the most famous example of this generational cohort that
also included Richard T. Ely, an economist and a founder of the American
Economic Association (1885). By the turn of the century, living in city
neighborhoods among immigrants, workers, and the poor had become a
distinct form of moral witness, social responsibility, and Christian ethics.
Major Protestant seminaries began to require a sojourn in the city of its
ministerial candidates, and critical studies of the urban situation were
incorporated into Protestant seminary curricula. The theological voice of
this engagement with the industrial city and its inhabitants was the Social
Gospel movement, which argued that reading the New Testament through
the lens of the contemporary urban and industrial social crisis disclosed the

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[8] Milton C. Sernett writes that "African American institutional churches were the excep-
tion rather than the rule on the eve of World War I," in *Bound for the Promised Land:
African American Religion and the Great Migration* (Durham, 1997), 120.

true import of Jesus' life and message for modern times. In the words of its leading representative, Walter Rauschenbusch, who had encountered urban reality firsthand as pastor of a German Baptist church in New York's Hell's Kitchen, "The kingdom of God is . . . a collective conception, involving the whole social life of man. . . . It is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven." When later in the twentieth century Chicago Divinity School professor Gibson Winter decried the "suburban captivity" of American Protestantism, he spoke from an American Protestant theological culture profoundly and permanently changed by the modern city.[9]

Rauschenbusch's jab at "getting individuals to heaven" was aimed at evangelical revivalism. It was a fair rebuke, but the fact is that revival Christians such as Chicago's Dwight L. Moody also recognized the pressing need to care for the bodies of the urban poor, although they did so without the critical perspective on the structures of American capitalism that created poverty, sickness, and urban crime. Skid row missions, workers' chapels, and restaurants subsidized by Christian organizations became standard features of the modern cityscape. But it was Social Gospel Christians in the seminaries and mainline churches that contributed most to severing the identification of poverty and moral depravity in mainline American Protestantism amid the successive and increasingly devastating economic crises of the turn of the century.

Given the place of the city in the American imagination, however, even the most idealistic reformers entered the urban environment with equivocal fantasies, chasing needs and desires more intricate that those of simply helping the poor. The history of the phrase "to go slumming" captures this ambiguity. It was used first in England and in the United States in the 1880s to mean visiting a slum to do charity work, but it soon took on the added connotation of trolling slums "for fashionable entertainment and to satisfy curiosity about how the other half lived." Slightly earlier in the century, the term for cruising working-class and slum city quarters for thrills and a taste of real life was "to hunt [or to see] the elephant," Civil War slang for a soldier's initiation into combat, an etymology that establishes a powerful unconscious resonance between wartime carnage and the postwar impulse to roam the city in search of the real. For some, the real life of poor and immigrant city quarters had the feel of the holy; for

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[9] Rauschenbusch's comment on the Kingdom is taken from Sydney E. Ahlstrom, ed., *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy* (Indianapolis, 1967), 557. For Gibson Winter's theological criticism of suburbia, see *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches: An Analysis of Protestant Responsibility in an Expanding Metropolis* (Garden City, NY, 1961).

others, as the double meanings of "slumming" suggests, the thrill was of forbidden and exotic sexuality. Literary critic Malcolm Cowley wrote that his generation of the 1920s sought "virility" in the "moral underworld of the city" and in the 125 Harlem nightspots that catered to a white middle-class clientele.[10]

Sacred/profane were not opposites in American imaginings of the city; the holy and the depraved spun around and constituted each other. It is not a mere coincidence of American city history that just as the vogue of Harlem primitivism was peaking among white slummers, the most popular play on Broadway was Marc Connelly's *The Green Pastures*, which presented an African American cast in modern dress acting out Bible stories transplanted to rural Louisiana. "The beauty of *Green Pastures*," writes literary critic and historian Nathan Irvin Huggins, "was that, for a moment, it made faith possible and vicariously experienced" to jaded and disillusioned white audiences who were as taken by their fantasy of African Americans as a naïve, childlike people of simple Christian faith as they were by their fantasy of Harlem's sexual licentiousness. It is precisely into the dark and filthy depths that God comes in late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century Christian urban legends, as told in city revival conversion narratives, the autobiographies of city ministers, and the life stories of saved urban wretches. These genres of urban religious redemption remain popular today.[11]

The other part of this story is what the immigrants, migrants, and workers, black and white, from Mexico, the Caribbean, Southern and Eastern Europe, the American South, and Asia to the industrial city, made religiously of the city themselves. City peoples – or rural, small town, and village peoples, displaced by the global forces of industrial capitalism, by changes in agricultural economics and technologies, and by war and cultural strife, who *became* city people in time – confound the narrative of modern urban religious decline, moral alienation, and secularization with a wide range of religious inheritances, adaptations, improvisations,

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[10] On the history of "slumming," see Irving Lewis Allen, *The City in Slang: New York Life and Popular Speech* (New York, 1993), 81–4, 229–31; for the phrase "to see the elephant" in Civil War soldiers' parlance, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, 2008), 34. Cowley's comment about virility is quoted in Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York, 1995), 80.

[11] Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York, 1971), 300. The deep ties between Connelly's play and the wild Harlem nightlife scene were noted by African American performers. See Marc Connelly, *Voices Offstage: A Book of Memoirs* (New York, 1968).

and inventions. Religious vitality did not wane in the modern industrial city; let alone did religions disappear. It is only from the perspective of the most unreal and tendentious vision of what a religious *tradition* is, namely, static, orderly, unvarying over time, transcendent, unquestioning, and hierarchical, as opposed to what a religious tradition really is, namely, fluid, dynamic, changing, ambiguous, diverse in regional origins, uncertain, contradictory, with different and competing voices of authority, that it can be said that modern urban religious idioms represented the corruption or degradation of religious traditions.

Immigrants and migrants from "traditional religions" – taken here to mean religions that mix inheritances from different periods of time and geographical areas, usually without distinguishing among them, and so bring into modernity ways of being not contemporary or local to it and not completely congruent with its values and assumptions – used their religions to meet the realities of their new lives. "Traditional" religions, among them Catholicism, Judaism, and Buddhism, were transformed in the process. Small village-based Mediterranean and Mexican Catholic religious celebrations, for example, centered on saints who had commanded regional loyalties in the old countries, became neighborhood events, drawing together immigrants from different villages into a common American ethnic identity. Bat mitzvah was created for American Jewish adolescent girls, aligning tradition with modern gender expectations and the course of the twentieth-century life cycle. Buddhist temples attracted polyglot practitioners and seekers who gave American urban dharma its distinctive shape. Other people-becoming-city-people invented new religions, such as Pentecostalism, which had small town origins but became a global movement after the extensive, day-by-day media coverage of the 1906 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles. Or they turned to new divinities, men and women of the cities themselves, such as Father Divine, founder of the International Peace Mission Movement, and Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam. Religion was not the only medium of engagement with the city – the labor movement, politics, sports, ethnic clubs, neighborhood life all intersected with religion too – but it was a crucial piece of the repertoire of modern urban life.

This part of the story falls into two periods. The first goes from the end of the Civil War through the 1920s, the second from the 1930s to the end of the Second World War. Like all such historical divisions, these are rough and overlapping, and the transition from one to the other cannot be pinned to a specific year. But the changes in the city and in city life over these years and in the religious practices of city people were real. Thinking in terms of these two historical moments will help to organize the story of religion in modern American cities.

From the end of the Civil War through the 1920s is when immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, migrants from Mexico, and poor and working-class Protestants from small towns and mountain hollows arrived in great numbers in American cities. They established themselves in enclaves that were never as homogenous as they seemed to outsiders, but that provided newcomers with the security of the familiar. This included religion: accompanied by their gods, and their ghosts, saints, ancestors, spirits, and demons too, Buddha, Krishna, by Jesus Crucified, and by the Holy Ghost, the immigrants and migrants brought their religions to the streets, alleys, and sidewalks of the cities, and raised their temples and churches into the urban skies. At first they used rented halls, storefronts, and abandoned and dilapidated city structures, but in a very short time – especially given the realities of poverty and cultural unfamiliarity – the migrants and immigrants set about building more permanent places of worship, often contributing their own labors after hard days of work. The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries were the great age of urban religious construction, made possible by the prosperity of the Gilded Age, which was itself the product of immigrant and migrant labor and impelled by the ambitions, determination, and vision of the immigrants and migrants themselves. This forever altered the look and feel of the American urban environment.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants had built more than four hundred temples along the West Coast, eight of these in San Francisco's Chinatown. Architecturally significant and impressive synagogues were constructed in urban areas around the country in the 1880s and 1890s, preeminent among them the nation's first house of worship for Eastern European Jews, the Eldridge Street Synagogue on the Lower East Side in New York City that opened in 1887. Catholic churches named in honor of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, patroness of Mexico, rose in Houston, Texas (1912), Chicago (1924), and Gary, Indiana (1927), among other places, to meet the growing migration from Mexico. Religious groups erected hospitals, schools, rooming houses, and orphanages in the cities. The policy of national parishes among Catholics in this period, which defined parochial membership by ethnicity rather than territory, encouraged the construction of separate churches by different Catholic immigrant groups, often side by side on the same city block, as in New Orleans' Irish Channel where the huge gothic churches of Saint Alphonsus (for Irish Catholics) and Saint Mary's Assumption Church (German Catholics) sat within each other's shadows on the same block.

Immigrants and migrants came face to face with their gods in these city buildings in the company of others like them and of their children. Urban

religion means this too: the presence of the gods in the cities – special beings, charged with memory, desire, and fear, become real, *there*, in the conditions of urban life. There was nothing reticent about the religious practices of immigrants and migrants; of all areas of immigrant and migrant life in the cities, the religious was among the most insistent and visible, and this is why it was so vexing to outsiders. Getting permits for religious buildings and street celebrations; contending with the apprehensions and hostilities of neighbors and their curiosity; sanctifying urban space with the necessary rituals, inherited or invented, adapted for city life; fighting over space with others of the same faiths but from different parts of the world or different practices; working with American law to secure their religious freedom – all of this work brought the immigrants and migrants into direct engagement with the realities of power and place in the modern city. Chinese immigrants in California, for example, needed to defend their right to worship against the calumny that temples were disguised opium dens spread by Protestant missionaries for their own ends. Building their religious worlds, literally making them, became one of the ways immigrants and migrants entered into the life of the nation and of the cities.[12]

Modern city religion was not limited to what happened *inside* these buildings. This first period of modern American urban religion was also the era of public religious spectacle, when new and unfamiliar religious customs, costumes, rituals, and imagery appeared in cities with a flamboyance that matched the ebullient mood of modernism itself. City people acted religiously on and within the spaces of the city – its streets, fire escapes, hallways, and alleys – and with the natural features of its landscape, city rivers, and woods. They appropriated public venues for themselves and their gods where they displayed inherited ways of life or improvised who they were becoming in the new environment. These were occasions for the public display of difference between the generations too, between those who came to the city and those who were born and raised there. Immigrant Catholics who took the saints or the Blessed Mother into the streets of Catholic neighborhoods; Pentecostals singing and praising on city corners; members of the Nation of Islam debating in outdoor forum; the great Harlem parades of pan-African messiah Marcus Garvey in full regalia; Jews saying Tashlikh beside a city river at the commencement of the new year – in such public religious practices the immigrants and migrants declared themselves present in the modern American city.

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[12] The information here about Chinese temples and the struggle for religious freedom is from Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boston, 1986), 73.

Urban religious forms in the spaces of the city were not reiterations of inherited ways, however, but creative reinventions in response to the conditions and challenges of modern city life and to its opportunities. An example of this interplay between the inherited and the new is gospel music. Rooted in old traditions of Protestant hymnody, gospel became the popular religious sound of urban migrants after the Civil War. Gospel was performed at revivals by accomplished and ambitious artists and promoted by Christian entrepreneurs and later by record producers and radio broadcasters. Radio gospel concerts served as a deeply resonant bond between small town memories, however idealized, and urban life for white and black city people, turning city apartments into little chapels. During World War II, gospel on the radio kept overseas servicemen in touch with an emotionally evocative performance of home. The great innovator of African American gospel music, Chicago's Thomas A. Dorsey, inflected this modern hymnody with the bent notes of the blues, a sound that initially horrified staid northern black churchgoers whose Christian respectability was hard won. Dorsey's song, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," composed in 1932 at the death of his wife and newborn child, is one of the magnificent creations of American urban Christianity. In the 1930s and 1940s, as the black exodus from the South picked up steam, great gospel music performances in the cities connected the migrants to what their city-born children thought of as the "improbable fields down south," in novelist James Baldwin's phrase. Black gospel proved to be a rich idiom for commenting on the religious and ethical challenges of city life. Such religious expressions belong neither to the times and places before the city nor to the city, but to both together in relationship, tension, and promise.[13]

Another example of this distinctly modern urban religious creativity is the work of Rabbi Solomon Schechter. In 1902 a number of leading Jewish families in New York, discontented with the prominence of the modernizing Reform movement in American Judaism, brought Schechter to the city from Cambridge University to be president of Jewish Theological Seminary founded in New York in 1887. Schechter's project was to hold together reverence for tradition with openness to modern intellectual culture. He performed this ambition – and in this way deepened it and made it real – in the city itself. Walking between the *shuls* of the Lower East Side, where he was a frequent and esteemed visitor, and the seminary, Schechter imagined Conservative Judaism at the juncture of the very different Jewish worlds uptown and downtown. The Teachers Institute at the

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[13] For Thomas A. Dorsey, see Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York, 1992). Baldwin's characterization of the South is from *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (New York, 2000), 11.

Jewish Theological Seminary, opened in 1909, became a national center for Conservative education.[14]

By bringing their gods out into the city streets, finally city people drew the spaces of the city, including its most troubled venues, within the moral ambit of their homes and faith, the very sort of moral connectedness anxious critics feared was lost in the city. They did so in direct confrontation with the centrifugal forces at work on the cities. Height came to dominate the modern city after the Civil War, the result of technological innovations in the late 1880s permitting the erection of skyscrapers. The separation of the working class and the middle class, between work and home, was widened further by the introduction of electric interurban transport in the late 1880s. American capitalism was relentlessly turning the city into an ever more efficient vehicle for the movement of goods, services, and money. But the gods of the city pushed back against the overwhelming forces of height, distance, function, and efficiency, announcing that the sole logic of the modern urban was not economic exploitation.

African American ministers and Roman Catholic priests and nuns have been especially connected to the urban environment. Malcolm X, who was a master of the art of street presence, loved moving through the spaces of Harlem. Catholic urban experience in the industrial North and Midwest was so thoroughly articulated to place that Catholics identified their neighborhoods by the names of their churches. Catholics celebrated this distinctive urban religious ecology in an annual round of sacred processions and carnivals. Catholic priests and nuns roamed city worlds in their distinctive garb, extending the moral authority of the church into saloons, parks, and candy stores. The environmental authority of African American and Roman Catholic religious figures has been especially evident during crises, when ministers, priests, and nuns make themselves visibly present on the streets, and in response to the spatial depredations of capitalism, when churches deal with the destructive consequences of the relentless demands of height in the capitalist city and with the human cost of spatial isolation, abandonment, and upheaval.[15]

In the second period of the history of the religious worlds of American cities, which goes from the 1930s through the end of the Second World

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[14] On Schechter, see Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (London, 1931; repr. New York, 1938).

[15] My sense of Malcolm X on Harlem's streets is informed by Benjamin Karim, with Peter Skutches and David Gallen, *Remembering Malcolm* (New York, 1992). On Catholic parishes in this period, see John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago, 1996), and Eileen M. McMahon, *What Parish Are You From? A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations* (Lexington, KY, 1995).

War, we find the children and grandchildren of the first generation in the city fully established, socially and religiously. The time of beginnings was over. Denominational administrative bureaucracies were situated in the cities along with the churches' expanding communications and advertising media and social action committees. The children and grandchildren of the immigrants and migrants were more secure in their presence in the nation and more confident in the public expressions of their faith. The charge of the exotic had waned. Catholics introduced many new popular devotions in urban parishes in this period in response to the anguish first of Depression and then war that attracted enormous overflow city crowds. The sight of Catholics lining up to pray to the Virgin Mary and the saints or to confess their sins became as common in American cities as neon signs and traffic. The older religious street celebrations of Southern European Catholic immigrants, once a marker of difference, were advertised as tourist attractions in the WPA state guides. Catholic and Jewish leaders addressed questions of broad social concern with a new forthrightness as partners with Protestants. Urban religious diversity, just decades before feared as a threat to American democracy, was taken in the 1930s and 1940s as the foundation of the American way of life and as the basis, paradoxically, for American unity, which was now understood to be fundamentally grounded in religious tolerance. The National Council of Christians and Jews dispatched "tolerance trios" into the cities in the anxious 1930s, teams made up of a Catholic, a Jew, and a Protestant, to speak about religious harmony and to exemplify it.[16]

A number of factors contributed to this transformation, but urban religion itself had played a crucial role in making mid-twentieth-century America. Churches, temples, and synagogues of the immigrants and migrants proved themselves in the 1920s effective halfway houses for immigrant and migrant families en route from the old ways to the new, teaching them, among other things, how to be ordinary Americans. Religious difference did not disappear: ethnic Catholics battled each other in city streets, anti-Semitism persisted, and black/white racial tensions would intensify in the coming decades. But overall the religious diversity of American cities had become less frightening as the rest of the world became more so.

The contradiction of the religious history of these years, however, is that just when the children of the older Southern and Eastern European immigrants had achieved place and prominence in American cities, turning the old ethnic enclaves into powerful political machines, they began moving

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[16] On "tolerance trios," see Wendy L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 2008), 78, 145, 152.

out of them, to newer and cleaner city neighborhoods or to the rings of suburbs beyond. This started before the Second World War and continued apace afterward. Now Jewish and Catholic critics also complained of the suburban captivity of their faiths. Contributing to this new exodus were decaying inner-city housing stock, the entry of greater numbers of Catholics and Jews into the professions as a result of the G.I. Bill, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which opened new commuter possibilities and the subsequent expansion of suburbs, and the destruction of city neighborhoods by the plethora of badly designed federally funded programs that came under the unintentionally ironic rubric "urban renewal." All of this generated a new set of challenges for religious communities in the city. Parishes rent by federally funded highways scrambled to keep aging congregations together. The thoughtless introduction of badly designed and poorly maintained housing projects, often constructed to face away from the life of the streets toward dusty inner courtyards, disrupted the moral and social bonds between homes and streets and left the churches to deal with the dangers and sorrows of a new urban anomie. People caught up in these changes often and tragically tended to blame them on African Americans just then coming in greater numbers to the cities, which contributed to a new era of racial strife in the nation's urban industrial belt that implicated churches and synagogues. Religious groups responded with initiatives for justice and interracial cooperation, but just as often Catholics and Jews colluded in efforts to keep black migrants out.

The arrival of African Americans from the South in this second period and their children's coming of age in the cities are facts so essential to the shape of contemporary urban culture, but more broadly of American religion and culture generally too, that it is appropriate to close this essay with it. The contemporary prosperity gospel, a Pentecostal theology popularized by media stars like T. D. Jakes, who broadcasts from Dallas, and Creflo Dollar, founder of the World Changers Church International that emphasizes the role of faith in capitalist success, religiously inflected popular music from soul to hip-hop, and the whole phenomenon of Oprah Winfrey, a migrant herself from rural Mississippi to Milwaukee who preaches a message of self-improvement through the power of mind – all these have a feel of the very new about them, but they belong, in fact, to the religious history of the Great Migration.

Between 1910, when 89 percent of African Americans lived in the South, two-thirds of this number in rural areas, and 1940, more than a million and a half African Americans moved to northern and Midwestern cities. They were attracted by the prospects of work in industry, especially during the wars, and determined to escape the brutality of the legal system known

as Jim Crow. This was the beginning of the great exodus. The perfection in 1944 of the mechanical cotton picker at last severed the connection between African Americans and agriculture and completed their transformation into an urban people. From 1940 to 1970 more than five million African Americans moved north. Racist restrictions and street-level hostility limited where the newcomers lived – the same was true for Puerto Ricans, whose migration to mainland cities got underway after the war as well – but the newcomers established themselves in city neighborhoods throughout the North and Midwest.

The Great Migration seriously strained the resources of older African American churches and denominations in the cities, which struggled to accommodate the newcomers with additional Sunday morning worship and expanded social services.

Methodist and Baptist churchwomen, in particular, took a leading role in church outreach to the migrants. But the newcomers' country ways embarrassed northern black Protestants, just as the arrival of Eastern European Jews and Southern and Eastern European Catholics had dismayed earlier and better settled German Jews and Irish Catholics. So the migrants, wandering among the religious options available in the cities – they were called "church tramps" by the more settled – turned to the growing number of Holiness and Pentecostal churches in the cities. By 1938 there were more than 266 sanctified church storefronts in Chicago. In the fissure that the Great Migration both disclosed and exacerbated between northern and southern African American Protestants, between social classes in the African American community, and between worship styles, Holiness and Pentecostal churches achieved a new prominence and place in black church life, signaling a major transformation in the history of African American religion. "Holiness and Pentecostal churches were . . . the creations of experienced, urban life," historian Joseph A. Washington, Jr., writes, "stemming directly from the new mobility of blacks."[17]

The result was the development of a distinctive modern urban African American religious culture, the main lineaments of which were powerful and charismatic leadership, male and female; the experience of the immediacy of God's presence in the living community of the church; the practice of a distinctive ethical intimacy with church members commenting on and intervening in each other's social and domestic lives, accompanied by strict accountability to the pastor and church leaders in matters of dress and comportment; the abundant embodiment of the experience of God

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[17] Washington is quoted in Sernett, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 96. The phenomenon of "church tramps" is discussed on 163; the figure for storefront churches in Chicago is on 161.

in all the media of the senses, in sounds (sermons, praise, and song), in color and textile (hats and dresses), and in taste (church picnics and dinners); and full confidence in the power of spirit over matter, God over the world. None of these idioms were innocent – but what religious expressions are – especially as they took shape within the challenging social and economic circumstances of African American northern urban communities. Ministers and parents abused their authority. The small communities were often turned inward, away from the world and the city, with its dangers and sins, but also with its promise and opportunity, encouraging a spirit of defeat, isolation, and anxiety, and adding to the fears that otherwise bore down on these neighborhoods. But Holiness and Pentecostal churches offered migrants a place to stand in the unfamiliar environment of the cities at a crucial time in the history of black America. They helped newcomers stay in touch with southern kin and with their own memories, and they offered relief, encouragement, and fellowship. Northern sanctified churches founded associated congregations back home in the South as well as elsewhere in the city and in other cities, elaborating networks of connection among the migrants and their children.

The religious ethos of Holiness and Pentecostal churches existed, moreover, with other currents of thought and feeling in black urban communities, with other musical and imaginative visions – with pan-Africanism, for example, New Thought, Communism, labor unions, emergent aesthetic movements such as the New Negro of the 1920s and later the Black Arts movement. The interplay of the sanctified and the secular on city streets gave black American culture in the latter half of the twentieth century its distinctive cast, and it was the seedbed of African American contribution to modern American civilization. When the question arises of the place of urban religion in twentieth-century American history, this is a good place to begin.

By the 1920s, historian Ann Douglas has written, everything associated with contemporary America – from styles of dress to modes of transportation, for instance, including theological ideas and political visions – was in place in New York City. With some slight modification, this is true of urban religion too in its relation to American culture. Between World War I and World War II, everything we associate with contemporary American religion was in place in cities around the country. Liberals and conservatives in all denominations had laid down their battle lines in the cities. The culture of religious celebrity, already evident in urban America in the figure of Henry Ward Beecher after the Civil War, had taken hold. Capitalism and neocapitalism found its acolytes and its fiercest critics. The powerful convergence of sanctified idioms and popular culture was

percolating in black culture. The mainline denominations were attuned to the theological and moral challenges and opportunities of the cities. The ebullient diversity of urban religion, its abundance of image, sound, taste and smell, which at the beginning of the period under consideration in this essay had marked the city out as alien and exotic, had become exemplary of American religion and of American culture itself.[18]

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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[18] Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 192.

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO
INDUSTRIALIZATION, 1865–1945

SUSAN CURTIS

During the eight decades spanning the end of the U.S. Civil War and the conclusion of World War II, the United States underwent a profound transformation. The nation, broken in 1865, emerged in 1945 as the most powerful country in the world. One of the driving forces of change was industrial development, which began in earnest in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Capital investments in new technologies and expanding national and international markets throughout the century enabled the processing of agricultural commodities and mineral resources as well as the manufacturing of consumer goods. From a land dominated by rural and small-town life, the United States became an urban and industrial giant by the first decades of the twentieth century.

The radical shifts that occurred in these eight decades took a heavy toll on social relations, cultural values, and Americans' everyday lives. The nature and condition of labor required in an industrial capitalist economy differed significantly from that of the artisanal shop, agricultural work, and small-scale factories that defined antebellum America. Individual craftsmanship and artisanal skills gradually gave ground to machine production and assembly lines. Labor in an industrial economy became a cost of production that employers and investors wanted to keep as low as possible. Workers' strikes against their employers in the 1870s and 1880s typically revolved around the sudden reduction of wages or changes in the condition of work. At the same time, large numbers of immigrants, principally from Europe and Asia, and newly minted African American citizens, increased the size of the labor pool and contributed to the continuation of low wages in spite of workers' valiant efforts to resist these changes.

Families suffered under these conditions – both those who struggled to survive and those who reaped the profits. Low wages eroded workingmen's role as breadwinners as women and children entered the labor force to contribute to the family till. By contrast, the wives and children of the Captains of Industry and their midlevel managers enjoyed the privileges and

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comforts that accompanied their wealth, but many struggled with a vague but profound unease and succumbed to neurasthenia. The belief that hard work and self-control would lead to success and happiness wavered. The rapidity with which these altered circumstances took shape left Americans groping for ways to make sense of their place in their communities and of their rights and responsibilities in the nation.

Many men and women turned to religion for guidance and solace for their alienation from work, loneliness, despair, and anxiety. But the faith communities with which they identified were equally shaken by the intellectual currents and economic demands that underwrote industrialization. Both "faith" and "community" were called into question. Darwinian science, which provided a useful rationalization for widespread poverty and suffering, challenged the traditional belief in a Supreme Being who created life on earth. Empirical research and positivism threatened to drain the mystery out of the divine; indeed, American Christians witnessed the publication of dozens of biographies of Jesus that relied on historical evidence and higher criticism of the Bible to explain the significance of the son of God. Worshipers, once bound together by shared beliefs, found themselves divided by class, social geography, and competing interests. Many in the working class withdrew from churches altogether.

Religious groups in the United States responded to what they perceived as a crisis in a variety of ways, both material and spiritual, and in the process were themselves transformed by their participation in politics, in movements for social justice, and in the culture in which they disseminated their messages. Responding to challenges faced by working people between 1865 and 1945 pushed most faith communities to adopt and to institutionalize a social service mission that worked in tandem with beliefs and practices meant to nurture individual spirituality. It also led to a wide array of programs that addressed issues specific to labor and to the effects of industrial exploitation on children, families, and communities.

In 1893 the contradictions inherent in industrialization became manifest as did the general response by religious groups to changing social and economic conditions. Even as the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago showcased and celebrated American progress in the four centuries since Columbus's arrival in the New World, the stock market crash testified to the fragility of recent economic developments. At the gathering in Chicago, Frederick Jackson Turner made his historic address on the closing of the frontier, and Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor worried about a system of production in which workers were unable to afford the very goods they helped manufacture. And Frederick Douglass, serving as the official representative of Haiti, drew attention to routine injustices faced by African American citizens. At the same time, religious

leaders who took part in the World's Parliament of Religion reflected aware-
ness of the implications of these anxieties for their basic beliefs and prac-
tices and widely shared approaches to ameliorating the crisis. Delegates of
Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, and Christianity, in spite
of the many differences that distinguished one from another, all called for
a renewed and deepened commitment to the brotherhood of man at the
dawn of a modern and global era.

The concept of a "brotherhood of man," while inherent in many reli-
gious traditions, took on specific meanings in the late nineteenth century.
The term evoked tolerance of other faiths at a time when new technolo-
gies began the process termed "globalization" in the late twentieth cen-
tury, and it emphasized ethics as well as spirituality. Charity and social
service became integral components of individual religious expression. The
urgency with which spokespeople for different faith communities called for
a commitment to brotherhood testifies to the serious social divisions that
followed in the wake of modernization and industrialization.

In the United States in 1893, one probably could find practitioners of
most of the world religions, but the religious landscape of the nation was
dominated by Catholic and Protestant Christianity and Judaism. Class, race,
and nationality further defined the responses of these broad communities
of faith to the labor question. In general, however, like the delegates to the
World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, religionists in the United States
addressed the suffering brought on by industrial development by providing
intellectual, theological, and doctrinal scaffolding for social service, by creat-
ing organizations and programs designed to ameliorate social ills, by becom-
ing involved with labor organizations, and by organizing for political action
to push government at all levels to create social safety nets. Although these
common impulses were undeniably evident in 1893, efforts by Protestants,
Catholics, and Jews began before the World's Columbian Exposition.

CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

For American Protestants, the challenges posed by industrialization cre-
ated a crisis of conscience and faith. The Protestant emphasis on individual
repentance and salvation through hard work and self-control had provided
the cultural support for market capitalist social relations. Indeed, individ-
ual moral lapses – lack of diligence, intemperance, and sexual impropri-
eties – provided ready explanations for workers' failure to ascend the ladder
of success in antebellum America. But as more and more hardworking and
churchgoing workers lost work or slipped into debt, some Protestant cler-
gymen found it difficult to assign such individual blame. As they grappled
with the apparent injustices faced by working people and with growing

militancy of workers, some Protestants began exploring more critically their churches' relationship to the social world. By the 1890s, a significant number of Protestant religious leaders and thinkers articulated what has come to be known as the "Social Gospel."

One of the pioneers of the Social Gospel, Washington Gladden, witnessed labor strife in North Adams, Massachusetts. In 1870, conflicts between shoe factory owners and their labor force escalated over the introduction of machines and unskilled labor. Workers organized a secret order of the Knights of St. Crispin in an effort to combat in solidarity the devaluing of their skills and lower wages. Factory owners responded by bringing a trainload of Chinese immigrants into the community in order to crush the strike. Gladden served as a peacemaker between the unsuspecting Chinese workers and the unemployed shoemakers, and he sympathized with both groups. Over the next several decades, Gladden explored the church's response to the "labor question" from the pulpit, in reform-oriented periodicals, and in books. He was troubled, as he put it in 1886, by the "multitudes" of "worthy people" who could "not succeed in raising themselves."[1] In *Workingmen and Their Employers* (1876), he had begun to offer guidance on appropriate Christian conduct in the world of work.

By the time Gladden published his short essay on the labor question, Americans had been shaken by numerous clashes between workers and their employers as well as periodic economic downturns. The panic in 1873 ruined businesses and turned thousands of workers out of their jobs; the Great Strike of 1877 rippled across the nation along the recently completed transcontinental railroad; and in 1886, the riot at Haymarket Square in Chicago raised the twin specters of radicalism and violence. The generation coming of age in these years faced a moral, spiritual, and religious dilemma of great magnitude and for which traditional Protestant prescriptions offered little help. They expanded the teachings of their churches to include social responsibilities.

Ministers and theologians who contributed to the Social Gospel did so from a range of political perspectives – from conservative impulses to avert class warfare to radical, anticapitalist stances. Josiah Strong in *The New Era* (1893) registered the pervasive anxiety over rapid industrialization and offered a palliative view of workers as small cogs in a larger machine of production. George Herron, by contrast, blasted the greed and indifference of capitalists and called for collectivity and social responsibility. Eventually, Walter Rauschenbusch, Charles Stelzle, Shailer Mathews, and Edward Scribner Ames, to name but four, added their voices to the chorus that insisted upon addressing the "social crisis" and embracing a

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[1] Washington Gladden, "The Labor Question," *Century Magazine* 32 (June 1886): 328.

"new redemption," "new orthodoxy," and a "new faith." All agreed that spiritual salvation was incomplete if individuals failed to speak out and take action against immoral labor relations. As Gladden put it in *Social Salvation* (1902), "No individual is soundly converted until he comprehends his social relations and strives to fulfill them."[2]

In addition to widely read essays and collections of sermons by Social Gospelers, Protestant novelists published imaginative pieces that drew middle-class readers' attention to the plight of working people. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' "The Tenth of January" (1879) and *Silent Partner* (1871) exposed unscrupulous business practices that endangered workers. Probably the most influential Social Gospel novel was Charles M. Sheldon's *In His Steps* (1897). Sheldon imagined a congregation inspired to live up to Jesus' example by asking "What would Jesus do?" whenever they were confronted with a social problem. Millions of copies sold in the United States and around the world, and individuals, Sunday school classes, and reading groups gained a new perspective on working-class experience that led to more direct action by churches.

In 1907, Walter Rauschenbusch published *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, which urgently spelled out the imperative for Christians to attack various social crises at their root. A year later, Frank Mason North presented a paper called "The Church and Modern Industry" at a meeting of the recently founded Federal Council of Churches. He urged fellow Protestants to champion working-class issues – the right to collective bargaining, legislation to regulate the conditions, hours, and wages in the workplace, state-sponsored insurance, and protection of the most vulnerable groups in society against "unscrupulous" businessmen. North's report won immediate, clamorous support, and delegates voted to adopt it as the "Social Creed of the Churches."

The "Social Creed of the Churches" represented both the culmination of Protestant thought on the labor question, which had been evolving over the last three decades of the nineteenth century, and the foundation on which individual denominations built social service programs designed to support working-class families in industrial America and to seek state-sponsored reforms that would curb the most exploitive practices that had brought the United States to the brink of social revolution in the 1890s. The Social Gospel movement, which spread through black and white Protestant churches, and the "Social Creed of the Churches" refitted the Protestant work ethic for the industrial age and provided labor activists and their middle-class allies a religious rationale for their commitment to and definition of social justice.

[2] Washington Gladden, *Social Salvation* (Boston, 1902), 10.

Many of the workers most directly and adversely affected by industrialization did not affiliate with Protestant churches. The millions of Europeans migrating to the United States between 1865 and 1915 came from largely Catholic or Jewish backgrounds. Irish Catholics, fleeing the potato famine in the 1840s, and German Catholics, leaving Central Europe in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution, were joined by millions of coreligionists from other parts of Europe seeking a new start in the United States. Because of the rabid anti-Catholic crusade of the decades before the Civil War, late-nineteenth-century Catholic immigrants faced both cultural and class barriers to success in a nation dominated by Protestants. Native-born workers and farmers resented immigrants' willingness to work for low wages, which they perceived as undercutting their own demands for fair wages.

American Catholic leaders were as concerned about the place of Catholicism in the United States as they were about labor issues, and two key encyclicals indirectly paved the way for efforts by Catholics to ameliorate living and working conditions of Catholic wageworkers. They provided some of the intellectual scaffolding needed to allow this faith community to respond to the spiritual and material needs of laborers and their families.

Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) sought to quell radical agitation for revolution by spelling out the "Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor." The Pope described the breakdown of Christian brotherhood and the rise of unjust suffering near the beginning of the encyclical. He lamented the fact that "a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself." While the Pope devoted much of the encyclical to attacking the motives, arguments, and tactics of socialists, he enjoined workers to labor faithfully according to contracts they had made and to avoid violence and disorder in resolving disputes with their employers. He also insisted that employers recognize the human dignity and spiritual needs of their workers and not misuse men seeking to make an honest living.

Rerum Novarum gave the green light to American Catholic leaders committed to social justice and labor issues. Bishops John Spalding and John Keane believed that it made saving society one of the missions of the Church, and other like-minded Catholics felt empowered to champion the cause of labor, advocate labor arbitration, and support demands for a living wage. Bishop George Montgomery of California went even further, calling for income taxes, "gas and water" socialism at the municipal level, compulsory arbitration of labor disputes, and the nationalization of railroads and telegraphs.

Shortly after *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII issued two additional encyclicals, *Longinqua Oceani* (1895) and *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899), to address the "Americanism" crisis. Clearly not wishing to make special rules for

the Church in the United States, the Pope nevertheless recognized the role of the Church in helping Catholics adjust to American life and institutions. Bishop John Ireland and other "liberal" Catholics had been working aggressively to "Americanize" the Catholic Church in the late 1800s, and they pushed forward on a practical level with the aim of gaining greater acceptance of the Church as another Christian "denomination."

One final effort to support Catholic workers in the United States came in the 1880s when increasing numbers of workers joined the Knights of Labor. Cardinal James Gibbons interceded with Rome on behalf of Catholic workers, hoping to avert a direct condemnation of the labor organization. Gibbons warned the Pope not to force Catholic workers to choose between taking care of their families and remaining within the Church; conditions were so desperate in the 1880s that Gibbons predicted workers more likely would leave the Church than abandon their quest for fair wages and hours and decent living conditions for their children. Catholics joined the Knights of Labor and later the American Federation of Labor unopposed by the Church hierarchy. By 1911, the Central Verein in the United States, representing German communicants, urged Catholic workingmen to join trade unions whenever possible as long as they opposed socialist leadership.

While the American hierarchy may not have produced an official statement on labor issues similar to the Protestants' "Social Creed of the Churches," Catholic writers, editors, and intellectuals produced essays in support of laborers' rights in such journals as the Boston *Pilot*, the Indianapolis *Catholic Record*, and the *Colorado Catholic*. Outspoken leaders such as Father Edward McGlynn in New York reached Catholics far outside St. Stephen's parish as he developed a language to reconcile support of workers' rights with devotion to the Church.

Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had to deal with some of the same challenges as Catholics. Religiously outside the Christian mainstream and many escaping bigotry, oppression, and pogroms, Jewish immigrants tended to remain in urban centers and took low-paying jobs in factories and sweatshops. Divisions within Judaism – Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative, and others – prevented a unified religious position on questions about labor. Nevertheless, Jews became active in movements seeking social justice and as activists articulated principles that drew others within the faith community to support workers during times of social and economic trial.

One such statement came from the first Workmen's Circle convention in 1901. The "Declaration of Principles" proclaimed the Workmen's Circle's desire "to be one more link in the workers' bond of solidarity." The Workmen's Circle and other groups within the Jewish labor movement at

the turn of the century drew upon a traditional Jewish sense of community responsibility. The Jewish concept of *tsedakah* defines social welfare as a responsibility and a right for all – those providing it as well as those receiving assistance.

Jewish socialists who continued to practice in the faith welded religion and politics in their writings about labor. The Yiddish press in the United States and influential writers like Abraham Cahan and Morris Hillquit disseminated their ideas and thus provided religious support for labor activism. Writing in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* that he helped establish, Hillquit intertwined advocacy with Jewish teaching by making the "Biblical portion" about strikes and imagining Moses telling the Israelites "more than six days a week you shouldn't work for the bosses, the seventh day you shall rest."[3]

Thus, the Protestants' "Social Creed of the Churches," the Catholic encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, and statements like the Workmen's Circle's "Declaration of Principles" and essays in the Yiddish press contributed to the construction of a culture that shifted or reinforced the thinking of many members of these faith communities toward collectivity and social justice. At the same time, efforts to actualize these principles led to institutional and programmatic responses to the crises brought on by industrialization.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

One important development among Protestant churches in response to struggling laborers was the institutional church. Recognizing that their social responsibilities demanded more than regular worship services and prayer meetings, advocates of the institutional church kept the doors of their churches open day and night seven days a week. They created an array of programs to address the material needs of working people while also ministering to their spiritual needs. Congregations located in urban centers ministered to their neighbors regardless of religious affiliation. Those churches with adequate means added staff to oversee family programs, social services, and wholesome amusements to serve as alternatives to public diversions that, from a Protestant Christian perspective, deadened the soul with stimulants and vice and contributed to further hardship.

Institutional churches appeared all across the United States in both small and large cities. An exemplary congregation was the People's Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a Unitarian congregation transformed into an institutional church by Caroline Bartlett in 1889. Bartlett oversaw the

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[3] Quoted in Shuldiner, *Of Moses and Marx: Folk Ideology and Folk History in the Jewish Labor Movement* (Westport, 1999), 40.

physical expansion of the church building to accommodate programs designed to ameliorate conditions for working families. The church opened a free public kindergarten and classes for boys and girls in manual training, all designed to supplement their education and to prepare them for better economic opportunities as adults. On weekday nights, workingmen could buy dinner at the People's Church for ten cents, and working families took part in such groups as a choral union, literary club, and Audubon society.

In cities where workers, many of them recent immigrants, lived in overcrowded tenements without adequate ventilation and indoor plumbing, churches opened bathhouses and gymnasiums. Rauschenbusch's congregation in Hell's Kitchen in New York, for example, provided free meals to workingmen, established a day nursery for children of working parents, and ministered to the sick. Reverdy C. Ransom's Institutional Church and Social Settlement, founded in 1900 in Chicago, attracted members migrating from the Deep South. This African American congregation supported clubs and classes for adults and children, a kindergarten, and an employment bureau, which served black workers struggling with racism and the adjustment to urban life as well as with low-paying, oppressive jobs or unemployment. While Ransom eagerly imbibed the message of the Social Gospel, African Americans had a long tradition of finding and providing succor and hope in their religious communities. What distinguished Ransom's efforts from this longstanding tradition in the African American community is that he interceded in labor disputes. In 1902, Ransom mediated between striking white workers and African Americans hired to break the strike.

One short-lived experiment that directly targeted working people began in New York City in 1910 when Presbyterian Charles Stelzle opened the Labor Temple. As a former wageworker, Stelzle sought to create an institutional church that downplayed theology, catered to workers regardless of religious affiliation, and offered a forum for discussing social and political solutions to problems experienced by workers. After three years and in spite of Stelzle's success in gaining converts, the Presbyterians decided to close its doors. Elsewhere, however, institutional churches in other denominations flourished well into the 1920s.

Ecumenical efforts also emerged. At the community level, ministerial alliances pooled their resources to address widespread suffering in the 1890s at the height of the Depression. In Lexington, Missouri, for example, church members canvassed the entire city in 1894 when many workers were unemployed, distributing food, fuel, clothing, and money collected by all the Protestant churches in the community. At the national level, most denominations created social service commissions, and the Federal Council of Churches established a Social Service Committee to provide institutional

support to member denominations whose embrace of the "Social Creed of the Churches" committed them to ministering to struggling workers.

Considerably earlier than Protestant institutional churches began to appear, Catholic parishes in New York developed social service programs for communicants. In the 1860s, for example, Father Edward McGlynn at St. Stephen's parish oversaw programs to support working families. Day care for children, wholesome entertainment and recreation, as well as unemployment services were offered at St. Stephen's. The tradition of charity and caring for Catholics within Catholic institutions obviated the need for institutional churches as such.

The exigencies of rapid industrialization, new Catholic arrivals from Europe, and widespread poverty among Catholics in urban America dramatically transformed Catholic charities from primarily poorly funded local volunteer groups caring for orphans and the poor into a centralized organization controlled by the diocese and directed by professional social workers. The determination to prevent intrusions into Catholic family life by Protestants or secular government fostered a close intertwining of Catholic faith and social action. The American Federation of Catholic Charities provided an important model for social welfare in the United States by focusing on the most vulnerable victims of industrialization.

Other more direct ties to the working class were made through the organizing efforts of Father Peter E. Dietz, who with John A. Ryan launched the American Catholic social movement. Although born in New York, Dietz spent most of his pastoral career in Ohio and Wisconsin, where he learned firsthand the nature of industrial conditions. He passionately defended organized labor and urged the American Federation of Catholic Societies to send a delegate to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor; Dietz was designated as the first such delegate. Inspired by both Charles Stelzle and the Federal Council of Churches, Dietz spearheaded the organization of Catholic trade unionists into the Militia of Christ for Social Service in 1910. A year later, the American Federation of Catholic Societies established a Social Service Commission to promote "the further amelioration of conditions among the working people for the preservation and propagation of the faith."[4]

Catholic organizations created to address industrial conditions also provided a platform for discussing the underlying causes of poverty and programs best suited to solve them. The Common Cause Society, founded in Boston in 1912, and the American Eunomic League, begun in New York a year later, provided venues for studying trade unionism, cooperatives, social insurance, and protective labor legislation. Catholic universities

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[4] Quoted in Abell, *American Catholicism and Social Action* (Notre Dame, 1963), 179.

introduced courses on social and industrial ethics and expanded efforts to formally train professional social workers. A notable example of this initiative can be found in Father Dietz's establishing of the American Academy of Christian Democracy for Women, which produced hundreds of graduates who went on to staff charity organizations and settlement houses across the United States.

American Jews held their first National Conference on Jewish Charities in Chicago in 1900, but individual Jewish philanthropists had targeted working people years earlier. At the height of the Depression and labor unrest, wealthy New York Jews provided the children of striking tailors with free meals in 1894, because they admired the religious habits of their parents. A year later an anonymous donor contributed $10,000 to the United Hebrew Charities to help cloak makers and their families through a strike. This practical, material support contributed to Jewish workers' growing commitment to unionism and strengthened bonds across class lines within the Jewish community. The Jewish Labor Lyceum dispensed aid directly to workers, and others heeded the call of the United Hebrew Charities' *Arbeiter Zeitung* to "Forget all old accounts – if your heart is not stone – be human!" The appeal to sustain Jewish collectivity contained both a religious and a social message.[5]

The most important effort to alleviate the struggles of laboring people among Jews was the work of organizing unions. Two of the most important labor leaders at the national level from the 1870s to the early 1900s were Jewish – Samuel Gompers and Adolph Strasser. In the 1880s the Jewish Workmen's Society and the United Hebrew Trades, both allied with socialists, attracted Jewish immigrants working as bakers, waiters, and bookbinders and in the needle trades, often isolated in tenement sweatshops. In 1900 the Workmen's Circle offered Jewish workers an alternative to Jewish benevolent societies with an organization that placed labor issues at the center of activities. Many Jewish workers also attended Stelzle's Labor Temple where they took an active part in freewheeling debates about capitalism, socialism, and workers' rights.

All three faith communities established settlement houses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Religious content and orientation varied from one settlement to another, but most came into being because of men and women inspired to actualize an ethical, spiritual, or reform vision. Settlement houses blended efforts to provide material support to working-class and immigrant families, to offer cultural, recreational, and educational programs, and to study firsthand living conditions in urban

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[5] Quoted in Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 179.

industrial America. Writing from a Protestant perspective, Jane Addams linked the rise of settlement houses to an unfulfilled spiritual craving to pursue justice – especially on the part of women. Addams pointed to the religious training of girls, which involved learning to care for others and to do God's will. She argued that as girls approached womanhood, they were discouraged from pursuing formal education to better prepare themselves to make a difference in their communities. In settlement houses, young people, but particularly young women, found important outlets for their professional skills and ways to shoulder some of the burden that fell so heavily on working people.

In cities across the United States, reformers established settlements in working-class neighborhoods, and residents lived in the midst of – rather than apart from – the squalor, pollution, and deprivation endured by wage-workers. They gathered data from their neighbors that represented some of the first efforts to document working-class life in social scientific terms. In Chicago, Addams' Hull House, Mary McDowell's University Settlement, and many other settlements served neighborhoods near the stockyards and along Halstead Street. Likewise the Henry Street Settlement, College Settlement, and University Settlement sprang up on the Lower East Side of New York just blocks apart from one another. Because most settlements were officially nonsectarian, they welcomed all neighbors, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or place of birth.

African Americans participated in some of the programs offered by settlement houses, but often on a segregated basis. Settlements developed by African Americans appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Louisville, Topeka, Cleveland, as well as in more rural areas, where African Americans labored as fieldworkers and sharecroppers. The religious nature of black settlements was more pronounced than in the institutions developed by European Americans, because many of them grew out of domestic missionary work in the aftermath of the Civil War. In urban areas as well as in rural areas, settlements typically offered social assistance to working families, an array of programs and classes for adults and children, and medical services, employment counseling, and soup kitchens to address basic needs beyond the means of struggling black workers.

Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations designed to ameliorate the adverse effects of industrialization led some individuals to become involved more directly in labor disputes. William D. P. Bliss and Frederick Dan Huntington, for example, cofounded the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor in 1887 under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. CAIL agitated against sweatshops, organized special services to draw attention to the working conditions endured by saleswomen in department stores, urged workers to become union members,

and distributed lists of businesses run by "fair employers" and advised congregants to shop there. Beginning in 1893, CAIL appointed a Board of Arbitration, which intervened in labor disputes involving electrical workers, lithographers, marble workers, and cloak makers. Charles Macfarland championed the cause of striking hatters and workers for the Buck Stove and Rage Company in the early twentieth century and succeeded in settling conflicts over labor contracts. Among Catholics, John Ryan's book, *The Living Wage* (1907), provided an analysis of the social good to be derived from adopting minimum wage standards adequate for supporting a working-class family. The Catholic Association of the United States for the Promotion of Industrial Conciliation and Voluntary Arbitration, founded at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, also pushed for arbitration of labor disputes. Jewish labor leaders stood at the forefront of efforts to obtain fair treatment through collective action, collective bargaining, and communal solidarity.

The organizations and institutions developed within these three faith communities represented social safety nets in the absence of state-sponsored social programs. As religious responses to the travail of working people, institutional churches, settlement houses, social service commissions, and labor or union-related activities ultimately pushed all levels of government to assume responsibility for regulating industry and for protecting workers from abuse. Religious leaders in collaboration with working people spearheaded campaigns in the political arena to pass laws to create a more just society. Their religiously charged investment in participatory democracy laid the groundwork for the political agenda of the Progressive era; while responding to the trials of coreligionists all around them, religious reformers helped transform America.

PROGRESSIVE REFORM AND RELIGION

American Christians who advanced a reform agenda in the early twentieth century did so frequently in explicitly religious terms. Theodore Roosevelt saw politics as a "bully pulpit" and adopted "Onward Christian Soldiers" as the campaign song for his presidential bid as a Progressive Party candidate in 1912. Sam "Golden Rule" Jones became mayor of Cleveland by running on a Christian-inspired platform of justice. A prominent scholar in the emerging field of sociology, Edward A. Ross, articulated the need for regulation of business in Christian terms in his book, *Sin and Society*. Journalists, who exposed some of the most appalling cases of unfair working and living conditions, embraced the moniker "muckrakers," which was derived from John Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress*, as a badge of honor rather than a source of shame. These and other public figures representing the

Protestant establishment in the United States used the rationale of religious activists, Social Gospelers, and reformers to introduce laws to limit the damage done to workers and their families in industry.

The success of conciliation, amelioration, and labor arbitration rested on voluntary efforts by activists and religious leaders and on employers' willingness to make concessions on a case-by-case basis. As the extent of the social problems facing the nation became more widely known – through social research, firsthand experience, from pulpits, and in mass-circulation publications – the demand for more uniform solutions grew. Protestant efforts to provide stopgap aid and spiritual support to wageworkers did not subside, but they were accompanied by engagement with politics to make social justice part of the law. As Washington Gladden famously put it in *Christianity and Socialism* (1905), "[I]f the kingdom of heaven ever comes to your city, it will come in and through City Hall."[6] Gladden himself served on the Columbus, Ohio, city council from 1900 to 1902.

Others also participated directly in the political system by running for public office or by accepting appointments in government. In 1887, the Labor Party nominated William D. P. Bliss for the office of lieutenant governor of Massachusetts. The campaign was not successful, but the experience prompted Bliss to establish the Church of the Carpenter in Boston and to participate in the National Social Reform Union. In Chicago, Mary McDowell of the University Settlement obtained an injunction against businesses dumping garbage in her neighborhood. She accepted a position on a municipal commission charged with addressing the problem of waste disposal; the city followed their advice and introduced state-of-the-art incinerators and a reduction plant. McDowell's objective was to improve the environment, reduce health hazards, and generally upgrade the quality of life for workers who lived near the stockyards. Caroline Bartlett left the People's Church in Kalamazoo after her marriage in 1896 to August Crane and launched a new career as a "municipal housekeeper." Like McDowell, she believed sanitation and proper food inspection would benefit all Americans, but particularly working people dependent upon processed foods. Others spearheaded municipal reform projects to improve sanitation, to introduce playgrounds in densely populated urban areas, and to push for regulation of housing.

Their efforts were largely localized and piecemeal, but the changes in municipalities that adopted these reforms reflected acceptance of the collective social responsibilities that had been advocated by religious leaders since the 1880s. Legislation passed at the state and national levels similarly came about through the participation of leaders from all faith

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[6] Washington Gladden, *Christianity and Socialism* (New York, 1905), 243–4.

communities. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, important laws meant to protect working people appeared on the books. Forty states passed new laws or tightened existing legislation to regulate conditions of employment for women and children. Most restricted women to an eight- or nine-hour working day and limited the work week to six days. Many of the laws required children younger than fourteen to be in school and eliminated night shifts for workers younger than sixteen years of age. In 1912, Massachusetts led the way in establishing minimum wage legislation. Between 1911 and 1919, forty-three states began requiring employers to insure workers in case of industrial accidents.

The fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911, which took the lives of more than one hundred people, most of them women, and left many more seriously injured, hit the Jewish community in New York particularly hard and spurred Jewish leaders to act. Abram Elkus, vice president of Stephen Wise's Free Synagogue, spoke before the New York State Factory Investigation Commission, arguing that "the so-called unavoidable unpreventable accidents which, it has been said, were once believed to be the result of the inscrutable decrees of Divine Providence, are now seen to be the result in many cases of unscrupulous greed or human improvidence."[7] In 1913, the state legislature of New York passed a workmen's compensation law touted at the time as the most comprehensive measure in place anywhere in the country.

In other states, Catholic activists took the lead in pushing legislation to protect workers' interests. Caroline Gleason of the Catholic Women's League in Portland, Oregon, investigated labor conditions in the city, and on the basis of her findings she persuaded the Oregon legislature in 1913 to pass a compulsory minimum wage law. John Ryan accomplished a similar feat in Minnesota shortly thereafter. And in some instances, leaders from all faith communities worked together to establish standards for hours, wages, and working conditions.

People from a wide range of religious affiliations took part in the campaign to end child labor. For a variety of reasons, the initiative to amend the U.S. Constitution, empowering Congress to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under the age of eighteen, failed to be ratified. But in 1916, federal legislation prohibited employers engaged in interstate commerce from hiring children. Support for this restriction came from a variety of religious and social positions, including those who believed that children's spiritual development was stunted by long hours of work, those who believed education of the young was essential to the perpetuation of

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[7] First Public Hearing, New York State Factory Investigation Commission, 10 October 1911, 2.

democracy, those wishing to restrict the labor pool, and those who felt that overworked children would more readily succumb to the vices that led to social, spiritual, and moral decline.

Agitation for improved conditions for working people did not extend to African Americans, in spite of powerful appeals by leaders in the black community and the advocacy of white clergy. Indeed, in many instances, African American job opportunities opened because employers were intent on breaking the wills and unions of white workers. Two of the bloodiest race riots of the early twentieth century – East St. Louis in 1917 and Chicago in 1919 – exploded because of interracial competition over scarce jobs. At the very moment when collective cries for social justice in industry and society promised legal recourse for European-descended workers, the "color line" hardened, black stereotypes circulated widely, and African Americans reached the nadir of their experience in the United States. Largely denied the right to vote and to hold office, African American citizens struggled to find relief through the channels of government.

Conditions for African Americans became so grave in the Deep South after the end of Reconstruction that thousands began fleeing northward in 1879. "Exodusters," as they were known, reported unjust sharecropping contracts, extensive debt peonage, and the ever-present threat and reality of violence. Labor legislation took a back seat to legislation to outlaw lynching, which in the last decade of the nineteenth century reached appalling proportions. Ida B. Wells crusaded tirelessly to bring lynch law to an end. Joined by a number of courageous black clergymen and white Catholics and Protestants, Wells' campaign ended with some success. While the federal government failed to produce antilynching legislation, several southern states – including Georgia, Maryland, Texas, Virginia, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee – passed such laws between 1893 and 1897.

African American workers did not find many friends in the Progressive movement. Booker T. Washington's famous dinner in the White House with Theodore Roosevelt resulted in a storm of protest from white southerners and brought forth no legislative initiatives to redress discriminatory practices against black Americans in the fields of education, labor, housing, or human rights. When Woodrow Wilson won the presidency in 1912, he introduced "Jim Crow" to the nation's capital and removed some of the few African Americans working in the federal government. The formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1910 drew attention to the plight of black Americans, and its existence as an independent organization, outside of government, testifies to the difficult task of overcoming racial prejudice on either religious or political grounds.

Religious lobbying and the resulting legislation of the Progressive period embedded in the social fabric of the nation expectations about how to collectively safeguard the quality of life for all people living in a democracy. For European-descended Americans of all faiths it represented a religiously inspired transformation of the national political culture. Opponents of government intervention, emerging later in the century, forget how insistently Americans, often led by clergymen, priests, and rabbis, demanded that government intervene in the economy, because business leaders of all faiths, by and large, refused voluntarily to treat their employees with justice and dignity.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE AGE OF BUSINESS

Preparing for war in Europe – even before the United States officially entered it – expanded business operations and created opportunities for working people. African Americans began migrating in large numbers to the steel mills, refineries, and manufacturing plants of the North shortly after the Great War began in Europe in 1914. The U.S. entry into the war in 1917 created numerous rifts among people of faith – especially between pacifist and nonpacifist Christians. But more importantly, the exigencies of wartime siphoned off the energies of labor and social reformers into either the peace movement or into the campaign to "make the world safe for democracy." Wartime measures to clamp down on labor activism and to mobilize a powerful propaganda machine posed challenges to workers and religious leaders who wanted to continue the work of creating more equitable conditions for wageworkers.

In this hypernationalistic environment, the government enjoyed the power to label opponents of the war as "un-American." Government propagandists used religious language to marshal support for the noble cause, and the War Production Board's intervention into the national economy resulted in efficiencies that combined high levels of output with a quelling of agitation on behalf of working people. It would not be apparent until the war's end how these policies would affect the lives of those in the working class.

Industrial areas that were geared specifically to war-related production boomed in the late 1910s and hired thousands of workers. But it quickly became apparent that inadequate housing and urban development in those industrial centers made for deplorable living conditions for wageworkers and their families. Catholics in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was an important munitions manufacturing city, noted the impact of inadequate housing on family life and responded by creating the first Catholic Charitable bureau. Under the leadership of Marguerite Boylan, a

professional social worker, the Bureau coordinated social services for families in Bridgeport. The Bureau soon spread to other cities where war materiel was being produced at the expense of decent family life.

In 1919, the nation learned of a strike by steelworkers. The striking workers identified twelve-hour working days, the seven-day work week, low wages, and lack of control over labor as the causes for three hundred thousand employees walking off the job. The national press, however, portrayed the strikers as radicals who were taking their cues from revolutionaries in Russia. Bloody clashes between workers and their employers marked the standoff. The Interchurch World Movement, an ecumenical Protestant organization, appointed a commission to investigate the situation. The report concluded that the workers had been justified in their protest and that the government should intervene on their behalf now that the strike had come to an unsuccessful end. Methodist Bishop Francis John McConnell lobbied at the federal level for regulation of labor conditions.

The outcome of the steel strike and the failure of Protestant leaders to persuade government action set the tone for the faith communities' efforts in the area of industry through the 1920s. The postwar fear of Bolshevism and the ascendancy of big business, boosted by the agents of consumerism, made it difficult for religious communities to extend the work of passing social legislation begun during the Progressive period. Catholic and Protestant Christians focused instead on assisting workers and their families through organized programs to shore up living conditions and to turn attention to workers struggling in rural areas. They also continued the intellectual work of crafting arguments about the need for social solutions to social problems that would keep alive the logic of social justice through the years of ballyhoo in the 1920s. By contrast, Jewish Americans, especially those involved in the Jewish labor movement, found hope in the triumph of Russian revolutionaries and sought ways of securing intergenerational solidarity by welding Jewish tradition and ritual to labor activism.

John Ryan penned a lengthy essay, "Social Reconstruction," in 1919 outlining existing social problems and positing solutions; the essay became the basis of the "Bishops' Program" that advocated the adoption of a family living wage, the right of workers to organize unions and to bargain collectively with employers, and the retention of wartime wages in the postwar period. When the program was blasted in the national media as evidence of social radicalism, the Church turned its attention to more ameliorative measures. The National Catholic War Council, renamed National Catholic Welfare Council in 1919, opened dozens of unemployment bureaus in cities across the country to assist returning veterans in their search for work. The Social Action Department of the Council conducted numerous

social service surveys to identify specific areas in need of attention and then mobilized social workers to serve the affected families. The National Council of Catholic Women focused on providing affordable and safe housing for working women and girls. In response to a growing number of children being placed in orphanages by parents who were unable to adequately clothe, feed, house, and educate them, new institutions were created to ensure that children from the same family would remain together. Beginning with the Angel Guardian Home in Chicago, Catholic homes for children of the working poor provided a religious family environment, education, recreation, medical care, and nurture otherwise unavailable to them.

In the postwar years, Catholics also began to focus attention on rural workers and farmers with the creation of a Rural Life Bureau. The bureau facilitated medical extension programs, helped Catholic farmers become involved in farmers' cooperatives, and disseminated information on youth and adult correspondence courses in the belief that further education would open these relatively isolated workers to other job opportunities.

Catholicism also infused the work of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association with religious significance. As an organization, the UNIA tackled the problems facing black workers by instilling race pride, promoting African American entrepreneurialism and black separatism. Garvey attracted thousands of followers, including clergymen from Protestant denominations. The women's auxiliary tapped the talents of African American women with professional training in a variety of fields to serve the needs of working people in the community. The Black Cross Nurses, for example, went into the community ministering to those needing medical care. A spin-off organization led by Laura Kofey, the African Universal Church and Commercial League, advocated establishing ties to Africa, educating black children about African history, and treating one another as brothers and sisters, all of which gave hope to African Americans for self-liberation from oppression.

Protestant Christians engaged in efforts similar to Catholics. Outspoken Social Gospelers – notably Francis John McConnell and Harry Ward – were tarred with the brush of radicalism by more conservative elements in national Protestant organizations, resulting in the marginalization of their arguments in support of fundamental labor reform. The churches provided support for workers in more localized ways through the decade of the 1920s. Institutional churches and church-supported social settlements continued to provide services to urban working families. In the South, where industrialization grew in importance and intensity following the war, Southern Methodist women's organizations attended to the plight of single working women in the southern industrial centers. They operated

affordable boarding houses for single women, hoping to protect them from danger and to help them stretch their low wages instead of resorting to prostitution in order to support themselves. Activists within the Southern Methodist Woman's Missionary Council also turned the spotlight on their own practices as employers of domestic servants, many of whom were African Americans. Although they did not succeed in passing legislation to regulate the hours, wages, and conditions of domestic employees, activists like Mary Helm and Sara Estelle Haskin urged women to adopt voluntary codes for the fair treatment of those working in their homes.

Beyond these local attempts to serve working families through social service agencies, Protestant clergy and theologians produced important literature in the postwar era that linked social justice and democracy and that would provide a foundation for more expansive efforts to improve industrial life in the 1930s. McConnell's *Democratic Christianity* (1919) and *Christian Citizenship* (1922) argued that Christians had a responsibility to "protest against political and industrial evils" and to create the demand for laws to protect the welfare of working people that legislatures could not ignore. Henry Cope's *The School in the Modern Church* (1919) acknowledged the need for experts and professionals for addressing social problems most effectively. And Edward Scribner Ames' *The New Orthodoxy* (1918) advanced the idea that the Great War represented a rupture in world history that called for "the religion of democracy."

Because of the strong antiradical sentiment prevailing in the post–World War I United States, labor activism in conjunction with socialists or communists lost ground. The Jewish labor movement, however, maintained strength by appropriating the religious and cultural drama of Passover for the cause of working people. The Seder, which included symbolic foods, recounting of Jewish history, and a renewal of the commitment to God and to Jewish liberation, had become a source of conflict between secular and religious Jews in the early 1900s. But in the 1920s, secular Jewish labor activists recognized the Seder as a ritual that could be refitted for modern conditions and bridge the distance between generations. They wrote a Bund *Haggadah* for the "red Seder" that identified capitalism as the regime from which Jews should be liberated. The message thus reinforced through religion was that the long tradition of struggle continued for modern Jewish workers. As Joseph Mlotek of the Workmen's Circle put it, "Yiddish writers sat down and took the old traditional haggadah, translated it into Yiddish, added new material to make it more contemporary and thus both parents and children were able to realize that this was an eternal, timeless battle for Freedom."[8]

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[8] Quoted in Shuldiner, *Moses and Marx*, 134.

Throughout the decade after the end of the war, workers' lives were shaken by the acceleration of mass production methods, the widening disparity between visions of consumerist abundance and their stagnant or falling wages, as well as the public denunciation of unionism and government intervention into industry. Social services provided by faith communities and their continuing development of a collective vision for social reform sustained workers and farmers, who experienced a depressed economy years before the stock market crash plunged the nation into the Great Depression. At the dawn of the 1930s, workers found allies and champions in religious leaders who appealed in an ever more organized way for social legislation to better the lives of working people.

DEPRESSION, WAR, WORK, AND RELIGION

The economic depression that followed the stock market crash of 1929 exposed weaknesses in the industrial capitalist boom of the 1920s and more general problems that arose from unregulated business. While middle-class Americans and some corporations suffered in the financial collapse, working people bore the brunt of hard times. Religious faith and communities sustained many families in the working class, although religious responses to the crisis were not always positive. By the end of the Second World War, which brought depression conditions to an end, the transformation of life for workers, begun in the Progressive period, was nearing completion. Insofar as collective social safety nets were put into place, faith communities played an important role in pressing the United States to assume responsibility for the welfare of its most vulnerable citizens.

Herbert Hoover's moderate response to depression conditions and his focus on shoring up corporate America in the belief that recovery would "trickle down" to the poorest Americans did little to halt the downward economic spiral. Makeshift shantytowns, ever growing bread and soup lines, and masses of unemployed workers underscored the urgency of the situation. Franklin Roosevelt's promise of a "New Deal" and the frenzied pace of policy making in his first three months in office represented an important shift from big business to the plight of working people. But before new legislation was implemented, faith communities responded to the crises.

As expected, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews provided direct relief to working-class families, who, without work, were losing their homes and their ability to feed and clothe themselves. More significantly, however, they renewed their engagement with the political process to achieve systemic reform and launched new movements to address workers' needs. Protestants and Catholics, critical of Roosevelt's haphazard plan of reform,

pushed the administration farther toward social legislation than it otherwise might have gone and assumed a radical anticapitalist stance. They influenced the direction and shape of laws and programs that affected workers' lives. Even as religious reformers sought to remake the nation, they introduced new theological positions within their communities.

Catholics essentially proposed adoption of the Bishops' Program, which they had tabled more than a decade earlier. Two-thirds of workers belonging to unions were Catholics, and their religious leaders, inspired by Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), lobbied aggressively for legislation to advance collective bargaining, to outlaw company unions, and to promote cooperative arrangements between capital and labor. The 1935 Wagner Act accomplished many of their objectives, but it did not lead immediately to peaceful relations as Catholics had hoped. Two years later the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists formed to support the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which represented some of the lowest paid workers in the country.

In 1933, Dorothy Day, inspired partly by Peter Maurin, launched a Catholic newspaper for the unemployed, *The Catholic Worker*. It included news about labor strikes, race relations, labor schools, and housing, and it advanced a three-point program of informed discussion of current social conditions, the erection of Houses of Hospitality to serve the poor and to seek social justice, and establishment of farming communes. *The Catholic Worker* offered the most radical interpretation of papal encyclicals, and Catholics involved in the movement committed themselves to living and suffering with the poorest people, believing that the sharing of hard times could be spiritually enriching and ultimately could lead to the new, just world about which so many dreamed. Unlike earlier social Christians, those in the Catholic Worker movement eschewed a bourgeois perspective and lifestyle and worked tenaciously for social reconstruction on the grounds of justice.

Protestants during the Depression decade followed two paths. The more conservative appealed to believers to assume personal responsibility for their condition and to revive themselves spiritually. From the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, the Assemblies of God tripled in membership and the Church of the Nazarene doubled in size. The message to workers was to turn to God for solace and to reform themselves to get through hard times. Mainstream churches, by contrast, resuscitated the ideals of the Social Gospel but were more intent on liberating their churches from middle-class sensibilities. Francis John McConnell presided over the American Association for Social Security, which provided an outline of the plan eventually adopted in the United States.

Theological writings in the 1930s underscored the need for opposition to industrial capitalism, which had oppressed so many working people. Protestants articulated a "Theology of Crisis" meant to persuade readers of the need for a dramatic restructuring of the capitalist system. Americans hailed the publication of Paul Tillich's *The Religious Situation*, which incorporated Marxian analysis into Christian social thought; and Neo-Orthodoxy, which won support from Protestant theologians on the liberal end of the spectrum, attempted to revise the Protestant Social Gospel by emphasizing the power of sin and the need for a dialectical relationship between individual conscience and collective action. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* represents the most powerful statement of Neo-Orthodoxy to provide a balance between Christian renewal and social reconstruction.

African Americans who had migrated to northern cities in large numbers since the 1910s turned to storefront churches during times of trial. Followers of Father Divine accepted his strict regimen of temperance, diligence, good grooming, and decorum because it provided a sense of control in a society over which they could exert so little control. Others found release in the ecstatic experiences generated by such religious figures as Sweet Daddy Grace. The seeds were planted in the 1930s for the later emergence of the Nation of Islam that tapped into a combination of Islam practiced by Africans and African Americans from the colonial period into the nineteenth century, black nationalism, and the spirituality of the black church. Traditional African American churches began organizing in the 1930s under the leadership of Reverdy Ransom. The Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, founded in 1934, urged collective action on behalf of the race.

By the 1930s, the vast majority of Jewish Americans identified with Orthodox Judaism, and many were financially stable. Because of conservative Christian extremists, who assigned blame for the stock market crash and the Depression to Jews, the climate in the United States was not friendly. Reformed Jews and radicals involved in the Jewish labor movement began cultivating a deeper appreciation of Jewish religious and cultural traditions. Zionism attracted some Jews who felt trapped in a hostile society; in the midst of hard times, the Jewish National Fund raised five million dollars to purchase land in Palestine for a "return" to the promised land. At home, recognizing that not all members of the faith were prospering, they extended the development of Jewish Centers – YMHAs and YWHAs – to provide a safe haven for single Jewish workers in urban areas.

Like Christian social reconstructionists, many Jews looked to the federal government to supply material aid to workers. Although each faith

community arrived at collectivism from a different path, all contributed to the making of a political culture that charged the government with erecting social safety nets. Labor laws to regulate wages, hours, working conditions, the labor of children, and arbitration of disputes succeeded because religious groups saw these measures as moral imperatives. The religious support for social security likewise won support from religious groups that recognized the need for social responsibility in an economy that distributed risk unevenly.

By the end of World War II, the lives of workers, various religious institutions, and the nation all had been transformed by the determination to address the impact of modernization on work. Religious writings from all faith communities expressed the conviction that workers' spiritual and material well-being must be safeguarded by the collective will. Social service organizations within the faith communities no longer represented the radical avant-garde. In adjusting to modernity, which brought both bounty and crisis, people of all faiths brought religion-inspired visions of justice and brotherhood to the public square and empowered their government to assume responsibility for the common good.

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RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO MODERN SCIENCE, 1865–1945

ROBERT C. FULLER

American religious thought generally kept pace with the nation's continued social and cultural growth throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Prominent universities such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton supported thriving Protestant seminaries, enabling the nation to produce a steady stream of academically sophisticated theologians. Many of these were conversant with recent scientific writings in botany, chemistry, physics, and geology. They incorporated their scientific knowledge into a sophisticated natural theology built on the premise that nature contains clear, compelling evidence of God's existence and perfection.

Antebellum natural theology rested on two basic premises. First was the assumption that God created the natural universe, which therefore contains evidence of his creative design. Second was total certainty that God has also provided completely reliable information about himself in the Bible. Natural theology expressed American Protestantism's confidence that our universe had a sudden beginning as explained in Genesis, evidenced a divinely orchestrated development, and was heading toward a predetermined end, the salvation of the faithful and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

The natural theology developed in the first six decades of the nineteenth century was, however, destined to break apart after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859. Before 1860, theologians had been able to reconcile biblical faith and sciences such as botany or geology with relatively little difficulty. Darwin's writings signaled the emergence of a "new biology" committed to building theories solely on the basis of empirical investigation and inductive reasoning. Science now proved an embarrassment rather than a buttress to religious faith. Educated persons would henceforth be forced to make a difficult intellectual decision: Is it more important for a person to seek factual knowledge through scientific investigation or to seek personal salvation through loyalty to the Bible?

INITIAL PROTESTANT RESPONSES TO DARWIN

The publication of *On the Origin of Species* was an epochal event in the ongoing debate between Western civilization's two opposing stances toward life – biblical religion and rational humanism. Darwinian biology represented empiricism and inductive reasoning in contrast with the deductive reasoning of biblical theology. The concepts of free variation and natural selection were based on the assumption that we can best understand our world by looking for natural causes, not for evidences of divine intervention. Darwin was thus offering a material explanation of life that did not fit with Christianity's traditional emphasis on the roles of divine providence and supernatural intervention. The conflict between rational humanism and biblical religion was no longer an abstract, philosophical one. It could now be reduced to a single debate: either the book of Genesis is correct that God created the world in six days, or modern science is correct that humans emerged as part of the natural process of evolution transpiring over millions of years.

Darwin's book became a cultural litmus test. It required people to make a decision, to commit themselves to one side or the other. Only in rare cases did individuals truly ponder the facts of the matter and allow these facts to determine their response. After all, most people really did not know much about Darwin's book or the intricacies of his evolutionary theory. There were not many people in the entire nation prepared to think the matter through in anything close to a systematic manner. Most people's responses to Darwin revealed prior intellectual and cultural commitments. As a consequence, debates over Darwin's writings were rarely about the scientific merits of his work. They were typically opportunities to reaffirm what one already took to be true or false about the fundamental nature of the universe.

In 1860 Americans were overwhelmingly Protestant. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Unitarians, and Lutherans collectively accounted for approximately 75 percent of the religiously affiliated population. These denominations, furthermore, operated many of the best colleges in the nation. Catholics and Jews were only beginning to immigrate in meaningful numbers, and the many other Protestant groups together constituted only a small fraction of the national populace. It is thus understandable that the first wave of religious response to Darwin came primarily from ministers, college professors, college presidents, and seminary faculty affiliated with a fairly small number of Protestant groups.

Protestant religious leaders were not disposed to respond favorably to Darwin's explanation of organic evolution. They took their intellectual

cues partially from British and American scientists who were themselves skeptical of Darwin's evidence and methods. Even those scientists who were willing to entertain the idea that variation and natural selection account for the transmutation of "lower" animals scoffed at the possibility that these principles can explain the exceptional qualities – free will and moral choice – manifest in humans. Indeed, a recurring theme in Protestant critiques of Darwinism was that it did not sufficiently emphasize humanity's special and privileged nature.

Initially, Protestant objections to Darwinism were not about defending the literal truth of the Bible. Geological evidence had long before convinced educated persons of the antiquity of life on earth. Most Protestant leaders in this era were willing to concede that the reference to six days of creation in Genesis was metaphorical. They reconciled biblical faith and science by interpreting scriptural references to days as vast geological ages (the day-age theory) or by separating a creation in the beginning from a much later six-day Edenic creation (the gap theory). Princeton theologian Charles Hodge put his finger on what most troubled Protestant religious leaders about Darwin when he drew attention to the fact that "in using the expression Natural Selection, Mr. Darwin intends to exclude design, or final causes."[1] Hodge argued that Darwin's attempt to explain the existence of human beings solely in terms of physical causes brought "it into conflict not only with Christianity, but with the fundamental principles of natural religion."[2] The issue that initially motivated a negative response to Darwin was not that organic evolution contradicted Genesis, but that it represented a worldview devoid of belief in the supernatural.

Even before evolutionary science appeared on the scene, a fair number of Protestant leaders had drifted to a more liberal theological position. Theological liberalism incorporates many themes typically associated with humanism, including a positive view of human reason and humanity's capacity for personal and cultural progress. Most theological liberals were also receptive to the newly emerging higher criticism of the Bible, enabling them to interpret the Bible symbolically and to make room for scientific insights. As Andover Theological Seminary professor George Foot Moore asserted in 1888, "The new knowledge of the universe gained by astronomy, geology, and biology, with the philosophy which seeks to unify this knowledge, has created the modern conception of the universe, which is held more or less consistently and clearly by all educated men."[3] Liberals

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[1] Charles Hodge, *What Is Darwinism?* (New York, 1874), 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, 108.

[3] George Foot Moore, "The Modern Historical Movement and Christian Faith," *Andover Review* 10 (1888): 333.

were convinced that theology must accommodate scientific knowledge or risk becoming irrelevant to the educated citizenry.

Numerous articles and books by liberal Protestants advocated what might be called theistic evolution during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Although most champions of theistic evolution professed to be embracing Darwin's theory of evolution, they typically glossed over Darwin's naturalist explanation of evolutionary change and instead made allowance for occasional instances of divine intervention. It might be noted that such religiously motivated (mis)interpretations of Darwin were not restricted to church leaders. Important American scientists also selectively omitted elements of Darwin's argument so that it might seem compatible with religious faith. This is why Benjamin Warfield, chair of polemical theology at Princeton, despite his reservations concerning the scientific merits of Darwin's theory, could say that "the whole upshot of the matter is that there is no necessary antagonism of [Christianity] to evolution, provided that we do not hold to too extreme a form of evolution."[4] Even the clergyman and president of Princeton College, James McCosh, was willing to go on record as endorsing biological evolution as an exemplary instance of God's creative design. Evolution, McCosh proclaimed, is "a beneficent ordinance of God ... giving a unity and consistency to the world, making it a system compacted and harmonious, admired by the contemplative intellect."[5]

Darwin's theory of evolution was tailor-fit to theological liberalism. As the liberal preacher and scholar Henry Ward Beecher often pointed out, the idea that modern scientific investigation shows our world to be continually changing justified liberal attempts to introduce changes in theological tradition. Evolution also symbolized the creative potential of nature itself, making beliefs about supernatural intervention unnecessary. The Congregational minister Lyman Abbott published a number of articles and two well-known books, *The Evolution of Christianity* (1892) and *The Theology of an Evolutionist* (1897), to explain evolution as "God's way of doing things." To liberal Protestants like Abbott, a Darwin-inspired view of nature's progressive tendencies suggested that God works from within, not from outside, the physical universe. Progress is continuous rather than abrupt or once and for all. Theistic evolution thus portrayed the universe in ways that encouraged people to abandon traditional doctrines such as

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[4] Benjamin B. Warfield, "Lectures on Anthropology," December 1888, The Benjamin Warfield Manuscript Collection in the Princeton Theological Seminary Library, 38:3. See also 40:21 and 40:31.

[5] James McCosh, *Realistic Philosophy Defended in a Philosophic Series* (New York, 1887), 1: 217.

the fall, sin, and the need for conversion experiences. Belief that evolution was divinely inspired enabled educated Protestants to mediate between conflicting claims of their heads (science) and hearts (tradition). Theistic evolution assured them that they could best serve God by creatively adapting to new cultural or intellectual challenges as they arise.

A fascinating example of the intellectual and spiritual dilemmas that science posed is the religious pilgrimage of Oberlin College graduate and Congregational minister G. Frederick Wright. A self-taught geologist, Wright was motivated to reconcile belief in the Bible with his growing scientific knowledge. Asa Gray, professor of natural history at Harvard, championed a theistic interpretation of Darwinism that struck Wright as a perfect compromise between his dual commitments to science and faith. Gray, like many American scientists, made allowance for the possible role of supernatural influence in natural selection. Following Gray's lead, Wright confidently proclaimed that theistic evolution "allows us to retain our conceptions of reality in the forces of nature, makes room for miracles, and leaves us free whenever necessary, as in the case of the special endowments of man's moral nature, to supplement natural selection with the direct interference of the Creator."[6]

Wright eventually met Asa Gray, and they even collaborated to write two important theological texts that explained "a right evolutionary teleology." Yet Wright had to wrestle with two thorny questions: had he abandoned a worldview predicated on such concepts as miracles or the special creation of humans, and, more importantly, had he abandoned a commitment to the authority of the Bible? Wright did his best to sidestep these issues. For the most part he restricted natural selection to the lower species, while suggesting that the appearance of humans can be explained only by an exceptional act of divine intervention. He was even more adroit when it came to finessing the authority of the Bible. Wright's principal point was that Darwinism, interpreted in a theistic context, might be seen as a new way of understanding God's design for creation. Wright was thus initially willing to concede that the genealogies in Genesis might be interpreted somewhat freely so that they accord with the facts established by geology and archaeology. After all, "the utterances of the Bible are not infallible except as pertaining to things necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation."[7]

Yet as time went on, Wright became increasingly uncomfortable about compromising the authority of the Bible. He saw, for example, how

[6] G. Frederick Wright, "The Debt of the Church to Asa Gray," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 45 (1888): 527.

[7] G. Frederick Wright, *Studies in Science and Religion* (Andover, MA, 1882), 354.

popular writers such as Herbert Spencer and John Fiske stretched Darwinian principles into systems of cosmic evolution that rendered Christianity irrelevant or obsolete. Even more alarming, he detected a basic similarity between scientific reasoning and the higher criticism of the Bible through which scholars were analyzing – and relativizing – Christian scriptures. Wright was correct about the methodological similarities between scientific thought and the academic study of scriptures. Both were rational approaches to knowledge that did not permit a priori acceptance of miracles, did not recognize supernatural causation, and made empirical evidence the foundation of truth. By 1900, Wright ceased supporting biological evolution and, instead, devoted his energies to defending the Bible's literal truth.

The last four decades of the nineteenth century thus witnessed a variety of Protestant responses to the new biology. During the first fifteen years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Protestant leaders could take comfort in the fact that scientists, too, had serious reservations about Darwin's data and methodology. Yet after 1875, both the number and stature of American scientists who opposed Darwin's theories declined dramatically. Religious leaders had no choice but to recognize that there was strong scientific evidence for the evolutionary development of life on earth. By 1900 almost 75 percent of American Protestant spokespersons had accepted some form of biological evolution although most held to a version of theistic evolution attributing organic change either to God's initial design or to direct supernatural intervention. A minority, about 25 percent, rejected evolution outright. They did so for a number of reasons. Evolutionary science threatened the biblical worldview. Its view of natural causation undermined belief in supernatural intervention. Its emphasis on the gradual and continuous development of life made it unnecessary to expect miracles or require persons to undergo sudden conversion experiences. Its conception of human nature failed to account for a soul or to characterize any behaviors as sin, thereby contravening the ethical principles and motivations embedded in the Christian gospel. Indeed, it implied that most behaviors deemed to be sins are quite natural or normal. Science thus encouraged a worldview that is basically incompatible with traditional biblical faith. As ultraconservative Protestantism became more vocal in the twentieth century, so, too, would its basic opposition to science.

EARLY CATHOLIC AND JEWISH RESPONSES TO DARWIN

Darwinism arrived just ahead of massive waves of immigration that would bring the first significant numbers of Roman Catholics and Jews to the United States. In 1850, only 5 percent of the total population was Roman Catholic. Beginning in 1870, continuing waves of Irish, German, and

Italian Catholic immigrants began to make their way in a nation formerly dominated by Anglo-Saxon Protestants. By 1910, one out of every three church members in the country was Catholic. And while there were as few as 250,000 Jews in the United States in 1880, that number increased almost tenfold in the span of just three decades. It must be remembered, however, that the Jewish and Catholic immigrants tended to be poorer and less educated than their Protestant counterparts. It would not be until midcentury that their sons and daughters would benefit from the same educational opportunities that Protestants enjoyed. Jewish and Catholic responses to science were consequently driven less by academic disputation than by broader patterns of social or cultural adaptation to a largely Protestant America.

Catholic leadership between 1870 and 1930 was sharply divided between conservatives and progressives. These labels slightly exaggerate the differences between the two groups since the progressives were still quite traditional in matters of church doctrine, while the conservatives were hardly unthinking or obstructionist. What separated conservatives and progressives was not so much their doctrinal positions as the thinking patterns that supported them. Theological conservatives were fully committed to the scholastic tradition of Thomas Aquinas that had dominated Roman Catholic theology for centuries. Progressives, meanwhile, were more self-conscious about conceptualizing Christian faith in ways that facilitated adaptation to the main institutions of American society. Sometimes described as Americanists, the progressives believed that Catholicism needed to find a collaborative relationship with the sciences and university scholarship. What separated Catholics on the issue of science, then, was not so much varying views concerning the literal truth of the Bible, the issue that increasingly divided Protestants, as their degree of loyalty either to traditional Thomism or to the scientific worldview gaining ascendancy in American universities and industries. The Darwinian controversy provided an early opportunity for Catholics to define themselves and to hear out arguments from two opposing interpretations of what it means to be Catholic in the United States.

In the nineteenth century there were few Catholic priests whose education had included the reading of texts on biological evolution. Church leaders were, nonetheless, aware that the Darwinian system rejected supernatural causality and flatly denied that nature reveals any teleological design. Moreover, Darwinism might be construed in ways that would pose a social threat to poor and ill-educated immigrants. Some social reformers revamped the Darwinian notion of progress to legitimate a program of eugenics, sterilization, and social engineering that implicitly targeted "unwashed" foreigners. It is understandable, then, that the initial Catholic

response to evolutionary thought was dominated by conservatives who forcefully maintained that Darwinism was contrary to divine revelation and to traditional Catholic theology. This opposition was strengthened by what Catholic leaders witnessed among liberal Protestantism's accommodation of Darwinism. Influential Protestants such as Henry Ward Beecher and Lyman Abbott incorporated evolutionary themes in ways that wholly undermined traditional Christian beliefs about the fall, heaven and hell, miracles, or the movement of history toward final judgment. Opposing Darwinism was thus partially motivated by a desire to protect an immigrant population from leaving the church and embracing a wholly secular approach to life.

The progressive or Americanist wing of Roman Catholic leaders sought to adapt Catholic thought to the modern era. John Ireland (the archbishop of St. Paul), John Lancaster Spalding (bishop of Peoria), James Cardinal Gibbons (the archbishop of Baltimore), and Bishop John Keane (rector of the Catholic University of America) were among those who encouraged efforts to open dialogue between Catholic theology and such modern intellectual pursuits as the higher criticism of the Bible or Darwinian biology. Ireland, for example, appointed John Gmeiner, a staunch advocate of theistic evolution, to the diocesan seminary in St. Paul. All of these progressive bishops encouraged the research of progressive Catholic scientists such as John Zahm, a Holy Cross priest at the University of Notre Dame, who became the first American Catholic scientist to embrace the theory of evolution from both a scientific and religious perspective.

During the 1890s, Zahm produced a number of books and articles explaining how evolution might be seen as the mechanism through which God's providence unfolds in human history. Zahm never swerved from his Christian faith. He believed, for example, that science can never overturn truths revealed by God in scripture or in church tradition. But he also affirmed that empiricism and inductive reasoning are indispensable to the progress of human knowledge. His most important book, *Evolution and Dogma*, argued that the inductions of science and the deductions of metaphysics both explain how the Deity creates through evolutionary processes. Antimodernists within the Catholic Church were quick to point out that Zahm had strayed far from the scholastic theological tradition. What troubled Zahm's superiors was not simply his endorsement of evolution. More problematic was the fact that he had only given lip service to Thomistic metaphysics and instead relied heavily on inductions from empirical data. To many, Zahm had opened the door to materialism, pragmatism, liberalism, and agnosticism. By 1897, church officials ordered Zahm to cease publication of his book, and in 1898, it was banned by the Congregation of the Index. In 1907, Pope Pius X issued a sweeping condemnation of

modernism, thereby restricting discussion of scientific matters such as evolution to the periphery of American Catholic thought.

The "Zahm incident" was a defining moment for Catholicism's stance toward science at the dawn of the twentieth century.[8] Although a few American Catholic clergy and professors continued to hold mild forms of theistic evolution, the church had made it clear that commitment to scripture and tradition was more central to Catholic identity than newly emerging scientific theories. The *Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary* published in 1931 explained that the official Roman Catholic teaching was that evolution could not be justified by physical science and utterly contradicted metaphysics. It further explained that although Catholics are free to believe in evolution excluding the evolution of humanity, the evolution of humans as a whole from lower animals is impossible.

Jewish responses to evolutionary science were similarly intertwined with ongoing debates about the future course of an immigrant faith in a new cultural setting. How far can you go in accommodating to American culture without losing your traditional Jewish identity? How far can you go in accommodating to modern intellectual thought without drifting toward materialism or atheism? These were important questions facing the largely immigrant Jewish population from 1860 to 1940.[9]

Just as Roman Catholics gravitated toward either the conservative or progressive stance, American Jews tended to align themselves with either the Reform or traditionalist theological positions. Reform Jews held that the core of Judaism consists of belief in one God and the moral law; it is not binding on Jews to preserve practices and ceremonies originating in other locales or times in history. Traditionalist Jews held that all ritual and ceremonial practices defined Jewish identity, and they were consequently more concerned with preservation than with innovation. Evolutionary science necessarily invoked loyalty to one or another of these two basic religious styles. After all, the majority of American Jews were not well educated and had no real way of engaging the technical issues at stake in scientific controversies. Even those rabbis who had formal university education were typically trained in the humanities. Debates about Darwin, then, inevitably became contests between these two competing approaches to Jewish life.

Reform Judaism views the Bible as myth and poetry. It believes that revelation is progressive, not something fixed in the ancient past. Reform

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[8] See R. Scott Appleby, "Exposing Darwin's 'Hidden Agenda': Roman Catholic Responses to Evolution, 1875–1925," in Ronald Numbers and John Stenhouse, eds., *Disseminating Darwinism* (New York, 1999), 173–208.

[9] See Marc Swetlitz, "American Jewish Responses to Darwin and Evolutionary Theory, 1860–1890," in Numbers and Stemhouse, *Disseminating Darwinism,* 209–46.

Judaism also affirms that God acts through natural law rather than through miraculous intervention. It was thus predictable that Reform leaders would be receptive to evolutionary themes. As early as 1874, the recent German immigrant Kaufmann Kohler gave his first sermon as rabbi of a Chicago congregation on the topic of science and religion. Kaufmann noted that evolution had by this time been accepted by nearly every person qualified to judge its scientific merits. He drew special attention to the fact that evolution showed how change comes about through natural law, not through supernatural intervention. To this extent science was confirming the central premise of the Reform movement. Evolution also supported Reform's contention that views of God, morality, and ceremonial customs must necessarily change over time. Like almost everyone else in the late nineteenth century, Kohler glossed over the fact that Darwin had restricted his discussion of biological events to purely natural causes. Instead, Kohler suggested that humans have a special status within nature and that human evolution had been as much spiritual as material. Kohler's sermon seems to have been a catalyst as other Reform leaders soon publicly embraced the basic tenets of evolution. Many Reform Jews were thus at the forefront of cultural progress in a way that contrasted with either Christians or traditionalist Jews.

Notable in this debate is the position of the most prominent leader of Reform Judaism in America, Isaac Mayer Wise. Like Protestant critics of evolution, Wise noted that evolutionary science had serious methodological shortcomings. He pointed out that there were gaps in the fossil record and that no one had ever observed the transformation of a species. His principal concern, however, was with the moral implications of evolutionary theory. Wise firmly believed in the existence of a universal moral law and the existence of a human moral conscience. He rejected evolutionary thought because it could not account for either of these as transhistorical or universal elements of the human condition. Unlike other Reform leaders, Wise never accepted the concept of progressive revelation or the view that moral principles change over time. In his view, God revealed a unique set of commandments to Moses that does not change with history. His particular brand of Reform religious and ethical thought thus motivated him to reject evolution's depiction of the gradual, continuous transmutation of species.

Predictably, most of the Jewish opposition to evolution came from traditionalists. Traditionalists, like scientists and religious leaders alike, often phrased their opposition to evolutionary theory in terms of its supposed scientific shortcomings. It was clear, however, that their negative response was motivated by their fear that evolutionary thought degraded human dignity and undermined the authority of Jewish scripture. To

traditionalists, Jewish moral principles and ritual ceremonies originate in unique moments of God's revelatory disclosure. It was thus difficult for them to embrace theories that eschew supernatural events in favor of thoroughgoing naturalism. Those traditionalist Jews who did accept evolutionary thought tended to be silent about its theological implications. As with conservative Christians, accepting science made it necessary for traditionalist Jews to compartmentalize their thinking in ways that would keep these two intellectual worlds isolated from one another.

Encounters with science did little to transform Judaism in the decades surrounding the dawn of the twentieth century. Few Jewish thinkers were moved by evolutionary thought to reconceptualize God in ways similar to those liberal Protestants who jettisoned theological transcendence in order to portray God as a wholly immanent spiritual power. Instead, scientific concepts were used by Reform and traditionalist Jews to illustrate or confirm the positions they had already adopted.

METAPHYSICAL CONNECTIONS

Not all spiritually inclined Americans have affiliated with a religious organization. One of the most enduring forms of personal spirituality throughout the nation's history has been what is variously called "harmonial religion" or "metaphysical religion." This spiritual style contrasts with traditional Jewish or Christian piety in that it does not restrict itself to any one scriptural tradition. Metaphysical religion is self-consciously eclectic, celebrating a free and open inquiry into what might be proclaimed as the more-than-physical aspects of the universe. Its central premise is that personal vitality flows automatically from a person's inner rapport with the higher reaches of the universe. Metaphysical piety can be found in persons belonging to all religious denominations, providing a spiritual lens that filters the personal meaning of traditional doctrines or rituals. Its greatest appeal, however, is to those who are spiritually oriented but who remain unchurched.

Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, mesmerism, spiritualism, New Thought, and Theosophy were the most prominent of the many nineteenth-century movements that disseminated metaphysical spirituality among the American middle class. Common to these was belief in the twin concepts of "correspondence" and "influx." The doctrine of correspondence affirms that the universe consists of interpenetrating dimensions – the physical, mental, spiritual, angelic, and so on. Spirit and matter are thus not opposing realities, but are instead complementary and inseparable dimensions of a single universal system. The concept of correspondence affirms that each of the many dimensions of the universe is constructed in such a way

as to be intimately connected with every other dimension. Studying the lawful operations of any one dimension of the universe thus sheds light on the mechanisms operative in other dimensions, too. This vision of metaphysical correspondence leads directly to the concept of spiritual influx. According to metaphysical spirituality, causal power is constantly emanating from God. There is thus a continuous influx of divine spirit into each successively "lower" dimension of existence. All true progress proceeds according to influences from above. Through diligent study and by cultivating mystical or receptive states of mind, anyone might establish the lawful conditions that permit higher spiritual energies to flow into, and become causally active, in the physical dimension. Science – especially psychological science – was thus thought capable of spelling out lawful mechanisms through which humanity might avail itself of freely available spiritual power.

Metaphysical religion affirmed the concept of universal evolution long before Darwin. Metaphysically interpreted, the universe was set into motion by the involution of higher spiritual energies into the natural order. The whole of history is the progressive evolution of matter back toward its divine source. It was thus inevitable that those attracted to metaphysical religion would find Darwin's writings loosely compatible with their own. Yet although spokespersons for metaphysical religion did not dispute Darwin's basic assertions, they insisted he did not understand the larger cosmic picture in which evolution transpires. From the metaphysical standpoint, evolution begins from above. Spiritual energy is continually emanating from God into the "lower" dimensions of existence, thereby inciting lower dimensions to grow, develop, and manifest evermore expansive spiritual potentials. The goal of human life is continued growth and development, contributing to the evolutionary movement of life back toward its divine source.

We can understand, then, why William James noted that the concept of evolution fit the religious convictions of those drawn to metaphysical religion

> so well that it seems almost as if it might have been created for their use. Accordingly we find "evolutionism" interpreted thus optimistically and embraced as a substitute for the religion they were born in, by a multitude of our contemporaries who have either been trained scientifically, or ... [those who are] dissatisfied with what seemed to them the harshness and irrationality of the orthodox Christian scheme.[10]

What was true of biological science was even more true of the newly emerging field of psychology. Indeed, early public interest in psychology

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[10] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; repr., New York, 1985), 81.

was almost wholly due to the writings of the mesmerists and New Thoughters (often referred to as Mind Cure) who applied the concepts of correspondence and influx to their study of the deepest reaches of the human psyche. Interpreting the concept of the unconscious mind optimistically, the whole field of psychology struck metaphysically inclined Americans as a substitute for traditional religion – a substitute that could at once meet their need for a scientific-like approach to knowledge and their need for reassurance of their inner connection with God's spiritual powers.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

In 1880 there were few universities in the United States that offered a curriculum in psychology. The study of mind and personal character had formerly been the province of philosophy or, in some cases, theological ethics. Yet by 1890 nearly every important university in the country had a rapidly growing department of psychology. In the brief span of a decade, the new "psychology without a soul" had emerged, defined by adherence to the basic tenets of science: concern with acquiring empirical data through objective, verifiable procedures; recognition of the physiological components of psychological phenomena; the quest for causal explanations; and adherence to a scientific method which – like those of biology and chemistry – would test and revise hypotheses through laboratory experimentation.

The rise of academic psychology signaled an important shift in American culture. Universities were replacing the church as the nation's most respected institution for disseminating reliable information. Whereas the lay population had formerly turned to ministers for guidance about the "good person" or the "good society," they would henceforward look to secular experts trained in the newly emerging social sciences such as psychology or its cognate discipline, sociology. The new social sciences illuminated the factors influencing human development without reference to such traditional theological concepts as sin, redemption, providence, or supernatural guidance. Instead they focused attention on this-worldly influences – all of which were within the scope of human comprehension and control.

George Herbert Mead, James Mark Baldwin, G. Stanley Hall, John Dewey, and William James were among those who used scientific methods to explore how the mind and self emerge through wholly social processes. Although their new scientific models explicating human development would alone have proved a challenge to religion, the vast majority of the era's most prominent researchers also turned their attention specifically to the study of religion. The rise of sociology and psychology was, in fact, partially owing to their ability to explain the origins and function of religion in fully natural terms. In both a cultural and philosophical sense, then, the

new social sciences were in many ways the result of the progressive secular-ization of American thought.

Religious responses to the new disciplines of psychology and sociology varied for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that American social scientists were themselves of mixed and frequently ambiva-lent religious outlooks. Typical in this regard was the life and career of G. Stanley Hall. Like so many in the first generation of American psycholo-gists, Hall grew up in a highly religious household and initially contem-plated a career in the ministry. In college Hall was forced to confront the intellectual challenges to religion posed by evolutionary biology and the higher criticism of the Bible. As a consequence, he could no longer commit himself to a Bible-based theology. Reading Romantic philosophers such as Emerson, Schelling, and Hegel inspired Hall to abandon traditional the-ism in favor of a more broadly pantheistic view that locates God within nature, not outside of it. Viewed in this context, psychology could be seen as a way of mediating between the new demands of scientific thinking (his head) and his desire to serve God by helping others (his heart). Hall devoted his academic career to understanding the lawful principles of psy-chological development, articulating the mechanisms that propel humans toward productive and fulfilling lives. Given his pantheistic metaphysics, Hall could simultaneously view these psychological principles as the way that an immanent divinity guides the ongoing evolution of the universe. Hall could, in fact, proclaim psychological science to be "Christian to its roots and centre, and its final mission ... [is to create a new worldview that yet retains] the old Scriptural sense of unity, rationality, and love beneath and above all."[11]

Other pioneering psychologists such as James Mark Baldwin, Edwin Scribner Ames, and George Coe were similarly attracted to psychology as a way of forging a synthesis between their Christian roots and the promise of scientific inquiry. An even clearer example of this capacity to stretch an empirical psychology into a spiritually nourishing metaphysics was the Harvard psychologist William James. James grew up in an affluent household where he was introduced to the bold religious philosophies of freethinkers such as Emanuel Swedenborg and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Both Swedenborg and Emerson had championed metaphysical systems affirming that, under the right lawful conditions, higher spiritual energies can flow into – and exert causal influences within – the physical world. These metaphysical beliefs shaped James' thinking as he successively com-pleted medical school, became the nation's foremost psychologist, and

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[11] G. S. Hall, "The New Psychology," pt. 2, *Andover Review* 3 (March 1885): 248.

emerged as the chief spokesperson for America's first original philosophical system – pragmatism.

William James' most enduring interest in scientific psychology was the investigation of the unconscious mind. He believed that research in such diverse fields as hypnotism, unusual mental disorders, and parapsychology showed beyond dispute that our consciousness exists along a continuum that shades off into regions just beyond the normal range of scientific investigation. James maintained that the further reaches of human consciousness are coterminous and continuous with what he called a spiritual "more" that can flow into, and exert regenerative influences within, our psychological systems. James used this psychology of the unconscious mind as the basis for what is arguably the most famous book ever written in the academic study of religion, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). Psychology provided a mediating term between scientific investigation and religious metaphysics. James believed that studies of the unconscious mind established on empirical grounds that we can become inwardly receptive to the inflow of metaphysical energies. Psychology thus furnished James a new vocabulary for describing a style of spirituality that carved out cultural space somewhere between traditional religion and traditional science. This was, moreover, a style of spirituality that could appeal to those persons for whom biblical religious ideas (e.g., sin, vicarious atonement, divinely revealed texts, a literal heaven or hell) were no longer viable options. James' psychologically phrased spirituality suggested that religion is not about doctrines at all, but rather about cultivating an inner personal connection with a spiritual "more."

Not all psychologists were as willing as James or Hall to sneak religious concepts into their fledgling science. James Jastrow, James Leuba, John Watson, and John Dewey were among those who insisted that psychology remain true to its scientific aspirations even if this meant dispensing with religion altogether. Watson, the founder of the behaviorist school of thought, maintained that psychology is an experimental branch of science whose goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Watson warned about psychologists like James whose theories struck him as little more than a subtle religious philosophy masquerading as science. Dewey, though less strident in his criticisms of religiously tinged psychology, was similarly convinced that science – not religion – is the most reliable path to human progress. Dewey believed that psychological science could contribute to the progressive improvement of the human species, a project that he believed was incompatible with religion's fixed doctrines and creeds. While Dewey acknowledged that religious institutions and beliefs have been of some value in expressing our highest hopes, he counseled that the next step in

humanity's growth requires us to rid ourselves of the stultifying effects of religious faith.

Dewey and Mead were on the faculty of the newly founded University of Chicago. From the beginning of the twentieth century onward, Chicago became a leading center for the study of religion. Chicago's Shailer Mathews, Gerald Birney Smith, Edwin Scribner Ames, and others developed a distinctively American style in religious thought – democratic, pragmatic, and comfortable with the categories of scientific thought. The "Chicago school" did more than simply adjust the gospel to modernity. They reconceptualized religion in terms of Deweyan psychology and Mead's social behaviorism, paving the way for the twentieth century's principal theological innovations. Yet while some liberal Protestants and some Reform Jews could affirm the progressive aspirations of Dewey's secular psychology, most Jews and Christians feared the incursion of secularism into the nation's educational and therapeutic institutions. Typical in this regard was the American Catholic view that Dewey's ideas were "socialistic naturalism without God, without Christ, without religion, without immortality."[12]

Sigmund Freud was the most renowned – and controversial – psychologist during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Freud, like James, emphasized the nature and function of the unconscious mind. Yet for Freud the unconscious was the repository of repressed instinctual urges. Thus whereas James portrayed the unconscious in spiritual terms as the portal to higher metaphysical realms, Freud depicted the psyche as teeming with sexual and aggressive desires. It is true that James, Hall, and others had used psychology to promote a liberal theological agenda that denied the literal truth of religious doctrines. Freud, however, used psychology to advance his wholly secular vision in which religion was nothing short of a psychological weakness preventing us from full personal or cultural health. In his most important critique of religion, *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud argued that we hold religious beliefs because we want them to be true – not because we have reason or evidence for them to be true. The fully mature person will abandon these illusions and instead face life honestly and rationally.

Religious thinkers of every denomination responded negatively to Freud. This was because Freud so openly dismissed religion as an obstacle to both personal and cultural health. It was also due to the fact that he so frankly discussed humanity's instinctual desires. Polite middle-class society preferred either to think that sexual and aggressive tendencies reside only in godless deviants or at the very least that they should not be discussed so openly. As time went on, some conservative Protestant thinkers conceded

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[12] Geoffrey O'Connell, *Naturalism in American Education* (New York, 1938), 137.

that Freud accurately described our basic, unredeemed, human nature. After all, the Bible teaches that ever since the Garden of Eden humans have been born in a condition of sin and therefore are in desperate need of forgiveness and redemption.

Most psychologists were as morally scandalized by Freud's clinical observations as the clergy were. When they did make explicit reference to Freud, their writings were typically riddled with glaring fallacies, substantive errors, and gross exaggerations. Among Freud's few supporters was a small group of the nation's first psychotherapists. Yet these early champions of Freud, much like the earliest champions of Darwin, recast his theories in ways that made allowance for America's religious heritage. Boris Sidis, Abraham Brill, and Isador Coriat were among the many Jewish psychotherapists who reframed Freud's theories to soften their moral and religious implications and thereby made them more compatible with Western religious sensibilities.[13] Protestant psychotherapists William Alanson White and James Jackson Putnam reinterpreted Freud's unconscious in wholly Jamesian and Transcendentalist ways – depicting the unconscious as a conduit for powerful spiritual energies. Thus Freud's ideas were assimilated into the vocabulary of wider audiences largely to the degree that they could first be assimilated into prevailing cultural attitudes about the spiritual powers potentially available through the unconscious.[14]

Throughout history, rabbis, priests, and ministers have drawn upon their era's folk psychology to provide pastoral counseling to their congregations. In 1905, the Reverend Elwood Worcester, Episcopalian rector of Boston's prestigious Emmanuel church, inaugurated a ministry that combined psychological science and Christian faith. Worcester established working relationships with several medically trained neurologists including Isador Coriat and James Jackson Putnam, and soon became an advocate for the emerging field of psychotherapy. His steady stream of publications tapped into the public's faith in the healing powers of the unconscious mind. A single article in *Ladies' Home Journal* elicited more than five thousand requests for treatment.

Worcester believed the time had come for the church to avail itself of the best therapeutic methods developed by psychological science. The "Emmanuel movement" soon attracted Episcopal, Baptist, Congregational, Unitarian, and Presbyterian clergy around the country who were eager to

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[13] See the expanded treatment of the role of Jewish psychologists in developing American psychology in Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul* (Princeton, 2004).

[14] See the expanded treatment of the role of American religious thought in developing American psychology in Robert C. Fuller, *Americans and the Unconscious* (New York, 1986).

apply the techniques of secular psychotherapy in their pastoral counseling. Despite occasional references to Freud and other psychoanalytic therapists, Worcester's concept of the unconscious came from William James and the New Thought movement. Whereas Freud depicted the unconscious as the source of humanity's tragic flaws, Worcester assured Christian audiences that it is the seat of all that preserves harmony in life. He added that the unconscious mind is suggestible; it is subject to moral influence exerted by our conscious efforts. Worcester's Emmanuel movement consequently encouraged its clientele to cultivate proper mental habits and, in so doing, to channel their unconscious energies in desired ways. Drawing upon James and well-known New Thought authors, Worcester also proclaimed that the unconscious is potentially open to the inflow of subtle spiritual energies. The key to abundant Christian living lies in "the discovery and use of those inexhaustible subconscious powers which have their roots in the Infinite."[15]

As the twentieth century progressed, both Jewish and Christian thinkers developed their religious positions with occasional references to one or another form of secular psychology. Jewish thinkers, for the most part, guarded against the mystical readings of psychology found in liberal Protestants. Rather than using language of the psyche to suggest humanity's inner connection with the Infinite, Jewish writers typically emphasized humanity's capacity for a life of love and ethically responsible behavior. The quintessential example of psychologically phrased Jewish teaching was Rabbi Joshua Liebman's best seller, *Peace of Mind* (1946). Although the book was clearly in the genre of inspirational literature, it avoided the "think your way to riches" message underlying most New Thought writings and instead offered a unique healing message of self-acceptance and neighborly love. Liebman used psychology to buttress his criticism of traditional Christianity for burdening the human psyche with excessive guilt and asserted Judaism's place as a religion of unequaled depth in its assessment of human nature.

The first Catholic thinkers to take critical notice of psychology were lay Catholic psychologists, spiritual writers, and moral theologians. Doctrinal theologians already had their own in-house psychology: the Neo-Scholastic adaptation of Thomistic faculty psychology. Slowly but surely in the 1920s and 1930s, Catholic theologians began to integrate the so-called new psychology into the older scholastic system. Catholic appropriations of psychology adhered to Catholicism's theological dictum that grace builds

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[15] Elwood Worcester, Samuel McComb, and Isador Coriat, *Religion and Medicine: The Moral Control of Nervous Disorder*s (New York, 1908), 43.

upon nature. Catholic theologians typically sought in psychology evidence for humanity's continuity or intentionality toward the divine, and rejected those psychological accounts of human motivation that have appeared to deny this capacity or to reduce it to something else.

Protestant thinkers have responded to modern psychology in two distinct ways. Beginning with Luther and Calvin, Protestants emphasize the discontinuity between the divine and the human realms. Protestant thought traditionally insists that not only is it impossible for humans to initiate connection with a wholly transcendent God; it is a sin of excessive pride even to attempt such a self-initiated connection. Conservative Protestant thinkers therefore found Freud's description of the human condition consistent with their own deeply held conviction that in their natural state humans are in desperate need of God's saving grace. By the late twentieth century, Fundamentalist and evangelical Christians would begin to see the usefulness of psychology for such fields as evangelism, religious education, and missionary strategies. Their strict biblical theology enabled them to make some use of behavioral or cognitive psychology, rarely psychoanalytic theory or archetypal psychology, and almost never the humanistic psychologies that celebrate humanity's inborn creative potentials. Yet for most of the twentieth century, conservative Protestants had little use for psychology except as descriptive confirmation of humanity's innate depravity.

Liberal Protestants had already abandoned the Bible as the sole source of religious insight before the emergence of academic psychology. They had an empirical bent, looking to nature for insights into the wholeness-making and world-building forces through which God progressively creates our universe. Liberal Protestant theologians have predictably been most interested in psychological theories that emphasize humanity's capacities for self-actualization and have, therefore, typically ignored both psychoanalysis and behaviorism. From Henry Ward Beecher to Norman Vincent Peale, psychology has held a special place in liberal Protestantism by providing a vocabulary for depicting humanity's inner connection with an immanent divinity.

SCIENCE AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'S THEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM

Fundamentalism emerged early in the twentieth century as both a theological and a cultural movement. From the very outset, Fundamentalism expressed a reactionary sentiment, defining itself in opposition to theological and cultural modernism. Despite its affirmation of scripture,

Fundamentalism is primarily defined by what it is against – and foremost is the whole intellectual framework supporting scientific inquiry.

A few smaller Protestant groups, notably the Seventh-day Adventists and early Pentecostals, were ahead of most of the established denominations in sensing the threat that science posed. These groups used ultraconservative theology to define their cultural boundaries and therefore could not permit themselves – or their children – to learn that these boundaries lacked objective validity. When the foundress of Seventh-day Adventism, Ellen White, declared that "the Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science," she was demarcating the line separating her followers from other Americans who desired a future defined by science and technology.[16] Other Protestants followed suit. Curtis Lee Laws, editor of a Baptist paper, *The Watchman Examiner*, coined the word "Fundamentalists" and used it to denote all those who were ready "to do battle royal" for the fundamentals of the faith. Between 1910 and 1915, Rev. A. C. Dixon edited a twelve-volume series titled *The Fundamentals* that prominently featured a chapter on "Evolution from the Christian Point of View" that signaled the Fundamentalists' battle cry against evolutionary theory.

Fundamentalists' concern with doing battle royal for their faith led them to support legislation banning the teaching of evolution from public schools. The "Scopes Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, became a symbol of this ongoing confrontation between science and religion in the United States. John Scopes, a young high school teacher, was put on trial in July 1925 for violating Tennessee's statute making it unlawful to teach "any theory which denies the theory of the Divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man is descended from a lower order of animals." The trial lasted eleven days and attracted worldwide attention from the press as famed criminal lawyer Clarence Darrow defended Scopes, squaring off against the equally famed politician William Jennings Bryan, who assisted the prosecution. The climax of the trial was Darrow's articulate cross-examination of Bryan, during which he revealed that Bryan was profoundly ignorant of biological science and even the Bible. Scopes was found guilty and fined $100, but the case brought attention to the fact that almost no reputable scientist in the country was to defend the biblical teaching of the special creation of the human species. Yet despite the fact that science was to dominate continued progress in American culture (transportation technologies, communication technologies, medical discoveries, home conveniences, etc.), religious conservatives would continue throughout the twentieth

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[16] See the discussion of Seventh-day Adventist views of science in Ronald Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 92–110.

century to view science – especially evolutionary science – as emblematic of modern culture's hostility to the Christian worldview embodied in the Bible.

In the 1930s and 1940s, another theological movement known as Neo-Orthodoxy began to emerge in American religious life. Walter Lowrie, H. Richard Niebuhr, and especially Reinhold Niebuhr became critical of liberal Protestantism's tendency to collapse theology into a discussion of human psychology. Neo-Orthodoxy countered that theology was not about human subjectivity, but about ultimate reality. Therefore, even though Neo-Orthodox thinkers drew heavily on contemporary psychological and sociological research to analyze the human condition, they insisted that the proper object of theology is a God who wholly transcends the human realm.

Two new schools of liberal Christian thought emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, both making substantial use of scientific insights. A cluster of self-identified "progressive" theologians such as Josiah Strong, Charles Eliot, and Walter Rauschenbusch were leaders of the Social Gospel movement that emerged in the century's first two decades. These thinkers used sociological and psychological theories to formulate theological responses to social and economic inequalities increasingly dividing the nation into the haves and have-nots. In the 1920s and 1930s, scientific language also filtered into a new school of liberal Christian thought called "process theology." Henry Nelson Wieman, for example, published *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (1926), which used contemporary psychology to connect the theological concept of salvation with those mental processes leading to integration, wholeness, and fulfillment. In *Process and Reality* (1929), Alfred North Whitehead drew on physics for a language that located God within, rather than outside, worldly processes leading to growth and development. These suggestive themes, later developed by Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and others, sustained liberal theology's concern with using scientific language to depict humanity's inner access to an immanent divine power.

By the middle of the twentieth century, Jewish and Christian leaders had developed fairly distinct, stable, and recognizable patterns for responding to scientific thought. Theologically liberal rabbis and clergy would find in science new ways of locating God's activity in the world, while conservatives would devise strategies for compartmentalizing religious belief in ways that would isolate it from the categories in which they otherwise went about their daily lives. Tensions between the competing loyalties of pursuing truth through open inquiry or procuring salvation through loyalty to the Bible would continue to surface, especially as seen in the resurgence of creationism in the 1960s.

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RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO PHILOSOPHY IN AMERICA, 1865–1945

JON H. ROBERTS

Claims concerning the foundations of knowledge and the nature of reality have played a central role in American religious discourse. For that reason many participants in that discourse have engaged in a lively, often spirited interaction with philosophical thought. This was especially the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when profound changes in American cultural and intellectual life resulted in challenges to prevailing doctrines and traditional sources of religious authority. In responding to those changes, many theologians, clergy, and learned laypeople found themselves drawing on the resources of philosophy in formulating and defending their worldviews.

For much of the period between 1865 and 1945 the engagement of American religious thinkers with philosophical reflection and analysis was motivated primarily by a desire to come to grips with the implications of modern science. By the second half of the nineteenth century scientists had become quite successful in describing phenomena in terms of intelligible natural laws, and many enthusiastic supporters of their efforts saw no reason to doubt that the reign of order pervaded the entire universe. Just as importantly, even pious members of the scientific community were coming to believe that "it is the aim of science to narrow the domain of the supernatural, by bringing all phenomena within the scope of natural laws and secondary causes." Practitioners of the natural sciences became increasingly insistent that the rejection of authority and the cultivation of skepticism constituted "the highest of duties" and that reliance on "blind faith" should be regarded as "the one unpardonable sin."[1]

The success of scientists in disclosing the structure and activities of natural phenomena led many Americans to wonder whether it was any

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[1] William North Rice, "The Darwinian Theory of the Origin of Species," *New Englander* 26 (1867): 608; Thomas H. Huxley, "On the Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge" [1866], in *Collected Essays by T. H. Huxley* (1893; repr., New York, 1970), I: 40–41.

longer appropriate to assert the existence of a spiritual dimension of reality. For many religious thinkers, one of the considerations that lent a sense of urgency to that question was the insistence on the part of a few outspoken partisans of scientific thought that concentration on naturalistic processes and agencies should not be regarded simply as a methodological norm for scientific discourse; naturalism also served, they maintained, as the basis for dismissing supernaturalism altogether. Those thinkers, who eventually adopted the label "scientific naturalism" to describe their position, inferred from the fact that "no intrusion of purely creative power into any series of phenomena has ever been observed" that the universe could best be described as a closed system of matter in motion operating in accordance with intelligible natural laws.[2]

Although proponents of scientific naturalism agreed that supernatural intervention did not occur within nature, they broke ranks when discussing the question of what, if anything, lay outside the realm of natural phenomena. Some were content to assert that "the term 'Nature' covers the totality of that which is." Others maintained that while science was competent to describe the operation of all natural phenomena, it was acceptable to employ terms associated with religion to describe the actual source of those natural phenomena. The English philosopher Herbert Spencer, for example, coupled his claim that scientific examination of the universe had disclosed the existence of a universal process of evolution with the argument that science and religion converged in affirming the existence of an "Unknown Cause, Power, or Force, which is manifested to us through all phenomena." Spencer's American disciple, John Fiske, similarly maintained that it was impossible to frame any "theory of phenomena ... without postulating an Absolute Existence of which phenomena are the manifestations." Neither Spencer nor Fiske, however, was willing to imbue the "Unknown Reality" with attributes traditionally ascribed to the Judeo-Christian deity.[3]

American religious thinkers roundly condemned scientific naturalists for attempting to confer the name and prestige of science on an irreligious metaphysics. In arriving at their own assessments of the theological implications of modern science, however, those thinkers found themselves

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[2] [John] Tyndall, "Reply to the Critics of the Belfast Address," *Popular Science Monthly* 6 (1875): 429; Frank Miller Turner, *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England* (New Haven, 1974), 1–37; Jon H. Roberts, *Darwinism and the Divine in America: Protestant Intellectuals and Organic Evolution, 1859–1900* (1988; repr., Notre Dame, 2001), 66–74.

[3] Thomas H. Huxley, "Prologue" [*Controverted Questions*, 1892], in *Collected Essays by T. H. Huxley* (1897; New York, 1968), V: 39n1; Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London, 1862), 99–110, 216, 258; John Fiske, *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* [1874], in *The Miscellaneous Writings of John Fiske*, 4 vols. (Boston, 1874), I: 128, 141.

sharply divided. In grappling with the numerous dimensions of that issue, as well as in thinking more generally about the implications of modern thought, they found themselves employing epistemological and metaphysical insights from the repertoire of philosophy.

During the period between 1865 and 1945 most of the public discussion of religion in the United States took place among Protestants. Some of those Christians, especially the more conservative members of the Protestant community who endorsed the idea that the Bible provided a clear, comprehensive, and inerrant guide to the precepts of theology, remained wedded to the idea that scientists should confine themselves to making inductive generalizations based on observation and experiment. Although proponents of this "Baconian" interpretation of scientific method acknowledged that the Creator had empowered entities within the natural world to serve as "secondary causes" and that the actions of those agencies could often be described in terms of natural laws, they refused to envision the universe as a network of "inflexible and virtually omnipotent laws." Noting that the divine inspiration of the Bible, the incarnation, the resurrection, the efficacy of prayer, and other doctrines long regarded as central to the Christian worldview depended on God's periodic intervention within the created order, conservative Protestants concluded that "Christianity is supernatural – from above nature, or it is nothing." A universe that could be entirely comprehended in terms of law-like processes, they asserted, made God the slave rather than the Master of the forces of nature. Convinced that "God must be thought of as a God who can work wonders," conservatives denounced the notion that natural agencies and processes were capable of explaining all events as a reckless hypothesis promulgated to support a speculative "materialistic philosophy" that sought to eliminate God from nature and history. For their part, throughout the period between 1865 and 1945 conservative Protestants continued to espouse supernaturalism. Although a few particularly fervent Fundamentalists came to believe that "philosophy and divine revelation are utterly irreconcilable," conservatives more commonly continued to employ philosophical arguments associated with the tradition of natural theology in defending their belief in a rational, benevolent, and providential divine Creator.[4]

In contrast to conservative Protestants, who refused to confer the kind of authority on the fruits of modern thought that they believed should be

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[4] J. T. Tucker, "Natural and Supernatural," *Boston Review* 6 (1866): 173; J. Macbride Sterrett, "Apologetics – Its Proper Attitude at the Present Time," *American Church Review* 43 (1884): 143; J. Gresham Machen, *What is Faith?* (New York, 1925), 72; A. A. Hodge, "Introduction," in Joseph S. Van Dyke, *Theism and Evolution: An Examination of Modern Speculative Theories as Related to Theistic Conceptions of the Universe*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1886), xvii; Philip Mauro, "Modern Philosophy," in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony*

reserved for the scriptures, many other Protestants deferred to scientists and other specialized producers of knowledge and called for the "reconstruction" of Christian theology in light of the results of their inquiries. Those Protestants, who characteristically came to be known as "liberals," expressed less interest than did conservative Protestants in defending supernaturalism, but they were certainly no less committed to the goal of defending the legitimacy of theism itself in the wake of the results of modern scientific investigation. Toward that end, liberal Protestants appropriated the resources of philosophical analysis in an effort to justify their views concerning the existence and nature of God. Their use of those resources, however, was not uniform. As a result, their efforts led to the development of widely different conceptions of deity.

One of the philosophical endeavors that many liberal Protestants regarded as especially worthwhile in the late nineteenth century was the development of an effective arsenal of arguments for the existence of God. Although natural theology had been a thriving enterprise prior to 1865, the work of Charles Darwin and others encouraged liberals to revise the arguments associated with that enterprise in ways that would make them more consistent with the thrust of modern science. Many who participated in that endeavor became especially enamored of an argument from design that was predicated on the ubiquity of order that scientists had discovered within the universe. Proponents of that argument maintained that it would be unreasonable to ascribe the pervasiveness of order to either logical necessity or the random interaction of forces and particles. Instead, they argued that "order is invariably conjoined with intelligence" and that "that which is intelligible has intelligence in it." From this perspective, they reasoned that in discerning the order that pervaded the universe, minds were meeting Mind.[5]

Many liberal Protestants went well beyond natural theology in their efforts to demonstrate the harmony of science with belief in a Christian deity. Those liberals sought to place the descriptions of science and the Christian conception of God within a larger, more comprehensive metaphysical framework. In the period after 1865 many of the more metaphysically oriented liberals came to believe that philosophical idealism, which

to the Truth (Chicago, n.d.), II: 89. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2006), 214–15; Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*, expanded ed. (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 65; Roberts, *Darwinism and the Divine*, 41–2, 101–2, 211, 220–1.

[5] D. B. Purinton, *Christian Theism: Its Claims and Sanctions* (New York, 1889), 31; Jon H. Roberts, "That Darwin Destroyed Natural Theology," in Ronald L. Numbers, ed., *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths About Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 165–7.

was described by the University of California philosopher George Holmes Howison as "that explanation of the world which maintains that the only thing absolutely real is mind," constituted a particularly fruitful way of affirming the pervasive presence of God within all phenomena. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of different varieties of idealism emerged in the United States, and together they dominated academic philosophy.[6]

Within the field of philosophy itself, the absolute idealism associated with philosophers such as Josiah Royce may have received the most attention. Like many European idealists in the nineteenth century, proponents of absolute idealism in the United States envisioned all of reality as the conscious experience of a divine Absolute. Among American religious thinkers, however, personal idealism, and especially the "personalistic" idealism promulgated by the Boston University philosopher Borden Parker Bowne, proved to be especially influential. This version of idealism, which has been described as "the first complete and comprehensive system of philosophy developed in America," sought to show that reality could best be understood as "a world of persons with a Supreme Person at the head." Bowne and other proponents of personal idealism made concerted efforts to show that the results of scientific inquiry could be comfortably placed within the framework of a metaphysics that affirmed that "mind is the only ontological reality."[7]

Proponents of personal idealism challenged head-on the claims of scientific naturalists that reality could best be understood as a system of matter in motion. They held that while metaphysics and science alike employed the data of experience, those enterprises made fundamentally different contributions to human understanding. Whereas scientists were able through empirical investigation to discern how "things exist and hang together in certain ways in space and time" and to develop generalizations concerning "the continuity, the unity, and the uniformity of nature," their efforts were essentially "classificatory and descriptive." It was the task of metaphysicians to disclose the actual nature of the agencies and entities that scientists had discovered.[8]

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[6] G. H. Howison, "The City of God, and the True God as Its Head," in Josiah Royce et al., eds., *The Conception of God: A Philosophical Discussion Concerning the Nature of the Divine Idea as a Demonstrable Reality* (1897; repr. New York, 1902), 84; Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America, 1720–2000* (Oxford, 2001), 111.

[7] W. H. Werkmeister, *A History of Philosophical Ideas in America* (New York, 1949), 103; Borden Parker Bowne, *Personalism* (Boston, 1908), 277–8; Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, rev. ed. (New York, 1898), 423.

[8] Bowne, *Personalism*, 40–1, 152; G. H. Howison, "Is Modern Science Pantheistic?" *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 19 (1885): 381; Bowne, *Metaphysics*, 2–5.

Personal idealists commonly maintained that two fundamental characteristics of the natural world that made science itself possible provided strong grounds for affirming that divine Mind constituted the ground of natural processes. The first of those characteristics was causality. Noting that even the most careful empirical examination of the natural world revealed merely the succession of phenomena, proponents of philosophical idealism concluded that causal agency resided within "a realm into which science as such has neither the call nor the power to penetrate." Drawing on human experience, they emphasized that the only source of efficient causal agency that had actually been shown to exist within the natural order was "active will endowed with intelligence." What this implied, they maintained, was that "causal explanation must always be in terms of personality, or it must vanish altogether."[9]

The other characteristic of the cosmos that seemed to personal idealists to indicate that Mind underlay natural phenomena was the pervasiveness of order within it. The most rational explanation for the success of science in demonstrating that the universe was "an orderly totality," they argued, was that it was the product of "a World-Ground, conceived of as an absolute Will and Intelligence – an intelligent Will, a willing Mind." Hence, cosmic order, far from serving as a "rival" to God, as scientific naturalists would have it, was actually "the continuous manifestation and product of the divine activity." Together, the phenomena of causality and order convinced Bowne and other personal idealists that reality consisted of "a world of persons with a Supreme Person at the head."[10]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the conceptions and rhetoric of personalistic idealism pervaded the work of American liberal Protestant theologians. William Newton Clarke, a professor at Colgate who in 1898 published the first textbook systematically explicating the ideas associated with the "New Theology," expressed a view that became the conventional wisdom among liberals when he averred that "a Mind caused the universe, made it intelligible to us, and is conducting it to an end." Elaborating the point, Clarke emphasized that "it is the nature of mind to be personal, and we speak correctly when we say that the universe is the work and expression of a personal Spirit."[11]

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[9] Bowne, *Personalism*, 152, vii; George Trumbull Ladd, *The Philosophy of Religion: A Critical and Speculative Treatise of Man's Religious Experience and Development in the Light of Modern Science and Reflective Thinking* (New York, 1905), II: 79.

[10] Ladd, *Philosophy of Religion*, II: 59–60; Borden P. Bowne, *The Immanence of God* (Boston, 1905), 26–8; Bowne, *Personalism*, 277.

[11] William Newton Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology* (1898; repr., New York, 1922), 118.

Although philosophical idealism continued to attract a number of liberal Protestants until well after 1945, during the second decade of the twentieth century a number of liberals, especially within the fields of academic theology and the philosophy of religion, began to express their resistance not only to that metaphysical framework, but to all other religious perspectives that proceeded in their analysis from the subjective realm of human experience. Those Protestants joined a growing number of academic philosophers who did not share their theological commitments in declaring their allegiance to a metaphysical realism that held that many processes and entities, including God, exist independently of anyone's consciousness of them. Champions of rigorous scientific methods of analyzing the data of experience, these realists did not insist on interpreting all elements of reality as harmonious components of a single, unitary process or system.

During the period between 1910 and 1945, one theological perspective predicated on metaphysical realism that received a good deal of attention from liberal Protestants was "empirical theology." Proponents of that perspective emphasized the importance of grounding humanity's most fundamental theological claims on scientific methods of empirical investigation. In practice, empirical theologians adopted a rather attenuated conception of their metaphysical task. Although they derived religious significance from the fact that the physical universe ministered to human needs and supported human values, they typically expressed little interest in the cosmic implications of theism. Instead they envisioned religion as the quest for extra-human "reinforcement of our highest ideals by the spiritual contribution from the environing universe." For the empirical theologians, the task of theology consisted of formulating doctrines based on the results of human religious experience rather than speculating more broadly on the relationship between God and the created order. Moreover, notwithstanding the fact that proponents of empirical theology described themselves as Christian theologians, their conviction that the rational and empirical analysis of religious experience constituted the appropriate basis for religious affirmation prompted them to downplay the significance of the Bible as a source of Christian revelation.[12]

The two most well-known exponents of empirical theology were Douglas Clyde Macintosh and Henry Nelson Wieman. Macintosh, who began teaching at Yale Divinity School in 1909, noted in his autobiographical reflections that he had resolved during his youth never to "believe, preach, or teach anything that did not seem thoroughly rational." That resolution

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[12] Gerald Birney Smith, *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology* (New York, 1913), 239–41.

prompted him to embrace absolute idealism prior to settling on empirical theology as the most effective means of explicating and defending his religious beliefs. Macintosh provided the first sustained articulation of his approach to empirical theology in his 1919 book, *Theology as an Empirical Science*. In this work he complained that most philosophers of his day had consigned theology to "a very small corner," and he attributed this situation to the failure of "speculative theology" to establish the "rational certainty" of its claims. Macintosh insisted that the problem was not the result of the association of religious beliefs with metaphysics. Indeed, he asserted, because the theological enterprise was inextricably bound up with claims about the nature of reality, it was imperative that theologians "boldly take up the ontological-metaphysical task." Determined to recover for theology the "scientific status" that it had once enjoyed, Macintosh proposed to abandon dogmatic theology and to substitute for it a set of beliefs based on what could be ascertained through scientific methods of empirical investigation. Toward that end, he proposed to use the "manifold of religious experience" as his primary data for theological inquiry. He acknowledged that this approach would not prove the existence of God, but he did not view this as a significant defect in his approach. Rather, he maintained, just as practitioners of the natural sciences routinely presupposed the existence of the objects that they were investigating, theologians were equally entitled to "posit the existence of God," defined in "preliminary fashion" as "a Power, not identical with our empirical selves, which makes for some dependable result (e.g., righteousness) in and through us, when we relate ourselves to that Power in a certain discoverable way." Macintosh conceded that positing the existence of God might be perceived as "dogmatic," but he insisted that "it is dogmatic only as every empirical science is dogmatic; it is not dogmatic in any unscientific sense." Macintosh also held that just as natural science was grounded on the "principle of the dependableness of nature," the basis of "any empirically scientific theology" was the principle that "God may be depended upon to act consistently, so that man may learn through observation and experiment what God does under different conditions." With these presuppositions in place, Macintosh maintained, an empirical theologian could carefully collect and categorize the data gleaned from religious experience and then formulate appropriate theological generalizations and assertions concerning both the "attributes and relations" that could be ascribed to the "religious Object" and the actions that human beings needed to take in order to bring themselves into "right adjustment" with the divine order.[13]

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[13] Douglas Clyde Macintosh, "Toward a New Untraditional Orthodoxy," in Vergilius Ferm, ed., *Contemporary American Theology* (New York, 1932), I: 293–303; Macintosh,

In the numerous works that Macintosh published during the interwar years he made it clear that he believed that the Deity disclosed through religious experience was a transcendent Creator of the universe,

> a Superhuman Spiritual Being, an essentially personal cosmic Power, an intelligent loving moral mind and Will, great enough in wisdom and power and favorable enough to human well-being to do for man not what man ought to do for himself but what it is infinitely desirable to have done and what man apart from such a God cannot reasonably be expected to accomplish for himself.

He also maintained that it was legitimate to supplement religious truth gleaned from empirical modes of investigation with other beliefs that could be justified on pragmatic grounds. Of particular importance in this regard was Macintosh's discussion of belief in the existence of God. Convinced that the strongest grounds for that belief lay beyond the realm of philosophical argument, in "the experience of religious need and its satisfaction," Macintosh employed a perspective that he associated with the work of William James and described as "representational pragmatism." Macintosh held that if a belief was both reasonable and useful in enabling human beings "to live as we ought," then it was acceptable to regard that belief as true. From this perspective, he called readers' attention to the "moral optimism" of human beings – their confidence that if they did their best, the "Supreme Power" grounding the universe would ensure that their highest values would be conserved and that righteousness would prevail. Macintosh maintained that if that optimism were valid – and he made it clear that he believed that it made sense to believe that it was – then it was reasonable on pragmatic grounds to posit the existence of a God on whom human beings were dependent and on whom human beings could depend.[14]

Not all proponents of empirical theology were prepared to join Macintosh in affirming belief in the existence of a "religious Object" possessing attributes traditionally ascribed to the Christian Deity. The University of Chicago theologian Henry Nelson Wieman, for example, shared Macintosh's commitment to the importance of basing one's religious claims on the kind of observation and critical analysis of "concrete experience" associated with the scientific method. In addition, while

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Theology as an Empirical Science (New York, 1919), 10, 1, 25–6, 29, 90–1, 27, 35, 41–4; Macintosh, *The Reaction Against Metaphysics in Theology* (Chicago, 1911), 85–6.

[14] Douglas Clyde Macintosh in Henry Nelson Wieman, et al., *Is There a God? A Conversation* (Chicago, 1932), 21, 140 (original in italics); Macintosh, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (New York, 1926), 74–6, 145, 45; Macintosh, *The Pilgrimage of Faith in the World of Modern Thought* (Calcutta, 1931), 180–205.

he clearly believed that this method was nicely calculated to minimize unbridled speculation, he joined Macintosh in acknowledging that metaphysics played a central role in the theological enterprise. Wieman even agreed with Macintosh that it was appropriate to describe God as "that Something upon which human life is most dependent for its security, welfare and increasing abundance." Wieman's conception of the nature of that "Something," however, bore little resemblance to that of Macintosh. Whereas Macintosh envisioned God as a personal Creator who was transcendent over and independent of the cosmos as well as immanent within it, Wieman explicitly refused to ascribe personality to God and endorsed a naturalistic version of theism that made the Deity an object of experience that resided within the universe itself. Convinced that it made the most sense to define God as that element of reality that was "supremely worthful for all mankind," Wieman held that God – a "fact like a stone wall or a toothache" – could best be described as a structured process that "sustains, promotes and constitutes supreme value." From that perspective, he reasoned that it was incumbent on human beings who wished to live truly abundant lives and achieve their highest good to accommodate themselves to the value-producing process that was God. Religion itself, he maintained, should be envisioned simply as the attempt on the part of a human being to orient the self toward the highest values. In spite of the fact that Wieman described the position that he was espousing as "theocentric," his view of God as the source of meaning and value and his emphasis on the importance of human welfare inevitably gave his religious philosophy something of an anthropocentric cast.[15]

In contrast to empirical theologians such as Macintosh and Wieman, who emphasized the value of scientific methods of inquiry, a number of other liberal Protestants who endorsed metaphysical realism chose to put forward cosmic theologies that drew on philosophical ideas closely associated with substantive developments in the natural sciences. The most noteworthy of these cosmic theologies were those associated with the work of Alfred North Whitehead. In 1925 Whitehead, an English mathematician and philosopher of science who had immigrated to the United States the previous year to become a professor of philosophy at Harvard, published *Science and the Modern World*. In this popular work

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[15] Henry Nelson Wieman, *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (New York, 1926), 10, 23, 9, 30; Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth* (New York, 1927), 182–3, 2–3; Wieman, "Theocentric Religion," in Ferm, *Contemporary American Theology*, I: 349–51; Wieman in Wieman et al., *Is There a God?* 280; Wieman and Bernard Eugene Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion* (Chicago, 1936), 297; Wieman, "God and Value," in D. C. Macintosh, ed., *Religious Realism*, (New York, 1931), 155; Wieman and Regina Westcott-Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (New York, 1935), 29.

Whitehead only briefly discussed the nature of God as the ground of both rationality and "concrete actuality" within the universe. Four years later he published *Process and Reality*, a much denser, often opaque, work of speculative metaphysics based largely on ideas that he derived from his interpretation of modern physics. Whitehead held that the basic units of reality were transient events – "drops of experience" – and that process, or "becoming," provided a more appropriate framework than did being for discussing the interaction of those events. Whitehead did not envision God as a transcendent Absolute, or even as the Creator of all events, emphasizing instead that God should be viewed as the exemplification of rather than as the exception to the metaphysical principles instantiated in the cosmos. In describing the nature of God's relationship to other actual entities, Whitehead held that the Deity possessed both a "primordial" and a "consequent" nature. In his "primordial" nature God was a nontemporal entity immanently related to all of reality as the "principle of concretion" that, by imposing limitations on the events that can actually emerge, serves as the source of actuality, order, intelligibility, value, and novelty within the cosmos. By contrast, God in his "consequent" nature experiences all events that occur within reality and is thus constantly being altered by those experiences.[16]

Although the heyday of process theology did not occur until the second half of the twentieth century, Whitehead's work attracted the attention of some theologians even prior to 1945. The individual who probably most completely appropriated Whitehead's process theology in the earlier period was Charles Hartshorne, who had studied with Whitehead as a research fellow at Harvard prior to joining the philosophy department at the University of Chicago in 1928. From the outset of his career Hartshorne endorsed Whitehead's view that all of reality, including God, participated in an ongoing process of becoming. During the 1930s he made it clear that he found classical theism's identification of God as a changeless, perfect Absolute to be untenable. Drawing on Whitehead's distinction between the nontemporal, "primordial" nature and the temporal, "consequent" nature of God, Hartshorne maintained that it was necessary to "distinguish the eternal self-identity of God from his successive states in time." Much of Hartshorne's career after 1945 was devoted to the task of elaborating a "dipolar," pantheist vision of theism that acknowledged the existence of constant and necessary elements within God's nature, but coupled that acknowledgment with an emphasis on the idea that the divine nature

[16] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (1925, 1953; repr., New York, 1967), 178; Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (1929; repr., New York, 1960), 27–8, 521, 373–4, 47, 530–2.

also included contingent elements resulting from God's active response to events.[17]

Liberal Protestants who endorsed metaphysical realism in discussing Christian theology characteristically joined idealists in making categories associated with mind central in their discussions of the nature of the Deity. To be sure, not everyone did so. Henry Nelson Wieman, for example, explicitly repudiated the idea that God should be envisioned as a divine mind. Mind also played no significant role in Whitehead's discussion of God, although Hartshorne and some of the other followers of Whitehead's thought made use of personal imagery and categories in their discussions of the divine nature. Most liberal Protestants, however, privileged the concept of "personality" in their descriptions of God and human beings alike, and this prompted them to privilege attributes associated with mind in their discussion of the nature of reality. Eugene W. Lyman, an outspoken proponent of metaphysical realism, thus described God as a "purposive creative Spirit" and reminded his readers that because all things were created and sustained by the "energizing" of God's will, "nothing is *completely* other than the being of God." Similarly, the Yale theologian Robert L. Calhoun, a committed metaphysical realist who acknowledged that no human conception of God was entirely adequate, nevertheless held that most Christian theologians were correct in affirming that "in the active self-manifestation of God, there appears to be evidence of Mind or Spirit at work."[18]

In the period between 1865 and 1945 many liberal Protestant theologians and perhaps even most of the liberal clergy expressed little interest in sustained metaphysical analysis. Although those thinkers found it difficult to dispense altogether with metaphysical thinking, they were uninterested in system building and chose to emphasize experiential rather than propositional knowledge of God. Christianity, liberals commonly maintained, should be envisioned as a life rather than an abstract system of beliefs.

Some liberal Protestants, persuaded that not everyone found "external arguments for the being of God" compelling, opted to look for an "inner manifestation" of God in the realm of feeling. Some religious thinkers, for example, called attention to humanity's feeling of obligation to act morally

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[17] Charles Hartshorne (1934), quoted in William R. Miller, ed., *Contemporary American Protestant Thought: 1900–1970* (Indianapolis, 1973), 319; Gene Reeves and Delwin Brown, "The Development of Process Theology," in Delwin Brown, et al., ed., *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Indianapolis, 1971), 28.

[18] Eugene William Lyman, "Christian Theology and a Spiritualistic Philosophy," in Ferm, *Contemporary American Theology*, II: 127; Eugene William Lyman, *Theology and Human Problems: A Comparative Study of Absolute Idealism and Pragmatism as Interpreters of Religion* (New York, 1910), 146–7; Robert Lowrie Calhoun, "How Shall We Think of God?" *Christendom* 1 (1936): 600.

and argued that this feeling attested to the existence of a righteous Deity to whom human beings were responsible. Even more popular among liberals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was an approach that was closely associated with the thought of the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher. The well-known liberal clergyman Newman Smyth, for example, acknowledged that nature is "wonderfully suggestive of God," but he credited the work of Schleiermacher and his disciples for preserving his faith by showing that humanity's feeling of "absolute dependence" served as the "perennial source of religion, opened afresh in every new-born soul." Convinced that this feeling was no less universal and ineradicable than humanity's sensations of phenomena from the external world, Smyth concluded that it was just as reasonable to ascribe the source of those feelings of dependence to an unconditioned Absolute as to ascribe the source of sensations to the existence of an external world. Another clergyman reasoned that just "as thirst implies the existence of water to quench it, so the sense of dependence and the longing of the soul after God, which are natural to man, imply the existence of their object."[19]

By the beginning of the twentieth century, many liberal Protestants who were inclined to emphasize the experiential rather than speculative dimensions of Christianity had begun to express concern about the highly subjective nature of Schleiermacher's views. Many of those liberals valued the theological perspective of the German theologian Albrecht Ritschl as a more concrete and objective approach to religious experience. Like Schleiermacher, Ritschl refused to interpret religion as primarily a metaphysical or even an intellectual matter. Appalled by the appearance of increasing conflict between science and religion, he insisted that in reality the two enterprises dealt with separate realms of human experience. Whereas the sciences sought to disclose truths about the natural world that drew on factual data and causal reasoning, religion was characterized by an affirmation of the privileged status of personality within the created order and the ability of human beings to achieve independence from and mastery over the natural world through its operation within the realm of what Ritschl called "value-judgments." From this perspective, he rejected natural theology and other attempts to draw theological inferences from humanity's encounter with nature and chose instead to emphasize the distinctive and redemptive elements of Christianity. Ritschl located those elements primarily in the person and teachings of Jesus. Ritschl maintained

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[19] Lewis F. Stearns, "Reconstruction in Theology," *New Englander*, n.s., 5 (1882): 86; Newman Smyth, *The Religious Feeling: A Study for Faith* (New York, 1877), 157–9, 130–2, 138–9, 148, vi, 33–41, 107–8, 128–30; George B. Stevens, "The Authority of Faith," *New Englander*, n.s., 4 (1881): 437.

that Jesus revealed in the excellence of his character the centrality of love and moral righteousness in the nature of God. Just as importantly, in his teachings Jesus affirmed both the freedom and dignity of personality in a cosmos pervaded by natural law and the central importance of serving others in the name of the Kingdom of God. It is through their encounter with Jesus, Ritschl held, that members of the Christian community discover the nature and presence of the divine and experience God's love, mercy, and power to liberate them from sin and suffering.[20]

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Ritschlianism garnered the support of most of the influential exponents of American liberal Protestant thought. To be sure, many of the American Ritschlians did not entirely share Ritschl's dismissive attitude toward metaphysics. Not only did they recognize that concepts such as value and personality were "metaphysically loaded," but many also indicated that they remained sympathetic to the claims of philosophical idealism. Nevertheless, they endorsed Ritschl's Christocentrism and held that it was necessary to reassess all of theology in the light of the revelation of God in the person and proclamations of Jesus. In addition, they joined not only Ritschl but also many pragmatists such as William James in affirming that the appropriate test of the legitimacy of Christian beliefs lay in their ability to convince adherents of the "supreme reality of the spiritual world" by providing them with the opportunity to "experience a power which delivers us from our weakness, our ignorance and our sin, and transfers us into the glorious freedom of the children of God." That power, they held, provided Christians with inner resources that enabled them to overcome temptation and participate in bringing about the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth.[21]

During the early twentieth century some liberal Protestants who viewed religion as a way of life rather than a set of doctrines drew on ideas associated with pragmatism in articulating and defending their values and convictions. Although the roots of pragmatism can be found in the interactions that

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[20] Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (1888; repr., New York, 1900), III: 218–9, 211, 13; E. Albert Cook, "Ritschl's Use of Value-Judgments," *American Journal of Theology* 21 (1917): 545, 548; William Adams Brown, *The Essence of Christianity. A Study in the History of Definition* (New York, 1902), 247–8; Eugene W. Lyman, "Must Dogmatics Forego Ontology?" *American Journal of Theology* 18 (1914): 358, 362–3.

[21] Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805–1900* (Louisville, 2001), 336; Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity, 1900–1950* (Louisville, 2003), 262, 29–30, 45; Wieman and Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion*, 150, 43; Lyman, "Must Dogmatics," 362; Brown, *Essence of Christianity*, 256–7.

took place among Charles Peirce, William James, Chauncey Wright, and a number of other gifted intellectuals during the early 1870s, it was not until 1898 that James described pragmatism as a distinctive philosophical position. Drawing on Peirce's contention that the goal of thought was the fixation of belief and the establishment of habits of thinking that produced action, James maintained that beliefs should be regarded as instruments that served in guiding conduct. In a very real sense, then, pragmatism as James interpreted it gave mind only a slightly less important role than did philosophical idealism in determining the nature of the overall scheme of things. James also held that especially in cases where a belief was incapable of being either decisively established or refuted by reason or experience, it was appropriate to evaluate the "effective meaning" of that belief by examining its consequences. In 1907, he employed pragmatism in an even "wider sense," claiming that the validity – the "truth" – of a proposition should be determined by assessing both its coherence with other truths and the difference that it would make in shaping people's lives. Using that claim as a springboard, James concluded that it was not inappropriate to regard truth as something that "*happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events."[22]

James insisted that the pragmatic test that he was espousing could be used to evaluate the legitimacy of theism. The truth of the proposition "God exists," he argued, could best be tested not by examining the logic underlying religious doctrines, but rather by determining whether religion actually enabled people to lead more abundant and productive lives. "The gods we stand by," James averred, "are the gods we need and can use, the gods whose demands on us are reinforcements of our demands on ourselves and on one another."[23]

The work of not only James but also Douglas Clyde Macintosh and a number of other philosophers of religion and theologians indicated that pragmatic modes of analysis could be used to test the legitimacy of metaphysical claims associated with theology. But in emphasizing the superiority of actual human experience to the barren abstractions associated with philosophical propositions that lacked concrete consequences and in claiming that experience could serve not only as the source of religious beliefs but also as a test of their validity, proponents of pragmatism offered an approach to the theological enterprise that appealed to many liberal Protestants who were indifferent to speculative metaphysics and wanted

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[22] William James, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" [1898], in William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907; repr., Cambridge, MA, 1975), 257–70; William James, *Pragmatism*, in *ibid.*, 32–4, 40–1, 97.

[23] *Ibid.*, 40–2; William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902; repr., New York, 1914), 331.

to employ not only the intellect but also the heart and the instincts as sources of religious truth and knowledge. Those Protestants employed ideas associated with pragmatism in a variety of different ways. Some used James' notion that ideas were "rules for action" as a springboard for committing themselves to some version of Christian social action. The prominent Social Gospel advocate Walter Rauschenbusch, who believed that the very core of Christianity consisted of efforts to transform the social order into the Kingdom of God through the reconstitution of human relationships, emphasized the value of religion as "a tremendous generator of self-sacrificing action." Others, such as Shailer Mathews, a well-known liberal theologian who became Dean at the University of Chicago Divinity School, envisioned religion as a means by which individuals sought to adjust to their environment. Theology, Mathews maintained, was a "primarily practical" activity, and its legitimacy should be evaluated in accordance with the success it achieved in providing "motive and direction for the life of the spirit." Mathews was not in principle opposed to the idea that metaphysics had a legitimate role to play within theology, and during the latter stages of his career he even devoted considerable attention to a defense of the idea that God could most accurately be described as a cover term for the "personality-evolving activities" within the universe. He insisted, however, that the most urgent task facing proponents of "theological reconstruction" was not a revision of metaphysics; it was instead the "empirical and pragmatic" task of using the central "presuppositions conditioning all social activity" to enrich the quality of human experience and thereby enhance the quality of people's lives. There were also doubtless many believers with no acquaintance at all with the formal thought of pragmatists who joined Harry Emerson Fosdick, the most popular liberal Protestant clergyman of his day, in maintaining that Christianity should be embraced because it provided human beings with "a resource of inward power, overcoming fear, reinforcing courage, making one an adequate personality equipped for life, able to do what one ought to do and to endure what one must stand."[24]

Some thinkers who placed themselves on the liberal end of the religious spectrum shared Fosdick's view that religion provided individuals with resources that were useful in grappling with many of the most important questions of human existence, but held that advances in scientific

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[24] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York, 1907), xxiii, 7; Shailer Mathews, *The Growth of the Idea of God* (New York, 1931), 207, 224, 229–30; Mathews, "A Positive Method for an Evangelical Theology," *American Journal of Theology* 12 (1908): 22; Mathews, "The Historical Study of Religion," in Gerald Birney Smith, ed., *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* (Chicago, 1916), 75–7; Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Great Time to Be Alive: Sermons on Christianity in Wartime* (New York, 1944), 93.

understanding had undermined the credibility of theism. Those think-
ers commonly chose to embrace religious humanism. Expressions of that
position can be found during the late nineteenth and early twentieth
centuries in the views of members of such groups as the Free Religious
Association and the Society for Ethical Culture. In the twenties and
thirties, thanks to the determined efforts of a small but intellectually
prominent group of philosophers and mostly Unitarian clergy, religious
humanism attained greater visibility within American society. Although
those thinkers found common ground in their rejection of supernatural-
ism, their esteem for the scientific method of obtaining knowledge, and
their conviction that the construction of meaning and value was a human
enterprise, they divided over the usefulness of God talk. Some religious
humanists rejected the notion that God was an actual object of experience
but continued to employ the term "God" as a symbol for humanity's high-
est ideals. Edward Scribner Ames, a clergyman who played a prominent
role in the department of philosophy at the University of Chicago, thus
used God as a "concrete universal" that encompassed within its purview
"order and purpose and moral values in the great Reality which we call Life
or the World." More succinctly, in his work on *Humanism* (1931), Ames
described God as "reality generalized, idealized, and personified." In his
widely reviewed book *A Common Faith* (1934), the philosopher John Dewey
described God somewhat more narrowly as "the unity of all ideal ends
arousing us to desire and actions." Other religious humanists, although
typically not militant in their rejection of theism, dispensed altogether
with the term "God" and sought to turn humanity's quest for "virtues and
values" lying at the very heart of the religious impulse, properly conceived,
in a more anthropocentric direction.[25]

In 1933 the efforts of religious humanists to imbue the practice of vir-
tue and the pursuit of values with spiritual significance culminated in
the publication of the "Humanist Manifesto," a document drafted by the
University of Michigan philosopher Roy Wood Sellars, then edited by a
committee made up of prominent leaders in the movement, and signed by
thirty-four prominent clergy, scholars, and writers. Noting that advances
in human understanding demanded "a new statement of the means and
purposes of religion," the authors of the manifesto affirmed that although
science had revealed that the human species was part of nature and that it

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[25] Lawrence W. Snyder Jr., "The Religion of Humanity in Victorian America," in Peter
W. Williams, ed., *Perspectives on American Religion and Culture* (Malden, 1999), 378–89;
Edward Scribner Ames, *Religion* (New York, 1929), 178; Edward Scribner Ames,
Humanism (Chicago, 1931), 30; John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven, 1934), 42;
Roy Wood Sellars, *The Next Step in Religion: An Essay toward the Coming Renaissance* (New
York, 1918), 135.

was unacceptable to look to the supernatural for support of human values, it was nevertheless appropriate to embrace a religion dedicated to the achievement of "the complete realization of human personality." Such a religion, they asserted, represented the ongoing "quest for the good life" that still constituted "the central task for mankind."[26]

During the late 1920s, at just about the same time that proponents of religious humanism were becoming quite vocal in criticizing proponents of liberal Protestantism for refusing to go far enough in appropriating the insights of science and philosophy, a number of liberal Protestants themselves began to engage in a serious critique of their own tradition that proceeded from the sense that they had given altogether too much attention to those sources of human understanding while giving insufficient attention to the lessons to be derived from God's word. That critique culminated in the emergence during the 1930s of an American version of "crisis theology" often described as "Neo-Orthodoxy." Edwin Lewis, a Methodist theologian at Drew Theological Seminary who had been an ardent supporter of liberal Protestantism before becoming convinced during the late twenties that it gave insufficient attention to biblical doctrines, gave voice to a common view among Neo-Orthodox thinkers when he complained that liberalism was characterized by efforts to establish "an alliance between a philosophical naturalism and Christianity" that had the effect of undermining the very foundations of the Christian worldview. Like many conservative Protestants, Lewis insisted that "Christianity is the religion of the supernatural." Reinhold Niebuhr indicted liberal apologists seeking to reconcile Christianity with the claims of modern science for sinking into a "morass of pantheistic and monistic philosophy" that led to an "overemphasis on divine immanence." Although Niebuhr paid lip service to religion's need to arrive at "some metaphysical basis for its personalization of the universe," he emphasized that religious truths were best expressed in mythical language that captured the paradoxes of reality more effectively than did philosophy. Those paradoxes, he asserted, could not be "completely rationalized without destroying the genius of true religion." George W. Richards, a church historian who had served as president of the American Theological Society, emphasized in his *Beyond Fundamentalism and Modernism: The Gospel of God* (1934) that the God of the philosophers was not the God of redemption celebrated by Christianity.[27]

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[26] "Humanist Manifesto I, 1933," reprinted in Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 6th ed. (New York, 1982), 286–8.

[27] Edwin Lewis, "From Philosophy to Revelation," *Christian Century* 56 (14 June 1939): 762; Lewis, *A Christian Manifesto* (New York, 1934), 104, 98; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion? A Study in the Social Resources and Limitations of Religion in Modern Life* (New York, 1927), 204–5, 220; Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era*

Proponents of Neo-Orthodoxy also maintained that the very effort by liberal Protestantism to establish the Christian worldview on rational, philosophical grounds represented a dangerous misunderstanding of the basis of Christian truth and knowledge. Convinced that "a god whom men can discover is not great enough for man to worship," Richards held that the key to finding God lay not in philosophical understanding but in acceptance of "God's revelation of Himself in His word." Similarly, the Presbyterian E. G. Homrighausen denied that Christianity could be construed as "a system of technical metaphysics," and he insisted that the redemptive elements of Christian life and thought could not be disclosed through a system of "rationalistic intellectualism." In order for human beings to apprehend the paradoxes and mystery associated with Christianity, he asserted, "*God* must speak to us; *He must reveal Himself.*" Similarly, Lewis' sustained study of the Bible convinced him that "speculative philosophy" was incapable of disclosing the central truths of Christian theology. The good news of salvation, he declared, could be conveyed to humanity only through the revelation of God contained in the scriptures.[28]

In discussing the responses of Roman Catholics to philosophy, we find ourselves in altogether different intellectual territory. For much of the period between 1865 and 1945, Neo-Scholasticism dominated Catholic thought in the United States and Europe alike. The impetus for this distinctly Catholic approach to philosophical issues began in the middle of the nineteenth century. By that time many Catholics had become quite dissatisfied with the intellectual tenor of modern life. In 1864 Pope Pius IX gave voice to that dissatisfaction by issuing a "Syllabus" denouncing some eighty positions that he regarded as "the principle errors of our time" and repudiating the idea that "the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization." At roughly the same time, even as Scholasticism began to attract a growing following among European Catholic intellectuals, Rome condemned a number of alternative positions that had received support from Catholic theologians. As a result, by the 1870s, as one historian has noted, "almost every force in Catholic theology had been condemned except scholasticism." Then in 1879, Pope Leo XIII, who had ascended the papal throne the previous year, issued *Aeterni Patris*, an encyclical that blamed the plethora of perverse philosophical systems that had "multiplied beyond measure" since the Reformation for the "false conclusions concerning

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(New York, 1934), 196–8; Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York, 1935), 11–14; George W. Richards, *Beyond Fundamentalism and Modernism: The Gospel of God* (New York, 1934), 118–19.

[28] *Ibid.*, 150, 24, 263; E. G. Homrighausen, *Christianity in America: A Crisis* (New York, 1936), 47–8, 58; Lewis, "From Philosophy," 762–3.

divine and human things" that afflicted modern thought and culture. Leo, an intellectual who had long been convinced of the virtues of Scholasticism in defending and promoting Catholicism, called for a "restoration" of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. While he emphasized that he did not expect Catholic philosophers to embrace thirteenth-century positions that had been disproved by advances in knowledge and understanding, he expressed confidence that Thomism would provide an ideal framework for understanding all human knowledge. In subsequent years, Leo and his successors continued their attack on what they regarded as false systems of philosophical thought and continued to confer upon Thomism an exalted philosophical status.[29]

Notwithstanding Rome's endorsement of Scholasticism, Thomist philosophy did not immediately achieve total hegemony within the American Catholic intellectual community. Although some Jesuits expressed enthusiasm for Scholasticism even prior to the appearance of *Aeterni Patris*, most Catholic thinkers in the United States had approached philosophy eclectically throughout the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, and they did not abandon that eclecticism overnight. In addition, in the late nineteenth century some American Catholics who were sensitive to the impact of historical change on ideas and somewhat more favorably disposed to modernity expressed concern that a philosophical system developed in thirteenth-century Europe was ill-equipped to grapple effectively with the philosophical issues associated with modern life and thought. Most of those skeptics, however, were more interested in accommodating the Catholic Church to the American cultural environment than in discussing detailed issues of religious philosophy. Moreover, even though proponents of Scholasticism characteristically confronted modern culture in a spirit of combativeness, many made it clear that they shared the conviction of Leo XIII that it was possible to embrace Thomism even while welcoming insights drawn from modern methods of investigation.[30]

During the early twentieth century, in the wake of the furor over Modernism within European Catholic circles, increasing pressure came

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[29] [Pope Pius IX], "The Syllabus of Pius IX" [1864], in *The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context*, ed. Anne Fremantle (New York, 1956), 143, 152; Gerald A. McCool, *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism: The Search for a Unitary Method* (1977; repr., New York, 1989), 132; [Pope Leo XIII], "Aeterni Patris [1879]," in *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878–1903*, ed. Claudia Carlen (Raleigh, 1990), 17–27.

[30] Charles A. Hart, "Neo-Scholastic Philosophy in American Catholic Culture," in Charles A. Hart, ed., *Aspects of the New Scholastic Philosophy* (New York, 1932), 17; Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1995), 110–12; William M. Halsey, *The Survival of American Innocence: Catholicism in an Era of Disillusionment, 1920–1940* (Notre Dame, 1980), 16.

from Rome to exclude alternatives to Thomism. In 1907, for example, Pope Pius X issued an encyclical that ascribed the "synthesis of all heresies" that was Modernism to the "alliance between faith and false philosophy" and demanded that "scholastic philosophy be made the basis of the sacred sciences." In 1914 Pius warned teachers of philosophy and theology alike not to deviate "so much as a step, in metaphysics especially, from Aquinas." By that time few American Catholic thinkers were inclined to express dissent from what came to be known as Neo-Scholasticism. And during the period between the wars, Neo-Scholasticism received the enthusiastic endorsement of virtually all Catholic philosophers.[31]

Those philosophers were expressing enthusiasm for a system of thought that displayed distinctive methods, vocabulary, and doctrines devoted to the development and articulation of an avowedly Christian approach to knowledge and reality. Proponents of Neo-Scholasticism emphasized that the Christian philosophy they were espousing was decidedly a philosophy, for its conclusions were arrived at though the process of discursive reason and were therefore distinct from Christian theology, which applied Thomistic principles to the divine revelation contained in the scriptures. Neo-Scholastics did not deny that a good deal of progress had been made since the thirteenth century in acquiring knowledge, but they exalted philosophy as the "unifying science" and insisted that it was necessary to employ the principles of Thomism to disclose the true meaning and significance of that knowledge. Fulton Sheen, whose *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy* (1925) has been called "the first significant contribution by an American to the Catholic intellectual revival of the interwar era," expressed a view common among Neo-Scholastic philosophers when he declared that "it is only accidentally that St. Thomas belongs to the thirteenth century. His thought is no more confined to that period of human history than is the multiplication table." It was the aspiration of Neo-Scholastics to integrate philosophy with theology and knowledge of the modern world with the philosophical insights provided by Thomism within the larger canopy of Christian wisdom.[32]

In contrast to most philosophers of their day, the Neo-Scholastics who dominated American Catholic thought in the period prior to 1945 did not place epistemology at the heart of their enterprise. Endorsing an

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[31] [Pope Pius X], "Pascendi Dominic Gregis [1907]," in *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903–1939*, ed. Claudia Carlen (Raleigh, 1990), 89–92; Pius X, quoted in Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 112–13; Halsey, *Survival of American Innocence*, 15.

[32] W. F. Cunningham, "The American College and Catholic Education," *Thought* 1 (1926): 273; Fulton J. Sheen, *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy: A Critical Study in the Light of the Philosophy of Saint Thomas* (London, 1925), xii; Gerald A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York, 1989), 31.

epistemological realism, they held that in a mind that functioned as God had intended, knowledge obtained through the senses and then processed through reason actually provided an unproblematic, accurate representation of reality. It was actually metaphysics that lay at the heart of the Neo-Scholastic project. Because proponents of that project embraced the Thomist view that God could most appropriately be described as Being Itself (*esse ipsum*) and had communicated being to every entity within the created order, they made the discussion of being their central preoccupation. The Aristotelian categories that they used in discussing being – essence and existence, potency and act, substance and accident, form and matter – had been abandoned by modern philosophers, but could be defended as intelligible, even commonsensical, when their meaning was understood.

As Christian philosophers, the Neo-Scholastics devoted a good deal of attention to the existence and nature of God. They described God as a self-existent Creator to whom such attributes of personality as knowledge, will, and benevolence could be ascribed. Conscious that they were living in an age in which unbelief was not uncommon, they emphasized the value of a natural theology that centered on the five proofs that St. Thomas had employed in demonstrating God's existence.

Armed with the principles of Aristotelian thought as Christianized by Thomas Aquinas and articulating those principles in journals such as *The Modern Schoolman* and institutions such as the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Catholic thinkers in the United States affirmed that they were uniquely capable of providing a rational justification for religious beliefs in a world dominated by relativism, subjectivism, and unbelief. During the interwar years, a period when many thinkers in the secular world were expressing doubts about the ability of human beings to comprehend the lineaments of reality, proponents of Neo-Scholasticism expressed confidence that through the use of intelligence, human beings were capable of apprehending God and grasping the intelligibility and the unity of the divine plan underlying the created order.[33]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some Jewish thinkers also found themselves grappling with the philosophical implications of modern thought. Members of the Reform tradition were especially notable in that regard. Isaac Mayer Wise, for example, held that it was important to subject religious claims to philosophical scrutiny in order to arrive at valid beliefs. In his *The Cosmic God* (1876), Wise provided what he hoped would be viewed "as a genuinely American production of the philosophizing mind." Wise, who maintained that philosophy drew on all of

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[33] My discussion of the tenets of Neo-Scholastic theology in the preceding four paragraphs draws heavily on the discussion in Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 116–22.

the sciences but went beyond them in its comprehensive perspective, held that by "adhering strictly to the law of causality and the method of induction," it was possible to demonstrate the existence of the "Cosmic God," whom Wise identified as "the cause of all causes, the first principle of all things." Kaufmann Kohler, the president of Hebrew Union College, also valued the contribution that philosophy could make in shaping Jewish thought. He emphasized that in itself, philosophical thought could only demonstrate the existence of an intelligent, purposeful Cause of phenomena and a moral order in the world; the resources of divine revelation were needed to disclose a personal Deity to whom human beings could appeal in times of trouble. Nevertheless, he averred, since Judaism underwent evolutionary development and did not claim to possess the "final truth," it was incumbent on Jewish thinkers to bring the resources of philosophy to bear in "scrutinizing and purifying, deepening and spiritualizing" the content of God's revelation to humanity.[34]

If, however, some Jewish thinkers devoted a great deal of attention to problems associated with the philosophy of religion, most did not. Some, who joined Solomon Schechter, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a pivotal figure in the development of Conservative Judaism, in affirming that "Judaism is a revealed religion," believed that it was unnecessary to bring the insights of philosophy to bear in discussions of revealed truth. Many others regarded their tradition less as a set of doctrinal principles to be defended than as a way of life based on a body of assumptions and behavioral practices. There were, to be sure, a number of Jews who were interested in philosophical questions, but even the few Jewish philosophers whom departments of philosophy in American colleges and universities in the period prior to 1945 were willing to include within their ranks did not view themselves as proponents of "Jewish philosophy" and typically focused on issues other than religion.[35]

The Jewish thinkers who chose to eschew the use of philosophical ideas in articulating and defending their tradition were taking a position that was

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[34] Isaac M. Wise, *The Cosmic God: A Fundamental Philosophy in Popular Lectures* (1876; repr., Hicksville, 1975), 5–6, 163; K. Kohler, *Jewish Theology Systematically and Historically Considered* (1918; repr., New York, 1928), 70, 4.

[35] S. Schechter, "The Emancipation of Jewish Science" [1902], in *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (1915; repr., New York, 1969), 3; Oscar Handlin, "Judaism in the United States," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds., *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton, 1961), 122; David A. Hollinger, "Jewish Intellectuals and the De-Christianization of American Public Culture in the Twentieth Century," in *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton, 1996), 25; Hollinger, *Morris R. Cohen and the Scientific Ideal* (Cambridge, MA, 1975), 18–19.

quite unusual among religious thinkers in the United States in the period from 1865 to 1945. Most of those thinkers assumed that beliefs should be accorded a central place within religious life, and few were inclined to embrace fideism in justifying those beliefs. Whether they called attention to the cosmic dimensions of religion or whether they focused more narrowly on insights derived from religious experience, religious thinkers in America characteristically found themselves employing philosophical argumentation in attempting to vindicate their claims.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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FUNDAMENTALISM

MARGARET BENDROTH

The rise of Protestant Fundamentalism, a movement that began in the post–Civil War decades and reached the peak of its influence in the mid-twentieth century, is a frequently misunderstood but important episode in American religious history. At first glance, Fundamentalism's combative and angular style – it has often been defined as "militant antimodernism" – seems out of place within the general narrative of American Protestantism that has emphasized the spread of pluralism and tolerance. Not surprisingly, the historians and social theorists who began to write about Fundamentalism in the 1930s and 1940s interpreted it as a temporary aberration, at best a curious cultural cul-de-sac proving the general rule of declining religious polarization in the face of rising secularism.

Events of the late twentieth century forever changed that perception. The growing political power of the religious Right in the United States, the rise of militant Islam, and the explosion of Pentecostal sects around the world forced scholars to abandon the very notion of religious decline and, to a degree, the narrative of tolerance. After the 1980s, the new agenda was to explain the durability of traditional religion in the modern world and to explain the success of antimodern faith in a presumably secular age. Many observers began to include American Protestant Fundamentalism within this larger social reality, as one of many reactionary religious movements standing in opposition to the social and political encroachments of modernity.

Despite the explanatory power of this approach, most religious historians have resisted broad comparisons between American Fundamentalism and militant movements elsewhere. They have interpreted Fundamentalism as a particular type of American Evangelicalism, the name given to the broad theological consensus that defined American religiosity from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century. Evangelicalism was for the most part theologically optimistic and socially engaged, committed to the authority of the Bible and the necessity of salvation through Christ alone.

It was tolerant of all of the many denominational eccentricities that found a home in the rich spiritual soil of the United States, though unilaterally opposed to Roman Catholicism and distrustful of liberal groups like the Unitarians.[1]

Most historians view Fundamentalism as a natural product of late-nineteenth-century religious culture – not so much an aberration as it was an intensification of northern white Evangelicalism during a time of unusual social strain. Until fairly recently, the movement was far more focused on spiritual goals than secular ones; its animating core was theological, not political. American Fundamentalism took root within a network of Bible conferences and training institutes, independent churches and missionary boards. There the common thread was premillennialism, an urgent reading of biblical prophecy that directly contradicted the dominant postmillennial faith in human progress shared by the majority of American Protestants. Alarmed at what they perceived as theological drift in the established churches, Fundamentalists also insisted on the absolute inerrancy of the scriptures. In other words, they held up a far more rigorous standard of truth than earlier generations had felt was even necessary: no longer simply infallible in all that it taught, the Bible of the inerrantists was without any error of fact, every word directly inspired by God. New forms of piety influenced by the British Keswick movement, and a new wave of revivalism led by evangelist Dwight L. Moody also narrowed the traditional evangelical social ethic, creating a divide between those who emphasized personal faith and those who sought to reform society along traditionally Christian lines.

Most historians also resist using the word "fundamentalist" to describe any contemporary religious movements. Certainly Fundamentalism was an important part of twentieth-century popular religiosity, and it played an important role in the resurgence of conservative religion in the 1940s and 1950s. But the postwar evangelical revival, which would go on to transform American religion and politics in the late twentieth century, was far broader and more complex than just a recrudescence of an old-style Fundamentalism. Modern-day evangelicals are Pentecostals (both white and African American), Southern Baptists, and members of nondenominational and immigrant congregations. Fundamentalism is one part of this spiritual mix, but in no way does it even begin to define its complexity.

The most basic question about American Protestant Fundamentalism, whether it is viewed in a broadly comparative light or under a narrower historical lens, is its relative significance. One might argue, for example,

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[1] Mark Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK, 2002), 29–43.

that the movement's relatively peaceful role in the United States, especially alongside militant antimodern religion in other parts of the world, suggests that it is a minor addendum to the larger narrative of American exceptionalism and religious tolerance. But in other important ways, Fundamentalism in the United States has charted a path defiantly at odds with modern-day rationality and progressive social ideals. The resistance is especially evident in its encounter with modern science and with twentieth-century gender roles, where Fundamentalists clearly diverged even from the dominant evangelical consensus. The persistence of these views suggests that the movement was something more than just an intensification of existing evangelical beliefs: Fundamentalism also articulated anxieties and resentments that other forms of religion were unable or unwilling to address.

The best explanations of Fundamentalism, therefore, do not overestimate its role in shaping contemporary religiosity, and they do not minimize its importance. Certainly the term conjures up negative images of religious bigotry, and in its general usage it is often too pejorative to be analytically useful. Still, most scholars would agree that Fundamentalism is simply too important to ignore: It tells volumes about the strengths and weaknesses of nineteenth-century American religious culture, and it provides important clues about the nature of modern-day religion in the United States.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE SCHOLARLY NARRATIVE

The wide range of scholarly discussion on Fundamentalism demonstrates some of the difficulties in placing it within the larger narrative of American religious history. The first assessments of the movement were essentially postmortems, appearing even before the public controversies of the 1920s had died down. The primary goal of these studies was to explain what appeared to be a widening crevasse in American religious and cultural life between those who embraced modernity and those who emphatically rejected it. To this first generation of scholars, the latter also served as a powerful negative example of religion gone awry, reaffirming the positive role that "mainstream" Protestantism might play in the development of American democracy. Serious reassessments did not appear until the 1970s when a new generation of scholars, many of them reared in conservative religious schools and churches, sought to integrate what was often dismissed as an obscurantist rural movement into the main flow of American Protestant theology and culture. But these more sympathetic observers of Fundamentalism also had to deal with the social reality they were attempting to analyze. The rise of the religious Right in the 1980s, a movement

that deeply polarized American society, meant that scholarly consensus
would be difficult to achieve.

Many of the earliest treatments of Fundamentalism were therefore
attempts to define a movement that was still in the midst of forming.
During the 1920s even the term "fundamentalist" was barely in use;
whatever their theological point of view, the vast majority of Protestants
still defined themselves by their denominational label. At the same time,
alarmed liberals attempted to combat what they saw as an alien and reac-
tionary force within modern Protestantism. The first scholarly treatment
of Fundamentalism, by University of Chicago theologian Shailer Mathews,
described the battles then taking place in denomination assembly halls as a
clash between "two types of mind, two attitudes toward culture," and "two
types of Christians." While liberals emphasized the ethical and practical
dimensions of religious faith, Mathews asserted, Fundamentalists stressed
the need for authoritative dogma. He believed that within the historical
long view, both types of Christianity were necessary, each serving a differ-
ent impulse within the larger faith; but in the heightened atmosphere of
the 1920s, such nuance rarely found its way into the public discourse.[2]

The publication of H. Richard Niebuhr's *Social Sources of Denomi-
nationalism* in 1929 added another important layer of interpretation to
contemporary understandings of the Fundamentalist controversy. Drawing
on theoretical models from Max Weber, Niebuhr explained the religious
conflict in terms of social strains, as a clash between a modernizing urban
bourgeoisie and rural communities organized around traditional agrar-
ian values. With the famous Scopes trial just off the headlines, Niebuhr's
analysis made sense: The dramatic showdown between scientists and anti-
evolutionists in a Tennessee courtroom certainly did not look like a gentle-
men's debate between two types of Christians – it was nothing less than an
epic clash between two ways of life. By the time Niebuhr completed his
entry on "fundamentalism" in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* in the
early 1930s, this social interpretation had become widely accepted among
scholars as well as the general public.[3] Even today the popular picture of
Fundamentalism is of a movement that is predominantly rural and south-
ern, uneducated – and ultimately futile.

The first full-length scholarly treatment of Fundamentalism, Stewart
Cole's *History of Fundamentalism*, appeared just a few years after the public
controversies had begun to die down. Cole used the categories of clin-
ical psychology to interpret vast amounts of new historical data, and his

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[2] Shailer Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism* (New York, 1924), 17–19.
[3] H. Richard Niebuhr, "Fundamentalism," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York,
1937), VI: 526–7; Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland, 1929).

analysis of Fundamentalism's interior mechanisms would become broadly influential for many years to come. Echoing and enlarging on Mathews and Niebuhr, Cole viewed Fundamentalism as a cultural "maladjustment" to the modern world, the reactionary faith of conservative people who simply lagged behind the changing times.[4]

Not surprisingly then, during the midcentury decades Fundamentalists played a fairly negative role in analyses of American religion and culture. Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* depicted them as people in "revolt against modernity" and "terrified of their own sexuality."[5] Popular treatments, including the Broadway play and film *Inherit the Wind* (1955, 1960) and the film *Elmer Gantry* (1970), dramatized Fundamentalism as a metaphor for all other forms of social intolerance, the last gasp of a dying way of life.

During the 1970s, however, renewed interest in American social history spurred new inquiries into marginal forms of religion, including Fundamentalism. The result was a thorough reevaluation of the movement's origins and significance with Ernest Sandeen's *Roots of Fundamentalism* marking the major turning point.[6] Unsatisfied with the views of Cole, Niebuhr, and Hofstadter, Sandeen focused on the intricate theological content of Fundamentalist belief which he argued was far from reactionary or conservative. Indeed, in Sandeen's view, theologically speaking the movement was genuinely innovative. He defined Fundamentalism in terms of two key doctrines, premillennialism and biblical inerrancy, demonstrating their origins in British millenarianism and among the Old School Presbyterians at Princeton Seminary. Sandeen also introduced a new cast of characters into the narrative of Fundamentalism. No longer simply rural and southern, his premillennialists and inerrantists were educated, urbanized men, engaged in a highly technical, transatlantic discussion about the fine points of eschatology and biblical hermeneutics.

The Roots of Fundamentalism ignited a wave of serious scholarly interest, led by the publication of George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* in 1980.[7] Marsden defined Fundamentalism as "militant antimodernism," emphasizing its conflicted role within the larger culture, the faith of Protestant "insiders" who suddenly found themselves looking in from society's outer margins. He also established the intellectual content of Fundamentalist belief, accepting and enlarging Sandeen's emphasis on

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[4] Stewart Cole, *History of Fundamentalism* (Hamden, CT, 1931).

[5] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1962), 119.

[6] Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago, 1970).

[7] George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York, 1980).

premillennialism and inerrancy. Marsden found the movement's origins deep within the institutional culture of nineteenth-century evangelical Protestantism, especially in the rising popularity of urban revivals and the self-abnegating piety of the British Keswick movement. Marsden also emphasized the role of Baconian "common sense" philosophy as the basis of Fundamentalist reasoning about the inerrancy of scripture, a tradition that dominated Protestant intellectual life for most of the nineteenth century. Though casting a wider analytical net than Sandeen, Marsden's Fundamentalists filled a similar social niche: they were mostly white, northern, educated men with transatlantic ties.

The next line of inquiry about Fundamentalism raised questions about the movement's rank and file. In an afterword to his study of nineteenth-century grassroots Protestantism, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, Nathan Hatch urged historians to recognize Fundamentalism's enormous grassroots appeal, its ability to capture the cares and concerns of everyday people.[8] Joel Carpenter's *Revive Us Again: The Rebirth of American Fundamentalism* took up this challenge, carrying Marsden's narrative through the 1930s into the present and demonstrating the appeal of Fundamentalist piety across a broad swath of middle America.[9] In Carpenter's view, the movement's central focus was not so much correct doctrine as it was an undying zeal for religious revival; its leaders were not theologians and scholars but passionate entrepreneurs, eagerly deploying any new means of outreach that would bring a larger harvest of souls.

Despite its rising sophistication, this reinterpretation of Fundamentalism still left ample room for argument. Marsden's primary focus on Protestants from the Reformed tradition, mainly Presbyterians and Baptists, led to criticisms that he had overemphasized the role of Calvinists and minimized the far broader influence of Methodists, especially those from the Holiness tradition. Throughout the 1980s, Wesleyan historian Donald Dayton carried on a lengthy debate with Marsden, insisting on the primacy of Holiness theology and practice in the larger narrative of American religion.[10]

Other scholars broadened the comparisons even more. Religion scholar Bruce Lawrence published his major work, *The Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*, just a few years after Marsden in 1989. Lawrence made use of modernization theory and comparative religion to explain the rising popularity of militant traditionalism in the

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[8] Nathan Hatch, "Epilogue: The Recurring Popular Impulse in American Christianity," in *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989), 210–19.

[9] Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York, 1997).

[10] The best summary is Donald Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL, 1991).

modern world. The multivolume Fundamentalism Project, spearheaded by historians Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, expanded and elaborated on Lawrence's approach. The diverse collection of scholars working with Marty and Appleby viewed Fundamentalism comparatively, arguing that militant movements – whether in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or Hinduism – represented a common response to a common problem. Fundamentalism was possible only in a technological rationalized society, they argued; its absolutist mind-set was only as authoritarian and totalizing as the modern world that traditional believers were forced to inhabit. Identifying various "family resemblances" across theological and sectarian lines, these scholars defined Fundamentalism as a potent combination of cultural alienation and authoritarian thinking, an aggressive but selective opposition to modernity. Though, for example, Fundamentalists condemned popular entertainment media, they readily made use of the modern world's technical tools where they furthered traditionalist purposes.[11]

Although the historical and comparative approaches to Fundamentalism are different in scope and tenor of argument, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Certainly both are useful tools for understanding a movement that has proven itself far too complex for just one mode of analysis. One major difficulty is semantic, whether a somewhat loaded term like "fundamentalism" is adequate to describe the broad and diverse religious response described by the Marty and Appleby project. The other problem, as the following historical narrative demonstrates, is the complicated – and seemingly idiosyncratic – role of American Protestant Fundamentalism in the unique religious culture of the United States.

THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF FUNDAMENTALISM

The current historical narrative of Fundamentalism emphasizes its paradoxes and inconsistencies, especially as the popular movement grew in the early twentieth century. It was in many ways the faith of mid-twentieth-century grassroots America, a warm personal piety built on firm biblical certainties. But it was more than just a recrudescence of "old-time religion," or a longing for older, simpler times. Fundamentalism could also be a vehicle of dissent, a way for ordinary people to denounce the dominant culture. This complex interplay between the movement's mainstream appeal and

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[11] Bruce Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age* (San Francisco, 1989). The Fundamentalism Project series includes *Fundamentalism Observed* (Chicago, 1991); *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago, 1993); *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economics and Militance* (Chicago, 1993); and *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago, 1994).

its oppositional cultural agenda is, in fact, what makes Fundamentalism such an intriguing and important subject for study.

Most historical accounts of American Fundamentalism begin in the 1870s, a time of rising conflict within Protestant circles about the perceived secular drift of American society. For many the presenting issue was new scholarship on the Bible, the so-called higher criticism. This methodology originated in German universities in the early nineteenth century among scholars who viewed the Bible as the work of human writers answering to human concerns. Under this new scrutiny, old certainties about the authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) or the history of the Israelites as God's uniquely chosen people began to crumble. Many Protestants began to fear that this new historicized Bible could no longer be a trustworthy guide to faith and practice.

Higher criticism was only one part of a general shift in Protestant thinking. By the late nineteenth century, a nexus of new ideas often called simply the New Theology was the talk of seminary classrooms; by the early twentieth century it was a staple of Sunday sermons. The ideas were not, of course, brand new, having deep roots in Emersonian views of human potential. The New Theology celebrated the moral potential of human beings more than their innate depravity, and it centered on ethical matters more than metaphysical ones. Within this new system of thought, Jesus was a great exemplar of God's design for humanity – a fully realized human being, not a sacrificial victim killed on a cross. At the heart of this emerging Protestant consensus was a desire for a thoroughly contextualized faith, one that spoke directly to the social problems of the age. Post–Civil War liberals were less enthusiastic about moral reforms directed at individual behavior – temperance and prostitution, for example – than they were about systemic challenges to social injustice. Reflecting the rising optimism of their era, advocates of a new Social Gospel envisioned an entire transformation of American society into the Kingdom of God on earth, based not on greed and exploitation but Christian principles of equality and love.

Conservative evangelicals viewed all of these developments with rising alarm: Both the higher criticism and the Social Gospel seemed major diversions from the primary Christian task of winning souls to Christ. In some cases, conservative forces within various denominations were successful in slowing down the advance of objectionable ideas, but only temporarily. In the 1890s, Presbyterians tried several prominent seminary professors for heresy, dismissing Charles Briggs from Union Seminary and Henry Preserved Smith from Lane; a third, Arthur Cushman McGiffert, left his post at Union before he could be convicted. Congregationalists attempted to do the same, leveling charges against five faculty members of Andover

Theological Seminary who had edited a series of essays on "progressive orthodoxy." This move failed, however, and in the end so weakened the denomination's flagship seminary that in a few years it was nearly forced to close.[12]

Intellectual issues were not the only source of concern, however. After the Civil War, American society itself seemed to be losing familiar moorings, transformed into something new and increasingly alien. The postwar decades saw the rise of "big" business, a vast and deeply intertwined conglomerate of trusts and holding companies that dwarfed the efforts of farmers and small shop owners. Though the United States outstripped its European competitors by the turn of the century, economic success brought mounting social costs of poverty and political corruption.

The economic transformation transformed a predominantly rural nation into an increasingly urbanized one. By the turn of the century, New York and Chicago were reaching populations upward of one million; with political infrastructures conceived in simpler and more rural times, these sprawling new cities were all but ungovernable. Many of their inhabitants were immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe who formed tight-knit communities replicating Old World social mores and relationships. The pace and scope of change were, to say the least, unsettling to native-born city dwellers, who might easily become lost in their own neighborhoods, unable to read any of the shop signs or communicate to another person on the street.

Religion was a central part of the transformation. Most of the new immigrants were Roman Catholic or Jewish, and their first task on arrival was to build their own churches and synagogues where they could retain old customs and a familiar language. In many cases, these new religious communities followed right on the heels of Protestant retreat, as native-born congregations left the city to rebuild in suburban neighborhoods newly accessible by streetcar. Increasingly visible consolidation of immigrant political power – Irish Catholics in Boston, for example – led to sharp and sometimes violent interreligious conflict.

Fundamentalism was a specific product of these times. Though anti-Catholicism had deep roots in American culture, dating back to the earliest days of New England settlement, in the late nineteenth century it became a means by which northern, white, urban Protestants – by all measures, the dominant American social group – could begin to see themselves as outsiders. Animosity toward Catholics drew on old traditions of biblical

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[12] Two helpful overviews are William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA, 1976); and Daniel Day Williams, *The Andover Liberals: A Study in American Theology* (1941; repr., New York, 1970).

interpretation, with the pope as the Antichrist and the Roman Catholic Church as the Whore of Babylon, that fueled new prophetic speculation in the post–Civil War era, its lurid stock images adding another layer of intrigue and urgency to Protestant opposition.[13]

Urban revivalism provided another means by which evangelical Protestants nurtured a growing sense of beleaguered solidarity. The revivalistic style itself was nothing new: Warm piety and fervent calls to salvation had been central features of American religion since the days of eighteenth-century evangelist George Whitefield. But after the Civil War, revivalism became much more of a public spectacle, a thoroughly orchestrated campaign increasingly driven by the quasi-celebrity status of popular preachers like Dwight L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Billy Sunday. Citywide revivals often lasted for months, involving the coordinated efforts of scores of local churches and garnering regular headlines in both the secular and religious press. The single most influential figure in this rising social phenomenon was Moody, a converted shoe salesman whose simple sermons combined homespun stories with earnest entreaties against drink and other sins of the flesh. Like many evangelicals, Moody's central concern was saving sinners from certain judgment, but he began to take an increasingly negative view of social reform as a potential distraction from matters of eternal importance. "I look upon the world as a wrecked vessel," the evangelist once explained. "God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"[14]

The theological core of Fundamentalism in its early stages was a mode of biblical interpretation known as dispensational premillennialism, a belief that Moody himself would adopt in the late 1870s. Premillennialism was not unknown in the United States at that time; Mormons had their own traditions of apocalypticism, as did the Adventist followers of William Miller who looked for the world to end in April 1844. Traditional premillennialism was inherently pessimistic about the future; it drew on specific biblical passages, especially one in Revelation 20 describing Christ's thousand-year reign upon the earth. While most American Protestants simply assumed this passage was describing the final culmination of human history, premillennialists believed that an entire series of violent, cataclysmic events would come before Christ's actual return.[15]

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[13] John Wolffe, "Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity in Britain and the United States, 1830–1860," in Mark Noll, David Bebbington, and George Rawlyk, eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1900* (New York, 1994), 179–97.

[14] Bruce Evenson, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York, 2003).

[15] Timothy Weber, *Standing in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1982* (Chicago, 1987).

Fundamentalist apocalypticism drew on old traditions of biblical scholarship about the end times, but with a new level of urgency. It was a particular type of premillennialism originating in the teachings of British millenarians Edward Irving and John Nelson Darby, who organized the Plymouth Brethren churches in the 1820s and 1830s. Their original concern was the fate of modern-day Jews and the possibility of their return to Palestine; but as Irving and Darby began to study biblical prophecy in detail, they became convinced that all previous modes of interpretation were wrong. Specifically, they rejected the traditional "historicist" view of apocalyptic books like Daniel and Revelation, which saw these texts as descriptions of events already taking place in the course of contemporary human affairs. Historicists, for example, associated many of the dire events of Revelation with the rise of the Roman Catholic Church and the ascendancy of the pope. Darby and Irving adopted a "futurist" reading of biblical prophecy, arguing that these passages were describing events that would not be fulfilled – or fully understood – until all human history came to an end.[16]

Darby added a dispensational scheme to this premillennial view of the end times. Though it often appears complex to outsiders, dispensationalism is best understood as a comprehensive system of biblical interpretation, encapsulating both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures into a single narrative of decline. It is often set forth in detailed visual charts and pictures, describing each of the seven periods of biblical time (or dispensations). Each one of these time periods began with a set of divinely ordained ground rules, where God laid out the reward and consequence of disobedience. Each one inevitably ended in disaster, and with yet another set of ground rules. Although Darby and his disciples disagreed about the precise timing of events in the last days, and generally refused to set a date for Christ's return, they agreed on a basic framework for the final unfolding: The world would undergo a period of Tribulation, to be followed by a thousand years of unbroken peace, known as "the Millennium," and then Christ would return for the final judgment of all humanity. Dispensationalists also believed that the Bible gave a special role to the Jews, and that their return to Israel would necessarily precede the final judgment. Darby's most controversial view was that between the First and Second Comings of Christ, believers would be taken up to heaven in a "secret rapture," a dramatic departure that could begin at any moment.[17]

Although the inherent pessimism of dispensational premillennialism stood in vivid contrast to the dogged faith in progress that had long been typical of American evangelical Protestants, it was an effective means of

[16] Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 3–41.
[17] *Ibid.,* 59–80.

rousing the faithful. It is easy to imagine that dispensational premillennialism would propel believers to withdrawal or despair – if Christ was coming to destroy the earth and judge all evildoers, then human activity would matter very little. But in fact the urgency of the premillennial timeline, the need to reach as many people with the gospel before Christ's return, spurred believers to vigorous new efforts at evangelism and foreign missions. It became very quickly the core of a growing movement.[18]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, premillennial ideas spread within an expanding network of Bible schools, formed in cities from New England to southern California. These schools, most notably the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, the Gordon Training School in Boston, the Northwestern Bible School in Minneapolis, and Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), offered young men and women without a college degree an inexpensive opportunity to train for foreign missions or evangelism. Especially in their early days, Bible institutes mirrored their students' sense of urgency for the unsaved: The Gordon school, for example, had no class roster or published curriculum until years after its initial organization. As Fundamentalism matured, however, the schools became its institutional core, taking on a quasi-denominational role as the movement grew farther and farther outside of the normal religious channels.[19]

Premillennialists also developed their own popular literature. William Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming* (1878) remained for many years one of the most widely read, though it was eventually eclipsed by a growing array of idiosyncratic periodicals, including Arno C. Gaebelein's scholarly *Our Hope*, devoted to the conversion of the Jews, and James Brooke's defiantly titled *The Truth*. But by far the most popular source for premillennial dispensationalist theology was Cyrus Scofield's *Reference Bible*, first issued in 1909. By the time Oxford University Press republished it in 1967, the *Reference Bible* was one of its all-time best sellers, an identifying symbol for Fundamentalist believers everywhere.

Fundamentalism also took root in Bible conferences, organized by premillennialists on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The first and most famous was the Niagara Bible Conference, formed in 1876 and held annually until 1897. Its fourteen-point Niagara Creed, issued in 1878, was the first explicit proclamation of premillennial doctrine in the United States. Niagara's success inspired a string of Bible and Prophetic Conferences,

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[18] Dana Robert, "'The Crisis of Missions': Premillennial Mission Theory and the Origins of Independent Evangelical Missions," in Joel Carpenter and Wilbert Shenk, eds., *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880–1980* (Grand Rapids, 1990), 29–46.

[19] Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880–1940* (Bloomington, 1990).

beginning with the first in New York in 1878. The roster of speakers included popular figures who were quickly becoming recognized leaders in the emerging movement: James Brookes, Leander Munhall, George Needham, and A. J. Gordon. Dwight L. Moody's Northfield Conferences for "Christian workers" in central Massachusetts also became a standard site for the teaching of premillennial doctrine.[20]

Northfield also became a conduit for a particular style of piety, associated with the British Keswick movement. Keswick taught that believers could live a "victorious life" through a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, one that would give the truly consecrated complete triumph over sin. In tone and in terminology, Fundamentalist piety owed much to the Methodist Holiness movement, especially early leaders like Hannah Whitall Smith, Asa Mahan, and William Boardman. Both forms of piety insisted on the importance of "emptying" oneself of self-will as a means of achieving "power for service"; both urged believers to seek this experience in a "second blessing" that followed an initial conversion to Christianity. Where the two movements differed was in level of expectation. Wesleyan Holiness advocates believed that anyone fully committed to God and emptied of selfish desires could achieve moral perfection. Keswick and Fundamentalist believers, coming mostly from the Calvinist wing of the evangelical world, argued that sin was too much a part of the human condition to be eradicated, even as a gift of the Holy Spirit. The result was a complex piety requiring constant struggle against sin and self-will, and the promise of supernatural power to effortlessly fulfill God's commands. In this sense, Keswick spirituality followed the internal logic of dispensational premillennial theology: both propelled believers into Christian service with special urgency and power.[21]

The other signal doctrine of early Fundamentalism was biblical inerrancy. Like premillennialism and Keswick spirituality, this particular view of the Bible's authority – as a divinely authored text without any error of fact – was far more demanding than traditional evangelical Protestant doctrines of divine inspiration. Inerrancy was associated with a group of Old School Presbyterian scholars at Princeton Theological Seminary, particularly Charles Hodge, his son Archibald Alexander Hodge, and Benjamin B. Warfield. They argued that every word in the Bible was directly inspired by God and was equally weighted with supernatural truth. In this sense, the inerrancy doctrine drew on an old American Protestant epistemology, emphasizing the essential rationality of religious truth. The so-called common sense philosophy originated among a group of Scottish

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[20] Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 132–61.
[21] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 72–101.

scholars – Dugald Stewart and Thomas Reid – who rejected the radical skepticism of David Hume and Immanuel Kant. They argued that the truths of the Bible were fully transparent to human reason; Christian beliefs were a series of propositions that could be deduced from the plain words of scripture.[22]

It is important to note that inerrantists like Hodge and Warfield were not biblical literalists who required blind obedience to the Bible's every word. Like other Protestants they made common sense distinctions between poetic and literal language. But they insisted that every text was equally inspired and equally authoritative, and in that sense they gave the Fundamentalist movement a powerful tool for separating truth from error.

At first glance, the Old School Presbyterians at Princeton seemed a fair cultural distance from the evangelical rank and file who attended Bible schools and higher life conferences. Certainly men like Hodge and Warfield had little sympathy for the teachings of dispensational premillennialists. But they also had no truck with the higher criticism and its historical relativizing of biblical truth, and they watched with alarm as the New Theology made steady inroads into Presbyterian circles. At bottom, therefore, the alliance between premillennialists and inerrantists was strategic, articulating a common concern for an absolutely authoritative Bible, its saving truth readily available to anyone who read with an open mind and an open heart.

Until World War I, Fundamentalism existed mainly as a loose network of cobelligerents. They were committed to common concerns about the Bible but still tied to their denominational roots, which tended to be northern Baptist or Presbyterian. Proto-fundamentalists gathered in summer Bible conferences like Winona Lake in northern Indiana, where they enjoyed a healthy combination of outdoor recreation and solid Bible teaching. They filled the pews of large downtown preaching centers like the Moody Church in Chicago, Tremont Temple in Boston, or the Broadway Tabernacle in New York. They supported a growing network of Bible schools – some forty by the end of World War I – and flocked to hear popular speakers like William Bell Riley, J. C. Massee, and Billy Sunday.[23]

These early Fundamentalist institutions flourished in urban areas, especially in the Northeast and upper Midwest. Demographic information

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[22] Mark Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (San Francisco, 1986).

[23] For biographical treatments, see C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism: Seven Biographical Studies* (Philadelphia, 1976); William Trollinger, *God's Empire: William Bell Riley and Midwestern Fundamentalism* (Madison, WI, 1990); Barry Hankins, *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington, KY, 1996).

about the movement's rank and file is relatively scattered, but the rosters of Bible institutes and churches show the typical adherent as fairly young, predominantly female, and geographically mobile. During the early twentieth century, for example, the majority of new members to Boston's Tremont Temple were emigrants from the Canadian Maritimes. These were not the rural dispossessed, but ambitious and technically skilled younger people – carpenters, teachers, and nurses – moving to the city from rural areas in search of economic opportunity.[24]

In fact, though Fundamentalism has often been stereotyped as a rural southern movement, it made relatively little headway below the Mason-Dixon Line before the 1960s. Some of the reasons for this are cultural, including the post-Confederate South's dislike of Yankee ways. But in a larger sense, Fundamentalism was less necessary in the South, and its message less urgent than it was in New York or Boston. The region's majority Methodist and Baptist churches were reliably conservative and felt relatively little threat from liberal ideas in their denominational seminaries. All the same, however, the early Fundamentalist movement did have a certain southern tinge: Many of the movement's first leaders were born and raised as southerners – J. C. Massee, William Bell Riley, Mark Matthews, John R. Rice, and J. Frank Norris – who achieved public success after they moved to urban centers in the North.[25]

Southern Holiness and Pentecostal groups also served as a vessel for premillennial teachings, though they remained socially and theologically distinct from the Fundamentalist movement itself. Members of Holiness and Pentecostal churches tended to be poorer and more racially diverse than their northern cousins, and the two groups also disagreed vehemently over the nature of conversion. Holiness and Pentecostal groups held out the possibility of moral perfection or "entire sanctification" in the lifetime of an ordinary believer, but dispensationalists emphatically rejected this possibility, as well as the Pentecostal gift of tongues, which they believed was a spiritual experience intended only for the first-century church.[26]

In the early twentieth century, the Fundamentalist rhetoric of alienation, though not necessarily its doctrines, resonated strongly with many immigrant groups, especially the confessionally oriented Dutch in the Christian Reformed Church, the Germans in the Missouri Synod, and the pietistic Swedes in the Evangelical Free Church. Fundamentalist piety, especially as it was expressed in gospel music and popular preaching, made various

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[24] Margaret Bendroth, *Fundamentalists in the City: Conflict and Division in Boston's Churches* (New York, 2005), 101–24.

[25] Hankins, *God's Rascal*, 19–44.

[26] Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

inroads into these communities, and they in turn helped broaden the movement's appeal. During the World War II era, two of Fundamentalism's most popular radio teachers were Marvin DeHaan from the Christian Reformed Church and Walter Meier, a Missouri Synod Lutheran.[27]

A recognizable Fundamentalist movement took shape under the cultural strain of the World War I years. When war first broke out in 1914, premillennial spokesmen generally avoided the fervent "100 percent Americanism" that propelled the United States into the European conflict. If Christ was coming soon, they reasoned, patriotism was almost a side issue; their primary concern was winning souls to Christ. This political quietism earned them sharp public criticism from liberal scholars like Shailer Mathews at the University of Chicago's Divinity School, who charged that Fundamentalism was dangerously unpatriotic. Fundamentalists responded by insisting even louder on their own loyalty to the American cause – and taking pains to point out that liberal theology was a product of German universities.[28]

A diverse group of cobelligerents began to coalesce under a common name. The publication of a twelve-volume series of books, *The Fundamentals*, between 1910 and 1915, was one public marker, though the hundred-odd articles in the twelve-volume collection were hardly incendiary stuff. Though widely distributed, thanks to a generous endowment by oil millionaires Lyman and Milton Stewart, the densely written, scholarly arguments of *The Fundamentals* generated relatively little response, academic or otherwise. According to most accounts, the Fundamentalist name really began to stick after 1920, when it was popularized by Baptist editor Curtis Lee Laws. Writing on behalf of an opposition group within the Northern Baptist Convention, Laws declared that "those who still cling to the great fundamentals" and who mean "to do battle royal" shall be called "Fundamentalists."[29] Baptist conservatives rallied eagerly around Laws' suggestion: New York pastor John Roach Straton formed a Fundamentalist League in 1922, and controversial Texas pastor J. Frank Norris followed suit with his *Fundamentalist* newspaper soon after. By then, conservatives in the northern Presbyterian church had already issued a list of five "fundamentals," accepted by the denomination in 1910 as the core doctrines of Orthodox Christianity. These included the inerrancy of scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, the "substitution theory" of the atonement (a particular understanding of Christ's death as a means of satisfying God's wrath for

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[27] James Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids, 1984), 123–41; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 154–9.

[28] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 141–53.

[29] Curtis Lee Laws, "Convention Side Lights," *Watchman-Examiner* 1 July 1920, 834, cited in Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 159.

human sin), the physical resurrection of Christ, and the authenticity of the miracles reported in the Bible.[30]

During the 1920s, Fundamentalist militancy reached its height, and then just as quickly began to dissipate. The most intense efforts arose among northern Baptists and Presbyterians – Methodists and Episcopalians were generally shielded from the spreading controversy by their hierarchical polity and Congregationalists by their decentralized one. Baptist conservatives were mostly frustrated by division within their own ranks: A more moderate middle group led by Massee refused to follow the divisive tactics of Norris and Straton. By the late 1920s, many Baptist Fundamentalists had chosen to depart for safer ground. Norris formed his own World Fundamentalist Baptist Missionary Fellowship in 1928 (a subsequent split in 1950 gave rise to the Baptist Bible Fellowship International). In 1932, a larger group left the Northern Baptist Convention to form the General Association of Regular Baptists; this group also split in 1947, resulting in the formation of the Conservative Baptist Association.

Presbyterians experienced an even more epic public battle. Though the conservative wing had been successful in establishing the five "fundamentals" as the standard for orthodoxy, they began to encounter resistance in 1922. That year Baptist theologian Harry Emerson Fosdick, a regular guest preacher at New York's First Presbyterian Church, issued a ringing liberal call to battle, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Conservatives quickly ousted Fosdick from his Presbyterian pulpit, and buoyed by their success took aim at the modernist drift at Princeton Seminary, a campaign they were not destined to win. There the formidable standard bearer for orthodoxy was New Testament scholar J. Gresham Machen, the author of an erudite series of essays titled *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). Machen charged that in attempting to save Christianity from its cultured despisers, liberals had rendered it all but unrecognizable. Unmoored from traditional Christian teachings on the atonement and the divinity of Christ, liberalism was, in Machen's view, an entirely new religion.[31]

But conservatives did not hold the upper hand for long. As was true of Baptists, the moderate majority of northern Presbyterians had little patience for doctrinaire infighting. In 1924, some twelve hundred clergy signed the Auburn Affirmation, a document they said was "designed to safeguard the unity and liberty of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." The affirmation denounced the five fundamentals as simply "theories" and denied the General Assembly's authority to impose

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[30] Among self-proclaimed Fundamentalists, the list often varied. Bradley J. Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York, 1991), 25.

[31] *Ibid.*, 9–53; J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, 1923).

an arbitrary doctrinal standard on candidates for ordination.[32] The election of Charles Erdman as moderator of the General Assembly in 1925 also signaled a return to power by the denomination's centrist party. Erdman was a former colleague of Machen's with strong evangelical ties, the choice of moderates determined to put an end to divisive conflict. Machen and his conservative following soon found themselves on the defensive, fielding blame for spreading schism and intolerance. In 1927, in a move intended to control rising factionalism within the Princeton faculty – and to discipline Machen and his party – the General Assembly voted to take oversight over the seminary. In 1929, Machen led a group of Presbyterian conservatives out of Princeton to form a new school, Westminster Theological Seminary, in suburban Philadelphia. In 1936 this group left the denomination entirely and formed their own, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

By far the most dramatic public confrontation of the 1920s was the Scopes trial, conducted in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. The defendant was high school teacher John Scopes, who had used a textbook sympathetic to Darwinism and ran afoul of the state law. (Like those of many other southern and midwestern states, the Tennessee legislature had prohibited the teaching of evolution in public schools.) Scopes was duly charged, brought to trial, and quickly became the center of a national controversy. Former presidential candidate and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan argued for the prosecution on behalf of the World Christian Fundamentals Association, and Clarence Darrow, hired by the American Civil Liberties Union, took up Scopes' defense. The ensuing courtroom spectacle quickly became grist for a largely unsympathetic press, led by *Baltimore Sun* journalist H. L. Mencken. It was easy work to ridicule the small-town southern culture of Dayton and the uncritical piety vividly illustrated when Bryan took the witness stand to defend the literal truth of Genesis.[33]

Their agenda in disarray and their beliefs a laughingstock, Fundamentalists won few public battles after 1925. Although Scopes was convicted and fined (the penalty was later overturned on a technicality), conservative religion settled into the American popular imagination as something basically rural, southern, and anti-intellectual. Machen's death in 1937, far from the halls of Princeton, in the wilds of a North Dakota winter, was an even more poignant symbol of irrelevance and failure.

But reports of Fundamentalism's demise proved premature. During the 1930s and 1940s, the movement built its own separate infrastructure of schools, churches, and publishing houses. One of the best examples of this

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[32] Longfield, *Presbyterian Controversy*, 77–9.

[33] Edward Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York, 2006).

quiet success was the growth of Bible institutes, which numbered at least fifty by the early 1930s.[34] Fundamentalists flocked there to attend public conferences on prophecy, foreign missions, or evangelism; they looked to students and teachers for orthodox Sunday school literature, trustworthy revival speakers, and reliable candidates to fill an empty pulpit. Bible schools also sold and distributed Fundamentalist literature; in fact, most of the influential movement publications of the 1930s and 1940s were all identified with various schools, including the *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, *The Pilot* from Northwestern Bible Institute in Minneapolis, and *Serving and Waiting* from the Philadelphia School of the Bible.

Bible schools also showed Fundamentalists how to use the radio as an evangelistic tool. Some of these stations, including KJS from BIOLA and WMBI from Moody Bible Institute, began broadcasting in the early 1920s, almost as soon as the technology was available. When the major radio networks began to limit their free air time to mainline Protestant churches, Fundamentalist entrepreneurs began to experiment with the (often dull) format of typical religious programming. Fundamentalist radio programs featured lively musical segments and Bible classes for children, question and answer shows for adults. During the 1930s and 1940s, Charles E. Fuller's "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" regularly attracted an audience of some fifteen to twenty million listeners, making it the largest prime-time radio broadcast in the country. Much of the show's appeal drew from his wife Grace's segment, in which she read and responded to personal queries from audience members.[35]

Before long, some Bible schools began to expand into seminaries and colleges, responding to a growing desire for ministerial training and a doctrinally safe alternative to a secular liberal arts education. Thus, in the 1930s the Gordon Missionary Training School in Boston became both Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (uniting two schools); in Minneapolis Northwestern Bible School became Northwestern College. Other Fundamentalists followed this trend by establishing brand new colleges of their own, including Bob Jones and William Jennings Bryan University in the South, Grove City in Pennsylvania, and Westmont College in California. Given Fundamentalism's deep and growing distrust of secular and mainline Protestant religious education, few of these schools had much difficulty attracting students. According to one survey of seventy conservative evangelical colleges, their enrollment doubled between 1929 and 1940.[36]

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[34] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 16–17.
[35] *Ibid.*, 124–40.
[36] Brereton, *Training God's Army*, 78–86 ; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 21.

By all accounts, the premier Fundamentalist school of the mid-twentieth century was Wheaton College, located in the western suburbs of Chicago. By then Wheaton already had a fairly long pedigree, having been organized in the 1850s under Wesleyan Methodist auspices, and then established as a college in 1860 by Jonathan Blanchard, a Congregationalist well known as a moral reformer. The school's fortunes rose along with a flourishing Fundamentalist subculture; from four hundred students in 1926 it grew to over one thousand by 1941, making it one of the largest liberal arts colleges in the state of Illinois. With a fully accredited academic curriculum, and highly regarded music, athletic, and debate programs, Wheaton clearly deserved its reputation as the "Harvard of the Bible Belt."[37]

All of these efforts helped mobilize a new wave of foreign missionary activity. During the 1920s, one of the major issues separating Baptist and Presbyterian conservatives from their denominations was their distrust over the orthodoxy of missionary candidates. After they left, conservatives formed their own organizations, or supported the work of independent "faith" missionary societies. These were small unaffiliated groups that operated with a minimum of institutional infrastructure, and often with very little money. Many enjoyed permanent success. Two of the most famous were the China Inland Mission, which added over 600 new recruits in the 1930s, and the Sudan Interior Mission, which grew from 44 missionaries in 1920 to 494 in 1945. By the early 1950s, Fundamentalist missionaries accounted for nearly a third of the total North American Protestants working abroad.[38]

After World War II, evangelistic organizations like Youth for Christ further broadened the popular appeal of Fundamentalist piety. Young entrepreneurs like Percy Crawford and Jack Wyrtzen adopted the music and clothing styles of postwar youth culture, incorporating big band music and rapid-fire, emotional preaching into enormous "youth rallies." Their upbeat, fast-moving platform technique attracted large outdoor crowds – some seventy thousand attended one Chicago event in 1945 – and eventually a great deal of national publicity.[39]

Youth for Christ also brought a new generation of charismatic evangelical preachers into the popular limelight, the most famous of which was Billy Graham. A graduate of the Florida Bible Institute, Graham began his career under the wing of William Bell Riley, reluctantly agreeing to serve

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[37] Michael Hamilton, "The Fundamentalist Harvard: Wheaton College and the Continuing Vitality of American Evangelicalism, 1919–1965," (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1994).

[38] Joel Carpenter, "Propagating the Faith Once Delivered: The Fundamentalist Missionary Enterprise, 1920–1945," in Carpenter and Shenk, *Earthen Vessels*, 92–132.

[39] Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 161–76.

as his replacement at the Northwestern Bible College in 1947. But the young evangelist's obvious talent for revival preaching soon led him back on the road, and in the charged atmosphere of the Cold War years he began to achieve genuine fame, beginning with a stunningly successful crusade in Los Angeles in 1949. Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst's decision to "puff Graham" only added to his rising national profile. In the 1950s, Graham's citywide campaigns became a cultural phenomenon, televised across the United States and around the world.

The organization of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942 was another important benchmark in the history of Fundamentalism. Rejecting the strict cultural separatism of the American Council of Christian Churches, organized in 1941, and the liberal agenda of the Federal Council of Churches, the NAE attempted to unite a new coalition of theologically conservative denominations in direct engagement with secular culture. In doing so, the "Neo-Evangelicals" associated with the NAE ran into direct conflict with old-style Fundamentalism's leaders and institutions. Staunch separatists like those at Bob Jones University, whose founder imposed strict rules on student social life, and the members of the Bible Presbyterian Church, who had objected to liberalizing tendencies among the Orthodox Presbyterians, looked with scorn on the new generation's perceived willingness to accommodate to the surrounding culture.

Indeed, by the 1940s Neo-Evangelicalism had its own roster of university-trained spokesmen and its own educational institutions. Two of the most famous names associated with this movement were Harold John Ockenga, pastor of Boston's Park Street Church, and Carl F. H. Henry, who published *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* in 1947. Henry was also the first editor of *Christianity Today*, a popular evangelical periodical established in 1956 by Billy Graham and designed to join conservative theology with thoughtful consideration of modern social problems.

But by far the signal achievement of this new generation was the establishment of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, in 1947.[40] The original inspiration for the school came from radio evangelist Charles Fuller, who dreamed of a training institute for missionaries and evangelists; he recruited Ockenga and Moody Bible Institute's Wilbur Smith, and they in turn urged Fuller to a more ambitious goal, a seminary for "advanced studies" that would train a new generation of men in a full intellectual defense of conservative Protestant doctrine. In the years that followed, Fuller Seminary was very successful in nurturing generations of scholars, missionaries, and evangelists, including Bill Bright, the founder of Campus

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[40] The best account is George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, 1987).

Crusade for Christ, and Rick Warren, best-selling author and pastor of California's Saddleback Church.

By the 1970s, with self-identified evangelical Jimmy Carter in the White House and conservative churches beginning to overtake the old Protestant mainline, old-style separatist Fundamentalism was a minor part of a burgeoning and increasingly complex movement. Certainly Fundamentalists had played an important role in providing leadership and institutional support for the Neo-Evangelical revival of the 1940s and 1950s. But strictly speaking, "Fundamentalism" was no longer a useful term for describing conservative evangelical Protestants, by then a large and theologically diverse religious movement.

Fundamentalism lives on today, but in less visible ways than before. It lives on in small denominations like the Bible Presbyterians and the General Association of Regular Baptists; the language of Fundamentalist piety still echoes in evangelical hymnody and devotional literature. Its legacy runs strongest, however, in modern-day Evangelicalism's characteristic ambivalence toward American secular culture. Like Fundamentalists, evangelicals see themselves as the nation's moral custodians, specially called by God to redeem society from certain judgment. But evangelicals have also taken from Fundamentalism a deep skepticism about the possibility of moral progress, an angry alienation from a social order that is hopelessly gone wrong. This tension grows out of Fundamentalism's origins in nineteenth-century mainstream evangelical Protestant institutions, and its rough departure from its previous position of cultural dominance. To both Fundamentalists and evangelicals, the United States is both Jerusalem and Babylon; it is a nation uniquely blessed by God and a "rebellious house" courting swift and painful punishment. This ambivalence manifests itself in many ways that are often confusing to outsiders, as a desire to both fix American society and to separate from it. Conservative Protestants may insist on being left alone by secular society, but they will also not tolerate being ignored by it.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE CULTURE WARS

The publication in 1991 of James Davidson Hunter's book, *The Culture Wars*, provided a compelling – and controversial – metaphor for the role of conservative religion in modern society. Echoing earlier analyses of Fundamentalism, Hunter described American society as a battleground for two utterly opposing forces, one progressive and the other reactionary, one tolerant and the other utterly dismissive of religious pluralism. To some observers Hunter's dualism was overly simplistic, eliminating the vast middle ground between the two extremes. Others argued that

it did not really square with the historical trajectory of Fundamentalism and its shift from a rugged separatism to a more accommodating Neo-Evangelical style.

Without doubt, however, Hunter highlighted a side of Fundamentalism that earlier analyses had often missed: its deep and growing resistance to key aspects of modernity. In fact, in two important areas – gender roles and the science of evolution – twentieth-century Fundamentalism became more, not less, restrictive as time wore on. Between the 1920s and the 1950s, an almost quixotic opposition to mainstream social views became a core part of its emerging identity.

Though Fundamentalists have often been depicted as deeply conservative on gender issues, they are best described as ambivalent about the role of women. The late nineteenth century was a time of rapid change, especially in Protestant churches, where enterprising women were busy forming national organizations devoted to home and foreign missions, education, and temperance. A good deal of this energy filtered into Fundamentalist institutions; in the early days of many Bible institutes, women constituted the clear majority of students. Recognizing the value of this contribution to the urgent task of evangelizing the lost, most Fundamentalist leaders put aside their doubts about its scriptural propriety. Some, like Baptist pastor A. J. Gordon, even argued that the Bible fully justified this new "ministry of women."[41]

But nineteenth-century Fundamentalists also harbored deep theological doubts about women's nature. Dispensational theology taught that their subjection was a divine punishment for Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, and that it could never be lifted. Women had incurred a "moral disability," as one writer declared, which would "abide even upon the last woman to the end of the age." Not surprisingly then, dispensational pre-millennialists opposed most of the social reforms, including the right to vote, that Protestant women's organizations overwhelmingly supported.[42]

Turn-of-the-century Fundamentalists, like many other Protestants, also worried about the lack of men in the church pews. The gender imbalance itself was nothing new – women accounted for at least two-thirds of church members throughout the nineteenth century. But worries about "feminization" reached a critical peak in the early twentieth century as Protestant church leaders contemplated their declining social power. They engaged in a widespread effort to "remasculinize" Protestant church life

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[41] A. J. Gordon, "The Ministry of Women," *Missionary Review of the World* 17 (1894): 910–21.

[42] Elizabeth Needham, *Woman's Ministry* (New York, 1895), 11, cited in Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, 1993), 45.

through organizations like the Men and Religion Forward movement and the rhetoric of "muscular Christianity."[43]

This new religious style provided Fundamentalists with a language and an opportunity to redefine their defense of Christian orthodoxy as an inherently masculine cause. During the 1920s, evangelists and preachers mounted a concerted attack on liberal "preacherettes" and "sissies" afraid to stand for the unpopular truths of the gospel. Fundamentalists proudly declared themselves independent and fearless, followers of a Christ who was "manly, full-blooded," and "vigorous," certainly not one to "shed briny tears" over heretics.[44]

Fundamentalism therefore gave men, not women, ownership of religious orthodoxy. This was a genuine departure from nineteenth-century Protestant mores, which deemed women by far the more spiritual sex. In the 1930s, Fundamentalist institutions rarely excluded women, who continued to flock to Bible institutes and conservative churches in large numbers; but as a matter of principle, women were prohibited from taking leadership over men. Whatever ambiguity remained in such practices began to disappear in the late 1940s and 1950s. Indeed, the Neo-Evangelical rapprochement with American culture coincided with a deliberate tightening of standards on women's role. A widely touted new ethic of "male headship" clearly relegated them to a secondary status.[45]

The Fundamentalist encounter with science, especially the theory of evolution, followed a similar historical trajectory, veering steadily further from the social mainstream after the 1920s.[46] In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when Darwin's theories first began to reach the United States, they did not cause a major stir, even among conservatives. Most Protestants were confident that even the most difficult scientific findings could be harmonized with scripture; they had at their disposal varied readings of the creation account in Genesis 1 that most people believed would account for fossil evidence of the earth's great age. Many Protestant theologians, including Princeton's Benjamin Warfield, even allowed for some form of organic evolution, though they were careful to insist on a separate divine creation of the human race. Though his views have often been caricatured, this is essentially the position that William Jennings Bryan argued at the

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[43] Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, 1990).

[44] "Notes and Comments," *Bible Champion* 30 (March 1924): 141, cited in Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 65–6.

[45] Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 73–117.

[46] Ronald Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (New York, 1992).

Scopes trial in 1925, one shared by the majority of Protestant laypeople – including many leading Fundamentalists of that era – well into the twentieth century.

The emergence of flood geology in the 1920s marked a new more rigorous standard for harmonizing science and scripture. When Seventh-day Adventist amateur scientist George McCready Price published his *Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science* in 1902, he was nearly alone in his interpretation of the fossil evidence.[47] Price argued that the entire fossil record was deposited at the time of Noah's flood, estimated at 3000 B.C.E., and that all of the plant and animal remains found in rock strata existed together on the earth. Price dated the biblical creation at somewhere between 4,000 and 8,000 B.C.E.; by his calculations, the earth was no more than ten thousand years old.

It was not until publication of *The Genesis Flood* by John Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris in 1961 that flood geology became the accepted view of conservative Fundamentalists, and eventually the broader evangelical public.[48] The book appeared in the midst of rising concern about science education in the public schools, an anxiety that resulted in new biology textbooks showcasing the latest findings in evolutionary theory. Whitcomb and Morris, and the Creation Research Society they founded in 1963, insisted that their reading of literal Genesis – following Price's ten-thousand-year earth and six-day creation – was the only truly Christian one. Aggressive defense of strict creationist views led to clashes with local textbook committees, and highly publicized confrontations in courtrooms and state legislatures across the country.

CONCLUSION

Both of these examples, and the larger history of Fundamentalism in the United States, demonstrate the paradoxes of conservative religion in the modern world. Fundamentalists needed women's full participation for their movement to succeed – after all, most of their adherents were, like the rest of the American religious public, female. But by restricting women's role, and taking a position clearly against the egalitarian flow of American culture, Fundamentalism established a clear point of difference from the secular world. As the rest of American society veered toward gender equality, the true faithful stood apart.

[47] George McCready Price, *Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science* (Oakland, CA, 1902).

[48] John Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Philadelphia, 1961).

Somewhat the same principle held true in regard to science. As their name suggests, scientific creationists were in many ways deeply committed to the use of rational, evidence-based thinking; books like Whitcomb and Morris's *The Genesis Flood* were replete with charts, graphs, and experimental findings – all in the service, however, of a theory entirely at odds with the mainstream scientific community. Creationism in effect used the methodology of twentieth-century science to build a hedge against modernity, demanding the unquestioning faith of its adherents.

These are not transitory or accidental tensions, but central to the survival of oppositional religion in the United States. The very openness of American culture, with its growing acceptance of pluralism and religious diversity, requires conservative faiths always to find new ways to maintain a healthy distance. That means that the rejection of modernity is always selective, deeply ambivalent, and riddled with ironies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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RELIGIOUSLY INFORMED SOCIAL REFORM AND REACTION IN THE ERA OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

KENNETH J. HEINEMAN

The economic crisis of the Great Depression spurred religiously informed political and social activism in the United States. Many Roman Catholic labor union and social activists in the 1930s drew inspiration from the papal encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI. Among some African American Protestants in the South and North there was also a desire to champion civil rights. American Jews, often sharing the same socially marginal, immigrant backgrounds as Catholics, filled the ranks of social reformers. In contrast to African American Protestants and Catholics, however, religious faith per se played a less explicit role in shaping Jewish activism.

At the same time, many Protestants, whether from mainline or Fundamentalist denominations, loomed large in the ranks of those opposed to organized labor and the expanding role of the federal government in the American economy. Even among Catholics and African American Protestants, there were prominent individuals who condemned progressive social reforms.

This essay will explore the contours of religiously based social activism in the 1930s as well as devote attention to the foes of reform. Many historical accounts of the Great Depression in the United States have slighted the significant role of religious reformers in promoting the fortunes of organized labor and building the New Deal Democratic electoral coalition. If economics cannot be separated from politics, then neither should be examined without accounting for religious belief. In religious faith there is a philosophical framework that individuals use to understand their economic and political systems. When the economic and political order does not meet citizens' expectations, people of faith move to rectify the situation whether by embracing a conservative or liberal activism.

AMERICA'S MORAL AND ECONOMIC ORDER
UP TO THE 1920S

Religiously-inspired political activism took root in American soil a century and a half before the English colonies secured independence from Britain. At its inception, the United States was – theologically and demographically – a Protestant nation. Its Congregational citizens in New England were animated by a spirit of moral and societal reformation. Throughout the nineteenth century, Protestant reformers linked crime and poverty to individual moral failing.[1]

The New England heirs of the Puritans, joined by the Quakers, decried the enslavement of Africans in the South and also sought to halt Irish and German Catholic immigration. For Protestant reformers, ending poverty in the northern cities required a moral transformation among Catholic immigrants who, to their thinking, were vice-ridden. Catholics' primitive religion, so Protestant reformers believed, kept them mired in ignorance and subservient to a foreign religious regime. Worse, Catholics built corrupt Democratic Party organizations in Boston and New York that placed burdensome property taxes on successful middle-class Protestants. Through alleged electoral fraud, Democratic "machines" threatened the very basis of constitutional governance.

Protestant reformers after the Civil War founded organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the American Protective Association to combat the liquor lobby and Catholic and Jewish immigration. In 1896, southern and western activists captured control of the national Democratic Party, nominating Nebraska Congressman William Jennings Bryan for president and renominating him in 1900 and 1908. Bryan's campaign rallies looked like Protestant revival meetings as cries went forth against Wall Street brokers, saloon owners, and the ignorant masses of immigrants arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Voters east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio River rejected Bryan. They realized that his call for higher cotton and wheat prices, along with proposals to inflate the currency, would lead to paying more for food and clothing while eroding the purchasing power of wages. Unable to bridge the nation's cultural, economic, and sectional divisions, the Democrats went on the political defensive for a generation.

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[1] William G. McLoughlin, "Pietism and the American Character," *American Quarterly* 17 (Summer 1965): 163–86.

White Protestant moral reform approached its zenith when the United States entered World War I in 1917. By associating breweries with the German enemy, reformers were able to persuade three-quarters of the states to ratify Prohibition. World War I served as an impetus for immigration restriction as well. Corporations such as U.S. Steel began recruiting southern black workers once the outbreak of World War I shut off Eastern European immigration. Unlike Catholic immigrants, southern blacks were Protestant, Republican, and did not join the massive 1919 strike wave. Having found a superior pool of inexpensive labor, corporation executives embraced restriction legislation in 1921 and 1924. This legislation established national origin quotas that intentionally discriminated against Eastern European Catholics and Jews.

A second Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1915, grew to four million members by 1924. The new Klan targeted Catholics and Jews in northern industrial states in addition to African Americans in the South. This reincarnated Klan achieved political power in Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania and blocked the Democratic presidential nomination of New York's Catholic governor, Al Smith. Although internal sex scandals brought about the precipitous demise of the Klan, most of its political agenda had been achieved with Prohibition and immigration restriction.

By the 1920s many Americans believed that not only the religious culture wars, but also the socially disruptive "boom and bust" economic cycle of the nineteenth century were over. Commercial building and residential housing starts soared every year in the 1920s. Companies such as BF Goodrich, Goodyear, and Firestone, for instance, fueled Akron, Ohio's, population growth. In 1900, Akron had 42,000 people. By 1920, Akron's population had grown to 208,000. Fully 35 percent of the residents in that city worked making automobile tires.[2]

Mass production produced economies of efficiencies so great that the price of Henry Ford's Model T automobile went from $850 in 1908 to $295 in 1922. When Ford's River Rouge Plant opened outside Detroit in 1924 in Dearborn, Michigan, it housed 68,000 workers. European automakers had developed a business model aimed at servicing the upper end of the consumer market. Americans, such as Ford and Alfred Sloan (General Motors), targeted the working and middle classes as well as the wealthiest segment of the population.[3]

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[2] Jon C. Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland: The Rise and Fall of the Industrial Midwest* (Bloomington, 1994), 108.

[3] *Ibid.*, 102–9.

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES AND THE EMERGENCE
OF NEW CULTURAL GROUPS

Prior to the Great Depression

Just beneath the surface of 1920s prosperity and tranquility there lurked serious economic problems and social discontent. Although reckless stock market speculation was rampant, far more ominous was the fundamental structural weakness of the economy. In the 1920s a family of four, just to meet the minimal subsistence level, needed an annual household income of $2,000. Fully 60 percent of Americans – 70 million – lived at or near the subsistence level, earning just enough for food, clothing, and shelter. There was little left over for amenities. Of the U.S. population, 42 percent earned less than $1,000 annually, with nothing to spare in the event of an economic downturn. In the South, 5.5 million white and 3 million black, tenant farmers and sharecroppers had incomes of under $100 a year.[4]

Capital investment in new plants, mass production which lowered unit cost, and, most importantly, the easy provision of consumer credit drove the economic boom of the 1920s. Buying on time allowed those living near the subsistence level to have the appearance of upward mobility. Mass consumption frequently reflected the taking on of higher household debt rather than being a product of rising income. Should credit ever become tight, consumer demand would crater, taking down with it industrial and retail employment.

In the best of times, working conditions in steel mills, automobile plants, and coal mines were dangerous. Every year in the early twentieth century, twenty-five thousand Americans were killed and one hundred thousand disabled on the job. There were virtually no government or corporate pensions, let alone health care or disability insurance beyond what ethnic fraternal organizations such as the Polish Falcons provided. Steel workers typically toiled six days a week, twelve hours a day, inhaling noxious iron particles, burning their flesh, and losing their hearing.[5]

The rise of the automobile, chemical, rubber, and steel industries in the early twentieth century created a bifurcated labor market: a large stream of unskilled workers and a smaller, yet significant, stream of highly skilled white-collar managers, researchers, and technicians. Skilled blue-collar workers largely disappeared in auto and steel industries, while those sectors of business where they remained secure – such as breweries, carpentry, and

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[4] Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940* (New York, 1989), 23.

[5] John A. Fitch, *The Steel Workers* (Pittsburgh, 1989), 57–71.

mechanics – did not greatly expand. U.S. Steel, Westinghouse, and Ford demanded an enormous pool of inexpensive, unskilled labor. From the 1880s through 1914, such corporations looked abroad for their workers rather than at home.

One of the most consequential trends in American economic history at the end of the nineteenth century had been the virtual disappearance of the native-born Protestant workforce in northern industrial centers. This was especially true in the metropolises of Chicago, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Even in midsized communities such as Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and Akron, Ohio, where white Protestant workers could still be found in the 1920s, they were outnumbered by Catholic and Jewish immigrants. As early as 1880, immigrants accounted for 65 percent of Chicago's industrial workers. By 1920, Chicago claimed 500,000 Polish Catholic immigrants and their children, followed by Pittsburgh (250,000), Detroit (100,000), Buffalo (100,000), and Milwaukee (100,000).[6]

Pittsburgh was the largest Catholic Slovak and Croatian city outside Europe in 1920. Most of western Pennsylvania's and eastern Ohio's Slavic workers were employed manufacturing steel. In New York and Philadelphia it was impossible not to think of garment-making without conjuring images of masses of southern Italian and Eastern European Jewish women toiling in sweatshops. Philadelphia had its "Little Italy," Pittsburgh its "Polish Hill," and New York, so late-nineteenth-century journalist Jacob Riis inelegantly wrote, its "Jew-Town." Chicago's "Loop" actually witnessed a Protestant Reformation in reverse as Lutheran places of worship were converted into Catholic churches.

As one consequence of the changing demographics of the workforce, a close relationship between religion/ethnicity and social class emerged. Data (from 1945) reported that two-thirds of Catholics were working class and just 9 percent could be found among the upper class. In contrast, 24 percent of Congregationalists were upper class and 43 percent middle class. Presbyterians had a similar class distribution. Baptists (white and black) were the only Protestant group with a high (68 percent) proportion in the lower income bracket. Overall, 55 percent of Catholics were urban manual workers. Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians had the lowest proportions among manual workers and the greatest representation in the white-collar professions.[7]

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[6] Victor R. Greene, "Poles," in Stephan Thernstrom, Ann Orlov, and Oscar Handlin, eds., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 787–803; and Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, 58–9.

[7] Liston Pope, "Religion and Class Structure," *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 256 (March 1948): 84–95.

The political portrait of the typical northern city by 1929 was paradoxical. Chicago's 234,000 African Americans were Republican loyalists – not because the GOP did much for them, but rather out of gratitude for emancipation and disdain for southern Democratic disenfranchisement and segregation. The Democratic Party in Chicago did not try to convert black voters any more than Irish Democrats in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York made an appeal to African Americans. Then again, in those East Coast cities, Irish Democrats were color-blind to the extent that they did not share power with ethnic Italians or Jews either.

For the millions of youths born of Southern and Eastern European Catholic and Jewish immigrants, their engagement with the political process prior to the Great Depression had been minimal. Unlike their parents, they had birthright citizenship and learned English. Although immigration restriction had been conceived as a punitive measure, it had promoted assimilation. Faced with the possibility that if they left American shores, immigrants would likely not be permitted to return, a largely transient population set down roots. Moreover, the parish church asserted its primacy against saloon and brothel. As with their foreign-born parents, however, voting and joining labor unions were not part of their mental world. They often had few expectations in life beyond obtaining a job, a home, and a family. Like the African Americans with whom they occasionally clashed, most Catholics and Jews expected little from the political process. In that, they were seldom disappointed.

Crisis, Opportunity, and the Advent of the Great Depression

Few nineteenth-century Catholics or Jews, whether clerical or lay, had engaged in politics beyond the confines of their neighborhoods or cities. Not until the 1930s did religious minorities mobilize locally and nationally. Once they became politicized, Catholics and Jews emphasized the economic as well as the moral roots of poverty. The ideological divide that widened between Democrats and Republicans in the 1930s reflected profoundly different religious conceptions of the causes of poverty and the appropriate solutions.[8]

In the 1930s there were identifiably Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant positions on such issues as labor union organization. Without the enormous organizational support of Catholic clergy, for instance, there likely would not have been a successful industrial union movement. At the same time, many of the most vociferous opponents of unionization were Protestant ministers and laypeople.

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[8] Rhys H. Williams, "Visions of the Good Society and the Religious Roots of American Political Culture," *Sociology of Religion* 60 (Spring 1999): 1–34.

While voters elected Franklin D. Roosevelt president four times, he owed his typically narrow margins of victory to a coalition of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities. Overwhelming support from Catholics and Jews in the northern urban centers helped swing industrial states such as Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to the Democrats. Roosevelt never received more than 40 percent of Protestants' votes, and they were the religious majority. What Protestant support Roosevelt garnered came from northern blacks and southern whites – as unstable and peculiar a partnership as one could conceive.

The Great Depression commenced in October 1929 as consumer demand fell precipitously, manufacturing inventories mounted, and stock values plummeted. Far from being a temporary downturn, the U.S. economy worsened. By 1932, 25 percent of the U.S. workforce was unemployed. Detroit, which was heavily dependent upon the automobile industry, had a 50 percent unemployment rate. Indeed, consumer demand for cars fell so sharply that in 1932 in Chicago, for instance, there were more cars stolen (10,199) than sold by dealers (9,068).[9]

Steel production in 1932 fell to 11 percent of capacity. Rather than lay off their workers, U.S. Steel placed 100 percent of its blue-collar employees on part-time status for greatly reduced wages. Consequently, they were not included in the national unemployment calculations. In cities such as Gary, Indiana, U.S. Steel terminated employees who accepted municipal or private charity. Steel towns such as Pittsburgh had an unemployment rate of 40 percent, which, given that U.S. Steel workers may have worked just one day in every four, greatly underestimated the actual extent of the economic crisis.[10]

Millions of Catholic and Jewish urban dwellers came of voting age at the beginning of the Depression. Between 1920 and 1936, the size of the U.S. electorate increased 40 percent, with most of that expansion occurring in northern cities. In Allegheny County (Pittsburgh), the number of voters rose 180 percent from 1920 to 1936. By the end of the 1930s, 51 percent of New York's voters and 45 percent of the Illinois electorate lived in New York City and Chicago, respectively. These new urban voters became a major Democratic constituency. Two-thirds of Michigan's Democrats, for instance, lived in Wayne County (Detroit). According to political scientist Steven Erie, without the twelve largest cities helping to shift their states to the Democratic column, Roosevelt's 449 Electoral College votes in 1940 would have been reduced to 237—29 short of reelection.[11]

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[9] Teaford, *Cities of the Heartland*, 182.

[10] Kenneth J. Heineman, *A Catholic New Deal: Religion and Reform in Depression Pittsburgh* (University Park, PA, 1999), 5, 11.

[11] Kristi Anderson, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928–1936* (Chicago, 1979), 29–34, 41; Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban*

One-quarter of the entire Democratic vote came from Catholics and nearly three-quarters of their clergy enthusiastically supported Roosevelt – including Syracuse, New York, Bishop John Duffy. Jews, though far smaller in number, became the most reliably Democratic ethnic voting bloc. The emergent residential and religious patterns in Democratic voting were replicated within the 1930s labor movement. Numerically, Catholics dominated the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Although there were fewer working-class Jews than Catholics, nearly all blue-collar Jews joined the CIO.[12]

In 1919, American Catholic leaders had issued the "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction." Adopting the language written by Catholic University priest John Ryan, the bishops argued that workers had the legal right to form labor unions and negotiate for "a living wage." Employers, the bishops contended, must understand "that the laborer is a human being, not merely an instrument of production; and that the laborer's right to a decent livelihood is the first moral charge upon industry." The bishops also urged corporations and the federal government to provide for "insurance against illness, invalidity, unemployment, and old age." Once workers received better wages and access to education, then they could assume more responsibility for providing for their own health insurance and retirement.[13]

Reformist Catholic clergy were most likely to be found in Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Toledo, and Youngstown. They were greatly inspired by Leo XIII's encyclical *The Condition of Labor* (1891), and two written by Pius XI, *Reconstructing the Social Order* (1931) and *Atheistic Communism* (1937). Bishops Karl Alter (Toledo), Hugh Boyle (Pittsburgh), and Joseph Schrembs (Cleveland), as well as archbishops George Mundelein (Chicago), Samuel Stritch (Milwaukee), and Edward Hanna (San Francisco), placed their moral authority behind social reform and labor organizing. Alter, Boyle, Hanna, and Schrembs, as members of the Administrative Council of the Washington-based National Catholic

Machine Politics, 1840–1985 (Berkeley, 1988), 137; Fay Calkins, *The CIO and the Democratic Party* (Chicago, 1952), 137; and Samuel J. Eldersveld, "The Influence of Metropolitan Party Pluralities in Presidential Elections Since 1920: A Study of Twelve Key Cities," *American Political Science Review* 43 (Dec. 1949): 1189–206.

[12] Monroe Billington and Cal Clark, "Catholic Clergymen, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the New Deal," *Catholic Historical Review* 79 (Jan. 1993): 65–82; Pope, "Religion and Class Structure," 84–95; and Lawrence H. Fuchs, "American Jews and the Presidential Vote," in Lawrence H. Fuchs, ed., *American Ethnic Politics* (New York, 1968), 50–76.

[13] Administrative Committee of the National Catholic War Council, "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction, February 12, 1919," in Rev. Raphael Huber, ed., *Our Bishops Speak: National Pastorals and Annual Statements of the Hierarchy of the United States, 1919–1951* (Milwaukee, 1952), 243–60.

Welfare Conference (NCWC), took the lead in championing unions and federal policies to combat unemployment.[14]

Clerical support for the CIO proved essential to its success. Catholics were often suspicious of outsiders, particularly if they were of a different religious faith. Blue-collar Catholics lived a relatively insulated existence up through the 1930s. Their world evolved around the parish, the ethnic fraternal, and, to the lament of some Catholic reformers, the tavern. There was little socializing across religious or even ethnic lines outside the workplace.

"Labor priests" and bishops provided the religious language necessary to build a non-Communist union movement among urban Catholics. In San Francisco, Archbishop Hanna maintained a close working relationship with Michael Casey, the Irish Catholic president of the Teamster local. Across the country in Pittsburgh, Fathers Charles Owen Rice and Carl Hensler walked picket lines, educated workers in union principles, and wrote articles in support of organized labor. As Hensler argued in 1934, "It is becoming increasingly evident that a proper distribution of the national income calls for a thorough reformation of the entire profit-system." To achieve that goal, Hensler concluded, "profits, wages, and prices be made to conform to the demands of the common good and the principles of social justice."[15]

Hensler and Rice helped establish the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) in 1937 to fight conservative businessmen and Communists. Neither priest wanted to create a separate and rival Catholic union. Rather, ACTU founders sought to link religious faith explicitly to political action and the cause of union organizing. Rice insisted, "Religion belongs in politics and is needed there. It alone can curb the unbridled greed that lies at the root of political corruption."[16]

Members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) often approached the local priests and fraternal presidents and asked them for their cooperation in holding union meetings. SWOC organizers in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, went to the Polish Hall, safe from the attacks of the Jones & Laughlin security men who would not invade a fraternal lodge or Catholic Church. In Homestead, Pennsylvania, Father Clement Hrtanek, a leader of the National Catholic Slovak Federation and pastor of St. Anne's, opened his church doors to CIO organizers.

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[14] William Issel, "For Both Cross & Flag: Catholic Action in Northern California during the Thirties," *Transatlantica* 5 (March 2006), http://transatlantica.revues.org; and David J. O'Brien, *American Catholics and Social Reform: Five Great Encyclicals* (New York, 1939).

[15] Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 59; and Issel, "For Both Cross & Flag."

[16] Heineman, *Catholic New Deal,* 43.

The social teaching of the Catholic Church influenced laity as well as the clergy. SWOC and CIO president Philip Murray had gone into the coal mines at the age of ten. No matter how far he rose in the ranks of organized labor, he never severed his working-class Catholic roots. As a labor leader, Murray kept copies of Leo XIII's and Pius XI's encyclicals on his desk for inspiration and guidance. He also frequently consulted labor priest Charles Owen Rice, and the two developed a strong friendship.[17]

John Brophy, a United Mine Workers (UMW) organizer and CIO troubleshooter, argued that in Leo XIII's encyclical *The Condition of Labor*, he had found church support for his ideas on "democratic economic and social planning." Pat Fagan, who became president of Pittsburgh's UMW District 5 in 1922, was no less inspired by Catholic social instruction. When he entered the mines at the age of twelve, Fagan drew strength from Leo XIII. Anthony Lorditch, a leader of the Johnston, Pennsylvania, SWOC and the son of Croatian immigrants, had entered the city's steel mills in 1917. As Lorditch recounted, "I believed {in the union] because I heard Phil Murray, and being a Catholic, I read the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, saying that human justice should allow people to join together in order to get fair deals and everything."[18]

In 1935, prior to the founding of SWOC, Phil Murray and Pat Fagan endorsed a statement issued by the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The statement, "Organized Social Justice," advocated a constitutional amendment to establish a national minimum wage, a standard forty-hour work week, and an "elementary regulation of industry." They were strongly opposed to any political movement that advocated workers' revolution – rejecting both laissez-faire capitalism and atheistic Communism. It was little wonder that CIO publicity director Len De Caux, a secret member of the Communist Party, contemptuously dismissed SWOC as "a setup – a Catholic setup.... In national CIO and most other new unions, religion didn't stick out as it did in SWOC."[19]

Dorothy Day joined Murray in endorsing "Organized Social Justice." A convert to Catholicism who had rejected the socialism and atheism of her youth, Day founded the Catholic Worker movement in 1933. She wished to feed and shelter New York's unemployed. Beyond that objective, Day wanted to underscore that it was "possible to protest, to expose, to complain, to point out abuses and demand reforms without desiring the

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[17] *Ibid.*, 121, 204–5.
[18] *Ibid.*, 41–2, 128–9.
[19] Eugene B. McCarraher, "The Church Irrelevant: Paul Hanly Furfey and the Fortunes of American Catholic Radicalism," *Religion and American Culture* 7 (Summer 1997): 163–94; Len DeCaux, *Labor Radical: From the Wobblies to the CIO* (Boston, 1970), 280–1; Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 70.

overthrow of religion." She and her followers were adamant in their support of unionization. Catholics must join picket lines, feed strikers, and distribute "extracts of the papal encyclicals showing how the Church supports the laborer in his rights on the basis of the divine law."[20]

Although Day's newspaper, the *Catholic Worker*, had a much smaller circulation than the *New York Times*, many of its regular readers were politically influential. Michigan governor Frank Murphy, a founder of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and an observant Catholic, regularly read Day and delighted in her company. Phil Murray admired Day, and Fathers Rice and Hensler established a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in Pittsburgh. Even those in the Catholic Church hierarchy who criticized Day's pacifist beliefs and rejection of capitalist materialism, admired her grace. New York's Francis Spellman, who became a cardinal, thought Day was, literally, a saint.[21]

Catholic clerical and lay reformers sought to act upon one of the church's core principles – the belief in subsidiarity. In essence, subsidiarity, as Pius XI had written, was the proposition that economic, moral, and political decisions should be made, whenever possible, at the local level and by the people most directly affected by policy changes. While the state had a role to play in social reconstruction, it was up to ordinary people to participate in the political process. In consultation with the federal government, the people decided how to build a better society. The state did not impose its will upon the people. A government that did not listen to all of its people, poor and rich, Catholic and Protestant, white and black, was not worthy of popular support.

For Joseph Alioto, a graduate of Catholic University and future mayor of San Francisco, and Pennsylvania Democratic boss David Lawrence, an Irish Catholic native of Pittsburgh, subsidiarity translated into building an inclusive, multiethnic political machine and promoting social reform. Both Alioto and Lawrence wished to avoid the racial and religion divisions that plagued Democrats in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Pittsburgh Bishop Hugh Boyle, whose nephew and namesake worked for Lawrence, concurred, as did Phil Murray. Alioto, having worked for Catholic University's Monsignor Francis Haas in the U.S. Department of Labor prior to World War II, was just as immersed as Lawrence in Catholic social teaching and union organization.[22]

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[20] Patrick W. Carey, ed., *American Catholic Religious Thought: The Shaping of a Theological and Social Tradition* (New York, 1987), 253–6; and Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 107.

[21] James Hennessey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York, 1981), 267.

[22] William Issel, "'The Catholic Internationale': Mayor Joseph Alioto's Urban Liberalism and San Francisco Catholicism," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22 (Spring 2004): 99–120; and

Beyond Catholic ranks, there were fewer Jewish clerical supporters of social reform in the 1930s. Rabbis such as Chicago's S. A. Pardes, the editor of a monthly Hebrew publication, and Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Committee, supported Roosevelt. Most Jews, however, championed change outside formal religious channels. To an extent, fear of an anti-Semitic backlash may have kept some temples from playing too public a political role in the 1930s. So too Wise and the American Jewish Committee were understandably focused on the rise of violent anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. It was also a fact that Catholic clergy loomed larger in the lives of their parishioners than rabbis often did in Jewish neighborhoods. Rabbis, after all, served at the sufferance of their temple boards and did not have an institutional support network comparable to that of the American Catholic Church.[23]

Finally, the forces of secularization operated more strongly among Jews than Catholics. There were numerous reasons why this was so, including the difference between a theology that focused on the here and now (Judaism) and one that kept the afterlife front and center (Catholicism). If the emphasis was on the here and now, then religious principles readily fused with secular politics. Catholic social thought, although supporting political reform, remained chary of giving too much power to the state and understood that politics could only achieve so much given their basis in flawed human nature. Tellingly, CIO vice president Sidney Hillman had started life as a rabbinical student and then evolved away from institutional religion and toward labor organizing. Phil Murray, in contrast, became more religiously grounded as he advanced in the union leadership.[24]

Protestant clergy and laypeople had the least representation within CIO and Democratic reform ranks in the 1930s. Catholic activists highlighted the work of Protestant union organizers such as Elmer Cope and James Myers precisely to counter the CIO's accurate public image as a largely Catholic and Jewish movement. Even in Detroit, a CIO bastion, white Protestant migrants from the South loathed unions that reached out to Polish Catholics and African Americans.[25]

Barbara Ferman, *Challenging the Growth Machine: Neighborhood Politics in Chicago and Pittsburgh* (Lawrence, KS, 1996), 42–4.

[23] Arthur Liebman, "The Ties That Bind: The Jewish Support for the Left in the United States," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 66 (Dec. 1976): 285–321; and Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (New York, 1989), 285–9.

[24] Pope, "Religion and Class Structure," 84–95; and Fuchs, "American Jews," 50–76.

[25] Steve Fraser, "The 'Labor Question,'" in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (Princeton, 1989), 55–84; and Elizabeth Fones-Wolf and Ken Fones-Wolf, "Lending a Hand to Labor: James Myers and the Federal Council of Churches, 1926–1947," *Church History* 68 (March 1999): 62–86.

In the South and, for example, Ohio's Mahoning Valley, where many industrial workers were Protestant Fundamentalists and Pentecostals, the CIO faltered along religious and cultural fault lines. Such Protestant workers tended to be antiunion and unexposed to Catholic social thought – let alone the early twentieth-century progressive Protestant Social Gospel that had shaped Cope and Myers. During the 1937 steel strike, white and black Protestants in the Mahoning Valley and Johnstown, Pennsylvania, crossed the picket lines. Nearly all of the steel workers who went on strike were Catholic. Johnstown's Protestant clergy railed against strikers, asserting, "The fruits of the CIO have been lawlessness, riots, bloodshed, kidnapping, threats, and great losses in wages to the working man. There is no question but that the CIO is paving the way for a Soviet America."[26]

Although African Americans in the northern cities shifted massively from the Republican to the Democratic Party in presidential balloting between 1932 and 1936, many held aloof from the labor movement. Indeed, the leaders of the Detroit branches of the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) decried the CIO for attempting to organize black autoworkers. Detroit's African American clergy followed suit, expressing immense gratitude toward Henry Ford for his financial support of their churches.[27]

For their part, black workers in cities such as Baltimore discovered that white unionists did not want them in their ranks no matter how hard Phil Murray and Maryland labor priest John Cronin pleaded on their behalf. It did not help race relations that in cities such as Buffalo and Detroit during the early 1940s, a few vocal priests rallied Polish Catholics to resist black settlement. Father Constantine Djiuk, of St. Louis the King parish in Detroit, clearly had no use for certain elements of the Democratic coalition: "[w]e have the Jews and niggers making a combination [in city elections] … they cheat the niggers worse than they used to cheat the Polish peasants who trusted them."[28]

In the midsized mill towns of Ohio and Pennsylvania, where Catholics appeared more willing to enlist blacks than was the case in Baltimore and Detroit, it was African Americans who rejected the CIO. During the 1937

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[26] Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 124–30.

[27] August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW* (New York, 1979), 16–19.

[28] John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago, 1996), 73–5; Kenneth Durr, "When Southern Politics Came North: The Roots of White Working-Class Conservatism in Baltimore, 1940–1964," *Labor History* 37 (Summer 1996): 309–31; and Joshua B. Freeman and Steve Rosswurm, "The Education of an Anti-Communist: Father John F. Cronin and the Baltimore Labor Movement," *Labor History* 33 (Spring 1992): 217–47.

steel strike, Protestant steel executives contributed generously to black churches and hired African Americans in place of Catholic unionists. To the dismay of SWOC organizers and their sympathizers in the African American press, black Protestant clergy used their pulpits to condemn the CIO as a foreign (i.e., Catholic) organization.

Harlem's venerable Abyssinian Baptist Church, whose congregation increased from eight thousand in 1929 to fifteen thousand by 1938, stood nearly alone in its embrace of the CIO. Claiming the largest Protestant congregation in the United States, black or white, Abyssinian sponsored health clinics, fed forty thousand unemployed people annually, and organized protests against discriminatory hiring practices. Pastors Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. urged African Americans to join Jewish and Italian garment workers in union organizing campaigns. Both generations of Powells preached a Social Gospel that had largely gone out of style among white Protestants. Building upon Abyssinian's experience in political organizing, the younger Powell won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1945, thereby becoming New York City's first African American Congressman.[29]

Despite the example set by Abyssinian, most African American congregations in Harlem castigated CIO organizing drives. In general, black clerical influence, whether exerted against the CIO in the North or on behalf of civil rights in the South, was limited. The northern black church outside Harlem was an economically weak institution and lacked the organizational infrastructure of the Catholic Church. Of Pittsburgh's fifty-six black churches in the 1930s, for example, only four had the resources to sponsor community events and provide assistance to the needy. In most African American neighborhoods in the North, there was no black equivalent of a Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Recognizing that reality, Chicago Bishop Bernard Sheil, who founded the CYO in 1930, encouraged blacks and Jews to participate in CYO-sponsored athletic events and vacation schools. Sheil was also a champion of a racially and religiously inclusive CIO.[30]

The southern black church, while more firmly rooted in their communities than their recently transplanted northern counterparts, operated in an exceptionally hostile political environment. When southern black Baptist and Methodist clergy decried lynching, segregation, and disenfranchisement to their flocks, they typically did not repeat the performance in front

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[29] Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Or Does It Explode? Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York, 1991), 59–60, 104–6, 111.

[30] John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Urbana, 1983), 199–201.

of a white audience. An African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1931 assisted the black unemployed and made a carefully worded political pitch for color-blind state relief. Three years later, in Darlington, South Carolina, AME Bishop Noah Williams publicly supported a membership drive for the NAACP. Given that the NAACP mounted legal challenges against discrimination, supporting the organization could have led to beatings or worse. Such black Protestant activism, however, was rare, and it never pushed too hard against local laws and customs.[31]

THE FOES OF SOCIAL REFORM

If Catholic and Jewish social reformers found it difficult – though not impossible – to forge alliances with blacks, white Protestants were often less open to outsiders. The South, in spite of being the most reliably Democratic section of the country in the 1930s, was also the most suspicious of labor unions and resistant to the expansion of federal authority. In part, this political state of affairs was a legacy of having lost a war fought, ostensibly, on the issue of states' rights. Further, the South, having been bypassed by the immigration wave of 1890–1914, had no large Catholic and Jewish constituencies arguing in favor of unionization and the expansion of federal social welfare programs. (Since blacks could not vote, their opinions did not matter.) Finally, the South was a culturally conservative Protestant region which, theologically, was more likely to see poverty as a result of individual sin rather than a product of an unjust economic system.

White southerners voted Democratic because they wanted federal agricultural subsidies, flood control projects, military bases, and infrastructure enhancement. They did not want civil rights or the CIO, and President Roosevelt was not about to force their hand since southern whites controlled most of the congressional committees with which he had to work. Moreover, given how tight Democratic margins of victory typically were – 1936 being the exception – Roosevelt could not afford to alienate the white South. Thus the most economically and socially conservative faction in the New Deal electoral coalition exercised a de facto veto over Democratic reform legislation.

In light of this political reality, it made sense that it was a Texas Democrat, Martin Dies, who helped mount congressional opposition to reform. With the support of other southerners and with the assistance of northern Republicans, Dies founded the House Committee on Un-American

[31] Edwin D. Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Equal Rights in South Carolina, 1930–1939," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (Oct. 1959): 346–69.

Activities in 1938. Dies established his investigating committee to paint
Catholic CIO leaders and New Deal reformers as Communists. The Dies
committee became a clearinghouse for opponents of reform, prompting
such Catholic activists as Father Rice and Phil Murray to defend the CIO.
Roosevelt largely kept silent, sending Interior Secretary Harold Ickes out
to attack Dies, and, in turn, absorb most of the congressional and news
media abuse.[32]

Northern corporation executives from J. Howard Pew (Sun Oil) to Alfred
Sloan (General Motors) funded numerous antireform organizations and
individuals. In 1934 they had founded the American Liberty League and
spent millions attacking federal social welfare initiatives. Liberty Leaguers
in the 1934 midterm election and 1936 presidential race sought to defeat
Democratic supporters of organized labor and drive Roosevelt from the
White House. Such executives also financed the publication of pamphlets
that associated the CIO with the Soviet Union, and they assisted publicist
Elizabeth Dilling in her efforts to depict the National Catholic Welfare
Conference as a Communist organization.[33]

GM's Sloan, along with fellow automobile executives John and Horace
Dodge, also funded the antiunion sermons of Michigan-based minister
Gerald L. K. Smith. Broadcasting from Detroit's WJR radio station in
1939, Rev. Smith, a member of the Christian Disciples, asserted that the
CIO's leaders were Soviet agents. At the invitation of companies such as
Johns-Manville, Smith had gone on the road in 1938 to warn workers not
to join a union. That same year he addressed an enthusiastic anti-CIO rally
of twenty thousand in Akron.[34]

Such opponents of social reform as the Liberty League, Gerald L. K.
Smith, and Martin Dies mainly spoke to the anti–New Deal choir and
made few converts. That said, the 1938 gubernatorial and congressional
midterms dealt reformers, whether secular or religious, a serious blow.
Conservative foes of the New Deal and the CIO won gubernatorial races
in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Ohio also sent to the U.S. Senate
Robert A. Taft, who quickly assumed national leadership in the battle
against Roosevelt and organized labor. A congressional alliance between
antireform southern Democrats and northern Republicans thwarted most
New Deal social and labor legislation after 1938.

An electoral backlash against the violent strikes of 1937, in addition to
a recession that wiped out the limited economic gains made since 1933,

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[32] Kenneth J. Heineman, "Media Bias in Coverage of the Dies Committee on Un-American
Activities, 1938–1940," *The Historian* 55 (Autumn 1992): 37–52.

[33] Heineman, *Catholic New Deal*, 98; and Michael W. Miles, *The Odyssey of the Radical Right*
(New York, 1980), 25.

[34] Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Right from the Great Depression to the
Cold War* (Philadelphia, 1983), 128–54.

brought out small-town Protestant Republican voters. Too many Catholic Democrats in the key urban industrial states failed to vote in 1938. Labor unrest and recession had demoralized many Catholic voters, and without Roosevelt at the top of the ticket – still beloved in spite of everything – they saw little reason to go to the polls.[35]

Beyond white middle-class Protestant antireform sentiment, Catholic activists in the 1930s had to face the fact that they were a group often divided against itself. Fort Wayne, Indiana, Bishop John Noll charged that the CIO's John Brophy was a Communist who pretended to be Catholic. As the publisher of the national weekly *Our Sunday Visitor*, Noll had ample opportunity to denigrate both Catholic and non-Catholic supporters of the CIO.[36]

Father Charles Coughlin, the Royal Oak, Michigan, "radio priest," was an instructive example of the important and sometimes counterproductive role Catholics played in 1930s reform. What had began in 1926 as locally broadcast homilies on Detroit's WJR radio station evolved into a national sensation. Within four years the CBS radio network had picked up Coughlin's broadcasts. By 1932, Coughlin's weekly audience numbered at least 30 million. When Coughlin sharply criticized President Herbert Hoover's economic policies, 1.2 million listeners wrote letters largely approving of his stance. His mounting attacks on Wall Street financiers played well with the Catholic laity.[37]

Coughlin, however, grew increasingly concerned with the expanding power of the federal government and became convinced that organized labor was a tool of Communist agitators. He moved openly into the anti-reform camp in 1935. Where he once called the New Deal "Christ's Deal," it was evolving into the "Jew Deal." Catholic clerical and lay supporters of President Roosevelt and the CIO were outraged. However, so long as Detroit bishop Michael Gallagher gave his approval, Coughlin continued to broadcast antireform homilies to millions of Catholics. As late as 1938, in spite of condemnation from the National Catholic Welfare Conference, a Gallup Public Opinion Poll reported that Coughlin retained a positive image among 42 percent of Catholics – compared with 10 percent and 19 percent, respectively, of Jews and Protestants.[38]

Although Coughlin was based in the heavily Slavic industrial heart-land, his supporters tended to be clustered on the East Coast among

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[35] Michael Barone, *Our Country: The Shaping of America from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York, 1990), 106–7, 122.
[36] Hennessey, *American Catholics*, 270.
[37] William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932–1940* (New York, 1963), 100.
[38] *Ibid.*, 101–2; Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York, 1983); and Hennessey, *American Catholics*, 275.

lower-middle-class Irish and German Catholics. The geography of
Coughlin's appeal made sense given that the Catholic Church leadership of
Boston and New York consistently criticized the New Deal and Catholic
social reformers. William Cardinal O'Connell of Boston informed his
priests not to discuss the labor encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI with
their parishioners. (O'Connell himself never trusted Coughlin because of
his earlier support for Roosevelt.)[39]

In New York, Father Robert Gannon, the president of Fordham
University, decried anti-Coughlin politicians who sought to corrupt the
minds of Catholic youth with Communist indoctrination. Democratic
reformers, including their Catholic enablers, Gannon concluded, sought
"to eliminate all religion and all morality that does not conform to their
peculiar ideology."[40]

Patrick Scanlan, the editor of the Brooklyn Diocese's *Tablet*, was an
enthusiastic supporter of Coughlin. In 1937, Scanlan depicted CIO orga-
nizers as "a radical, disturbing element with a definite link to communism."
A year later, Scanlan contemptuously dismissed Coughlin's Jewish critics.
Accusations of anti-Semitism hurled against Catholics, Scanlan insisted,
represented "nothing more than a 'Red' herring used by communists and
their 'liberal' dupes and stooges to spread strife, discord, and confusion
throughout the land." Neither Patrick Cardinal Hayes nor his successor,
Francis Cardinal Spellman, would condemn Coughlin's anti-Semitic New
York followers – unlike Chicago's Mundelein who voiced enormous dis-
gust with the Detroit priest.[41]

If the East Coast branch of the American Catholic Church contained
most of the clerical conservatives, so too it may be observed that Democratic
Party leaders in Boston and New York were equally leery of reformers.
Unlike Pittsburgh and Chicago, Irish Catholic Democratic leaders in
Boston and New York resisted sharing power with ethnic Italians, Jews,
and African Americans. Philadelphia's Irish Democrats were a little more
open to forging multiethnic alliances, but in a city where Dennis Cardinal
Dougherty and his Irish clergy regarded Italians as primitive "pagans,"
there was going to be only so much successful outreach. This was one of the

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[39] Gerald H. Gamm, *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920–1940* (Chicago, 1986), 155; and Ronald H. Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians of New York City, 1929–1941* (Urbana, 1988), 96.

[40] Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 90.

[41] Gerald H. Gamm, *The Making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920–1940* (Chicago, 1986), 155; Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 104, 106; Charles H. Trout, *Boston, the Great Depression, and the New Deal* (New York, 1977), 258–71; and David J. O'Brien, "American Catholics and Organized Labor in the 1930's," *Catholic Historical Review* 52 (Oct. 1966): 323–49.

reasons why South Philadelphia's Italians voted Republican in municipal elections through the 1940s.[42]

In New York, blacks, Jews, and Italians went so far as to found the American Labor Party (ALP). Wishing to reelect Roosevelt in 1936, but not wanting to vote for Irish Democrats down ticket, creating the ALP proved the answer. Under New York election law, a third party could nominate as their presidential candidate someone from the Democratic or Republican Party, and then fill in the gubernatorial, congressional, and municipal election slots with their own people. It then became a simple matter for the ALP to bypass Irish Democrats and round out the ticket with Italians, Jews, and African Americans. A better illustration of political dysfunction in the 1930s could not be found.

By the time the United States entered World War II in 1941, the tide of religious and secular-inspired social reform had receded. President Roosevelt himself had argued that "Dr. New Deal" would be replaced by "Dr. Win the War." Phil Murray spent the war years quietly fighting the influence of Communists within the CIO while publicly decrying efforts of conservatives to paint the union movement as a Soviet tool. With Father Rice at his side, Murray helped establish the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) in 1947. The ACTU supported the efforts of the ADA to contain Soviet expansion after World War II, purge the CIO of Communists, champion civil rights, and fight for a continuation of New Deal economic reform.

The history of religious social activism in the United States until the 1930s was largely a Protestant tale. Protestant activists brought their vision of a just and moral order to the center of American politics. It would be impossible to imagine the abolition of African American slavery without taking into account the critical political role played by northern Protestant congregations and ministers. At the same time, Protestant reform encompassed causes far beyond abolition. Such activists saw a host of moral ills in America – many of them caused, they were convinced, by vice-ridden Catholic immigrants. Poverty, the great majority of Protestant activists believed, was the result of sin, not low wages and an unjust economic order.

Few Catholics, or Jews for that matter, responded to Protestant crusades against saloons, gambling, and immigration. Most Catholic and Jewish immigrants were too busy trying to earn a living to fight back at the ballot box. Then again, many Southern and Eastern European Catholic

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[42] Richard A. Varbero, "Philadelphia's South Italians in the 1920s," in Allen F. Davis and Mark Haller, eds., *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790–1940* (Philadelphia, 1973), 266–70.

immigrants in the early twentieth century regarded themselves as transients; they had no intention of remaining in America and putting down roots. Further, Catholic and Jewish numbers were too small, and most were not naturalized citizens, to exert much political influence – and certainly not on a national scale. So far as unionization was concerned, even among those immigrants who might have been interested in organizing, the fact remained that uniting a workforce that spoke a dozen languages was nearly impossible.

The Depression decade became the historical moment of opportunity for the children of Southern and Eastern European Catholic and Jewish immigrants. By the 1930s their numbers were great; they spoke English, had the vote, and were ready for change. The Democratic Party and the CIO became the vehicles of reform, powered by millions of Catholics and Jews. Catholic clerical and laypeople moved into the front ranks of labor and social reformers. Never before had so many Catholic bishops, priests, and devout laity come together to challenge the economic order. While the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI did not transform the post–World War II Democrats into a Catholic party, they had exerted more influence than many pundits and subsequent historians recognized.

Threatened by the political challenge which urban Catholics and Jews posed to the old social order, Republicans – mainly northern Protestants – denounced social security, collective bargaining, and public works projects for the unemployed as socialist, if not Communist. What they could not admit was much of the reform they decried had its roots in a religious conception of social justice that was alien to their mental worlds. Reformers such as Philip Murray, Charles Owen Rice, and Joseph Alioto were not Communists. To the best of their abilities they sought to bring together people of different faiths and racial backgrounds. Though they may have failed in all their goals, these religious activists changed America.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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NATIVISM FROM THE NEW REPUBLIC
TO THE COLD WAR

JUSTIN NORDSTROM

America's religious history rests on an unsettling pattern of contradiction. While the United States has served as a refuge for generations of new-comers fleeing religious persecution abroad, the nation has simultaneously been the site of intense interreligious conflict and persecution. This essay sketches an outline of America's religiously inspired prejudice from the late eighteenth century through 1945, arguing that such intolerance informed a broad range of American cultural biases. In popular literature, social movements, legal decisions, and military or political campaigns, America's aspiration to serve as the world's religious safe haven clashed uncomfortably with the harsh reality of domestic turmoil.

Ironies abound in the study of America's religiously inspired xenophobia. The task of identifying examples of religious persecution can be problematic, since victims can also be perpetrators. For instance, while Catholics endured generations of discrimination on the grounds of their alleged "foreign" demeanor, they also lashed out at "heathen" Asian immigrants on the West Coast, and the outspoken Catholic priest Father Charles Coughlin broadcast vehemently anti-Semitic messages to millions of radio listeners in the 1930s. More often, however, religious conflict signaled an attempt to define the United States in largely or exclusively Protestant terms and to rally the nation against a perceived enemy lurking within American borders.

DEFINING NATIVISM

In a famous letter addressed to the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790, George Washington proclaimed that the new American republic "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."[1] However, such demonstrations of liberality clash with America's equally pervasive

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[1] Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, 2004), 39.

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tradition of xenophobia. Even the most prominent examples of ethnic and religious tolerance can be paired with equally significant instances of close-minded hostility. For instance, while the Bill of Rights, enacted a year after Washington's letter, ensured freedom from religious persecution on a national level, individual states continued to restrict office holding and voting rights for religious minorities through the mid-nineteenth century. The Statue of Liberty, symbolizing a pluralistic and welcoming America, was completed in 1886. That same year, Chicago's Haymarket Riots resulted in the unjust arrest and execution of several German-speaking labor organizers, demonstrating American animosity toward the foreign-born. Likewise, the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago invited Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic visitors to join with Western speakers, promising to "unite all religion against all irreligion."[2] But such broad-minded rhetoric was quite limited: Mormons were completely excluded from the proceedings, and the Parliament's Protestant organizers hoped to use the event to evangelize and demonstrate Christian superiority. Examining the twentieth century reveals similar patterns. While American soldiers in World War II were ostensibly fighting abroad to secure the "four freedoms," including "freedom of worship," surveys conducted during the war "disclosed that more than twice as many people considered Jews to be a 'menace to America' than were concerned about Japanese or Germans."[3]

Such forms of hostility are expressions of American nativism – a recurring pattern of animosity toward individuals and groups outside the American mainstream. Specifically, nativism entails "intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections."[4] Nativists believed that their enemies were engaging in a secretive plot to undermine American democracy. While Catholics, Jews, and Mormons have been prominent targets for nativism, other groups have experienced religiously inspired bigotry as well. In the colonial era, Puritanical theocracies could banish or hang Quakers who set foot in New England, while in the nineteenth century the Shakers' celibacy was demonized for allegedly corrupting American morality and family life.

Regardless of their opponents, nativist crusades were the product of a heightened nationalism that invested religious prejudice with the trappings of patriotism. Thus not all types of interreligious hostility should be termed nativism. Arguing that Catholic transubstantiation is theologically

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[2] John Henry Barrows, ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions* (Chicago, 1893), 1: 72.

[3] Robert N. Bellah and Frederick E. Greenspahn, eds., *Uncivil Religion: Interreligious Hostility in America* (New York, 1987), vii.

[4] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns in American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1998), 3–4.

incorrect or that Jews are guilty of deicide would not necessarily consti-
tute nativism per se. However, alleging that Catholics were stockpiling
weapons in order to topple the American republic or that a cabal of Jews
steered the nation toward war and ruin – these forms of bigotry would
reflect nativism in its quintessential form. Inherent in these arguments is
the sense that nativists themselves exhibit the requisite patriotism, judg-
ment, and insight to serve as arbiters of national belonging. Nativism at its
most fundamental level is contested nationalism; it is a conflict over which
individuals, groups, and religious communities should belong as part of
the nation and which should be rooted out and cast aside.

Some of the most powerful motivations for nativism developed in the
early modern era and migrated to American shores with early European set-
tlers. American anti-Catholicism, for instance, traces its origins to armed
conflicts during the European Reformation and the seventeenth-century
scandals such as the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in which Catholic radicals con-
spired to destroy the British Parliament. The capture and execution of
such criminals, celebrated as Guy Fawkes Day in England, was commem-
orated in colonial America as Pope's Day, a prominent holiday for revelry
and public demonstrations against Catholic settlers. Likewise, Europe's
long history of anti-Semitism shaped American attitudes for generations.
Medieval fables, such as the Myth of the Wandering Jew who insulted
Jesus during the crucifixion, or stereotypes of sinister Jewish cabals influ-
enced writers from the colonial era through the Cold War. From the first
Jewish settlement in New Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century
through the American Revolution and beyond, governors repeatedly ques-
tioned whether Jews should be eligible to hold office, serve on militias, or
participate in elections. Well into the nineteenth century, the European
stereotype of Jews as untrustworthy pariahs persisted, even in the demo-
cratic United States.

Nativism can also influence one's individual personality and identity
formation. In this respect, nativism can be understood as a nearly uni-
versal phenomenon – "an aspect of social psychology" that reflects deeply
held fears and attitudes.[5] In this psychological explanation, nativism
emerges because individuals enhance their own social and religious sta-
tus by projecting uncertainties and anxieties onto outsiders and differ-
ent social groups. The Ku Klux Klan's skyrocketing membership in the
1920s, for instance, reflected fears that traditional white male authority
and Protestant hegemony were under siege. By identifying recognizable

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[5] Michael Hughey, "Americanism and Its Discontents: Protestantism, Nativism, and
Political Heresy in America," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 5:4
(1992): 545.

targets, such as new immigrants, women's suffrage advocates, and African Americans, the Ku Klux Klan transcended geography and denomination-alism, rallying millions of members into a community unified by ritual and common enemies.

While these broader considerations clearly contributed to the outpour-ing of nativism in the United States, America's particular cultural and social climate also stimulated interreligious hostility and shaped the con-tours of nativists' activities. Interreligious hostility served as a unifying cultural force in an American nation where significant ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity made it difficult to find a common cultural identity. Thus, in this view, nativism is commonplace in American history "because it meant different things to many different people. It could assuage many different anxieties, justify many hatreds, and rationalize many personal and group objectives."[6] Moreover, America's unique traditions and social out-look motivated nativism in the nineteenth century: religious minorities and unassimilated immigrants threatened American notions of indepen-dence, democracy, and republican government. Nativism rose in popu-larity in the antebellum era due to persistent fears that ideals enshrined by the American Revolution could not be sustained in later generations. As Native American removal became more pervasive in the 1830s, newly arrived immigrants took the place of the Indian "other" against whom Protestant Americans defined themselves and their nation. Pre–Civil War nativism, therefore, was part of the growing pains of a distinctly American form of republicanism.

Furthermore, outbreaks of nativism were more frequent and more explosive when they coincided with the concrete realities of economic fluctua-tion, social class formation, and partisan competition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nativist antagonism emerged most forcefully from direct conflict or status rivalries: "activities – political, religious, economic, and associational – through which men of different ethnic backgrounds have competed for prestige and for favorable positions."[7] For instance, violence between working-class Protestant and Catholic street gangs in antebellum New York emerged less from overt ethnic hatred than from the overcrowding, mechanized labor, and limited opportunities for entre-preneurs and artisans that accompanied the nineteenth-century market revolution.

American nativism emerges in a wide variety of forms, ranging from print culture to legal or political discourse, and culminating in dramatic

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[6] Dale Knobel, *"America for the Americans": The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York, 1996), xxviii.

[7] John Higham, "Another Look at Nativism," *Catholic Historical Review* 44:2 (1958): 151.

outbursts of religiously-inspired violence. What follows is a survey of nativism's many manifestations. Such a topical approach, while not meant to be exhaustive, should demonstrate how nativism exerted a tremendous impact on American historical and cultural development.

LITERARY TROPES

It is in print – in novels, newspapers, plays, and other forms of popular literature – that America's religiously inspired nativism assumed its most pervasive and durable form. When ethnic and religious stereotypes were disseminated in written form, authors could shape readers' attitudes and imaginations, even in geographic areas where their subjects were virtually unknown. In rare instances, these stereotypes were positive. Before significant numbers of Jews arrived in British North America, for instance, Puritan settlers in Massachusetts styled themselves a "New Israel," evoking imagery from the Old Testament to form their colonial society. More often, such conceptions conveyed deeply anti-Semitic tones, even in areas with virtually no Jewish population. Anti-Semitic jokes, stories, and songs predate Jews' arrival on American shores and provided fodder for early newspapers, even on the colonial frontier. In the antebellum era, Rabbi Isaac Wise remarked on the prevalence of anti-Semitic writing, noting, "A rascally Jew figured in every cheap novel, every newspaper printed some stale jokes about Jews to fill up space, and every backwoodsman had a few such jokes on hand for use in public address."[8] Likewise, rural communities in the Midwest during the 1910s were home to the most vitriolic anti-Catholic newspapers of the decade, which disseminated horrific stories of Catholic cruelties and torture, although they were located in counties that contained no significant Catholic populations.

Nativism informed American print culture from the colonial era through the twentieth century, in part, because these screeds transferred longstanding anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic arguments from Europe to American shores. While Jews constituted less than 1 percent of the American population in the early United States, Americans embraced European stereotypes, viewing Jews as inherently untrustworthy and morally bankrupt. In particular, the longstanding anti-Semitic Shylock myth influenced literary representations of Judaism in the United States well into the 1900s. Based on the villainous character of Shylock in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, this cliché insisted that Jews harbored an unnatural obsession with money, had a sinister appearance, and lacked the morality and charity

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[8] Louis Harap, *The Image of the Jew in American Literature: From Early Republic to Mass Immigration* (Philadelphia, 1974), 5.

necessary to belong in conventional society. Shakespeare's Elizabethan caricature of Jewish cruelty became the archetype of anti-Semitism in America for five centuries. Anti-Semitic themes permeated America's best-known fiction, influencing Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, James Fenimore Cooper, and several other nineteenth-century American writers. These authors were rarely acquainted with Jews firsthand, and some included even positive allusions to Judaism in their writing. Yet they readily accepted the Shylock caricature and carried a centuries-old stereotype into modern America.

Similar studies of the twentieth century show the prevalence of anti-Semitic thought throughout the Lost Generation of the 1920s and beyond, particularly in the works of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Anti-Semitic attitudes proliferated, in part, because negative "Shylock" caricatures were prominent fixtures in American public schools and literature textbooks. In evaluating American anti-Semitism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Robert Michael states flatly that "the Jews were the most widely reviled of all the immigrant groups," noting that Jews were seen as "the most un-American because they were the traditional destroyers of America's Christian values."[9]

There was, however, no monopoly on religious bigotry in the American press. Writers similarly repeated well-worn stereotypes, popular since the Reformation, that equated the pope with the biblical "Whore of Babylon" and assumed American Catholics were his dutiful minions. Popular newspapers throughout the United States lambasted Catholic confessionals as sites of immorality and priestly lust, chided Catholics as intellectually backward, and argued that Catholic schools brainwashed students into mindless drones who served Jesuit overlords rather than the nation. As Catholic immigration continued to mount after the Civil War, new threats were articulated that Catholic schools and charitable organizations, including hospitals and orphanages, would siphon public money to fund Catholic propaganda campaigns and dupe ignorant Protestants. Even seemingly benevolent institutions, nativists warned, were simply a smokescreen to distract citizens from Catholicism's conspiratorial plot to corrupt America and to install the pope and Catholic Curia as absolute overlords in the United States. Above all, popular literature and prominent anti-Catholic lecturers charged that "Romanist priestcraft" threatened America's Protestant character and that Catholics' close-minded devotion to a priestly hierarchy undermined democracy and patriotic loyalty.

Religious and ethnic stereotypes often blurred together, particularly in the image of the Irish in America. Like the Shylock myth, American popular

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[9] Robert Michael, *A Concise History of American Anti-Semitism* (Lanham, MD, 2005), 134.

art and literature perpetuated the caricature of "Pat" and "Bridget" – Irish men and women who arrived as servants and laborers in antebellum America, fleeing British colonialism and severe food shortages abroad. While nativists viewed "Pat" as inherently dishonest and an unreliable worker, what made him a genuine threat to American democracy, in the minds of nativists, was his dependence on parasitic priests who mesmerized their congregants, controlling Irish labor unions, workers, political activity, and voting patterns. Such bigotry frequently consigned the Irish to low-wage labor, evidenced by NINA (No Irish Need Apply) notations in employment advertisements, later memorialized in poetry and song. While later research has disputed the historical authenticity of the NINA acronym, what is beyond dispute is that the Irish were portrayed as animalistic drunkards and the pawns of meddlesome priests throughout the immigrant experience and in subsequent generations.

The well-known satirist and cartoonist Thomas Nast vividly demonstrates the prevalence of anti-Catholic attitudes in the popular press. His cartoon, "The American River Ganges," published by *Harper's Weekly* in 1871, appears to depict fearsome crocodiles slithering out of the ocean, ready to pounce on American children huddled along the seashore. But a closer look reveals that the reptiles are actually Catholic bishops – the satirist's pen transformed their tall miters into crocodiles' jaws. Looming in the cartoon's background is the Vatican City; the foreground features an American school with a flag flying upside down as an SOS signal. Nast's message is clear: Catholic immigration and "priestcraft" threaten the nation, particularly its vulnerable children, and must be treated as monstrous invaders and public enemies.

German Catholics faced similar biases, which became particularly acute during periods of revolution abroad and wartime mobilization at home. After the failed German uprising of 1848, German refugees arriving in America were stigmatized as radicals, anarchists, and labor antagonists. Like the Irish, Germans were accused of drunkenness and violating Sabbath laws. Reformers charged that German immigrants frequented beer gardens and patronized cheap amusements rather than following the staid pursuits of church service and contemplation favored by native-born Protestants. This pattern accelerated as America's workforce industrialized following the Civil War. German-speaking labor organizers served as scapegoats for America's labor violence during the General Strike of 1877, and particularly the Haymarket Bombing of 1886, in which German-speaking immigrants were blamed for killing police officers and instigating a violent riot.

The most intense anti-German sentiment occurred during World War I in the 1910s and during World War II in the 1940s as American wartime

propaganda portrayed Germans as militaristic "Huns," preying on innocent civilians. Like the anti-Irish caricatures, Germans were dehumanized as angry animals, lacking the intelligence and morality to make independent decisions and blindly following autocratic leaders. A World War I recruiting poster warned Americans to "Destroy this Mad Brute" and depicted a club-wielding ape wearing a German army helmet, clawing at a bare-chested woman. While Americans of German descent worked to demonstrate their patriotism by limiting German-language school instruction, changing family and street names to English-language spellings, and contributing to the war effort, the American press frequently demonized German citizens as disloyal. Occasionally such statements led to German American imprisonment or charges of sabotage.

Perhaps the most explosive examples of anti-Catholic literature are stories of convent captivity that permeated the American literary landscape from the colonial era through the twentieth century. One of the best-selling American books of the antebellum era was *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* published in 1836, which enumerated episodes of torture, licentious orgies, and infanticide within convent walls. Although set in the Hotel-Dieu Convent in Canada, and later completely disproven – the alleged novice was a Montreal prostitute, and the fictitious account was actually ghostwritten by an opportunistic publisher – American readers, eager for material that validated their anti-Catholic prejudices while producing titillating stories, quickly made the book a best seller. It remained in print for several decades, serving as fodder for later anti-Catholic crusades such as the American Protective Association in the 1890s and the Second Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. By claiming to save innocent women from Catholic predators, such writing could inspire both hatred toward Catholic enemies and a sense of commonality among Protestant crusaders.

VIOLENCE AND NATIVISM

While it received less national notoriety than *Awful Disclosures*, one other nativist text deserves attention. In 1835, a young Protestant woman named Rebecca Reed, who had been a student at the Catholic Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, published a sensationalized account of her experiences and eventual escape. *Six Months in a Convent* outlined nuns' imprisonment, the rigid deference to authority in the convent, and Catholic efforts to proselytize vulnerable Protestant girls. Reed's volume set the tone for later nativist writing, but it also inspired Protestant mobs in Boston to demolish and burn the Ursuline Convent, destroying its buildings and forcing the nuns to flee for safety. Although the arsonists' identities were well known, nearly all perpetrators were acquitted at trial.

The burning of the Ursuline Convent demonstrates the powerful overlap between nativist writing and mob violence. Such episodes of nativism also challenge fundamental understandings of American identity. A recent essay on cults in America has argued that "the United States in the twentieth century and throughout its history has been largely free from interreligious strife that has assumed life-and-death intensity."[10] But such a generalization overlooks frequent episodes of religiously inspired violence that appear throughout U.S. history. In 1844, for example, riots erupted in Philadelphia over claims that Catholic Church officials wanted to remove the Protestant Bible from public schools. Days of mob violence resulted in dozens of deaths and tens of thousands of dollars in property damage. In Louisville in 1855, mob violence between Catholics and Protestants erupted on election day, as nativist politicians charged their German-speaking opponents with voter fraud. These "Bloody Monday" riots resulted in twenty-five deaths and the destruction of over one hundred buildings. Similar episodes of street riots in the nineteenth century occurred in Baltimore, St. Louis, Wheeling, and Newark.

The prosecution and lynching of Leo Frank in the 1910s challenges the positive view of America's religious climate. Frank, a prominent member of Atlanta's Jewish community, was convicted of murdering a young girl in 1913, despite limited and contradictory evidence. His accusers, particularly the outspoken Populist politician and journalist Tom Watson, hurled anti-Semitic sneers at Frank and inspired a lynch mob to attack and kill Frank when the governor of Georgia commuted Frank's sentence in 1915. Members of the lynch mob included prominent politicians, business leaders, legislators, and a former governor. The Leo Frank case not only demonstrated the power of anti-Semitism in twentieth-century America but also proved a crucial turning point in American nativism, inspiring a revival of the Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta and the creation of the American Anti-Defamation Society in 1913.

Reaction to nativism, whether in print or by direct and violent attacks, tended to focus more on acculturation than retaliation. Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and other marginalized communities searched for ways to demonstrate patriotism, loyalty, and "100 percent" Americanism while at the same time preserving linguistic, religious, and ethnic identities. Negotiating this balance – being "good Americans" while retaining ethnic allegiances – is perhaps the classic theme of American immigration. Outnumbered and often exploited, first- and second-generation immigrants saw embracing their new American identity as a means of securing both personal and group acceptance.

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[10] Lawrence Foster, "Cults in Conflict: New Religious Movements and the Mainstream Religious Tradition in America," in Bellah and Greenspahn, *Uncivil Religion*, 186.

Although a violent backlash was rare, religious communities expressed other forms of "antinativism," or ways of challenging their nativist foes particularly during the twentieth century. For American Catholics, the Knights of Columbus served not only as a philanthropic and mutual aid society, providing life insurance, social networking, and camaraderie, but also as a Catholic antidefamation organization, attempting to curtail excessive religious prejudice. In the 1910s, the Knights organized a Committee on Religious Prejudice to denounce anti-Catholic bigotry and to educate American readers on the patriotic sacrifices and historical contributions of American Catholics, publishing a series of pamphlets and funding a lecture series. Likewise, the American Anti-Defamation Society sought to use education and legal appeals to limit blatantly anti-Semitic writing and to limit the teaching of Christian doctrine in American public schools. Occasionally, nativist periodicals and publishers were sued successfully on charges of libel or had their postal mailing rights revoked. Catholic customers also organized boycotts against outspoken nativists, a strategy bemoaned by the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s.

Perhaps the most radical vision for escaping nativism was the dream of relocating an entire community and forging a haven against persecution on the American frontier. Imagining the American West as a magnet for attracting refugees from Europe, visionary plans for resettling persecuted Jews in American agrarian communities were attempted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though such ventures were generally short-lived. Following the Civil War, Jewish agrarian communities were established in Louisiana and rural Florida, along with smaller projects further west – in the Dakotas, Michigan, and Oregon. The most ambitious such project was designed by the playwright and Tammany Hall politician Mordecai Noah in 1825. Hoping to establish a "refuge" for world Jewry on the frontier of western New York State, Noah purchased land and staged a lavish pageant to draw attention to his utopian community which he termed Ararat. Although Ararat and other frontier safe havens failed to attract settlers, Noah's project expressed another dimension of anti-nativism in rural America. His project demonstrates that nativism and its challengers were not focused exclusively in the urban Northeast, but had a widespread geographical character embracing America's shifting frontier.

WESTERN NATIVISM

Examining nativism on the American frontier reveals a strong anti-Mormon bias that occasionally erupted into violence. Although a characteristically and distinctly American religion, Mormonism has been a target of nativist attacks since its founding in the early nineteenth century. Like criticism of Catholics and Jews, anti-Mormon nativists alleged that

Joseph Smith's followers constituted a secretive, conspiratorial theocracy that "posed a threat to American democratic values and … might eventually lead to the destruction of the American political system."[11] Such fears prompted the Missouri governor to declare that the Latter-day Saints must be exterminated in 1838, after which mobs attacked Mormon settlements, resulting in over a dozen deaths. Mormons continued to migrate westward, but conflict and violence pursued them. Joseph Smith himself was lynched by angry mobs in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1844. By 1857, the U.S. Army was mobilized to preempt what President James Buchanan believed was a pending Mormon rebellion against the United States. In what became known as the "Mormon War," the Mormon militia clashed with the American army in a series of skirmishes that lasted more than a year and resulted in over one hundred deaths.

Such anti-Mormon violence serves as a potent reminder of nativism's broad geographical reach. Historiography has tended to focus on urban competition between Protestants and their enemies in America's northeastern cities, but a more careful examination of nativism's influence must take a broader view including the South and the West. Anti-Catholic violence occasionally erupted on the American frontier; for example, anti-Catholic riots took place in rural Ohio and Galveston, Texas, during the years before the Civil War. Western settlers in the Oregon Territory claimed that the 1847 Whitman Massacre, a native uprising that resulted in the murder of a Protestant physician and his wife, was secretly the work of Jesuit missionaries. Such tensions played a significant role in shaping America's mind-set of Manifest Destiny that resulted in full-scale war against Mexico in the 1840s and against Spain in the 1890s. Just as anti-Catholicism infused British colonists' hatred of their "Romanist" French rivals in the wars of the 1700s, contempt for Mexican Catholicism – seen as idolatrous, decadent, and at odds with American Protestantism – fanned the flames for southern conflict in later generations. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, imposed on Mexico by the victorious American army, was signed at a sacred Catholic shrine, demonstrating America's victory over both Mexico and Catholic ideology. In the Mexican-American conflict, white supremacy and Protestant triumphalism converged to promote rapid territorial expansion and to justify America's first foreign war.

Tensions between Anglos and Catholic Mexicans persisted into the twentieth century. In 1904, a group of nuns arrived in rural Arizona, attempting to place Irish Catholic orphans with Catholic Mexican foster parents. Nuns from New York's "Foundling Hospital" and the Catholic foster parents hoping for adoption encountered resistance, lawsuits, and

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[11] *Ibid.*, 194.

vigilante violence at the hands of Anglos attempting to "rescue" the white children. At issue in the "Arizona Orphan Abduction" controversy was whether white children could be placed with Mexican families – in effect, whether ethnicity or religion was given greater credence in turn-of-the-century America. Later in the twentieth century, anti-Mexican hostility took a more intense form. During the Great Depression, nearly half a million Mexicans were "repatriated" during periods of intense unemployment in the West. Using coercion and border raids, California attempted to deport Mexican Americans to reduce competition for jobs and resources. Although some voluntarily left, state and national programs encouraged migration even among Mexican Americans who were born in the United States.

Examining such tensions in the West demonstrates two key facets of American nativism. First, interreligious hostilities were frequently interwoven with concerns over nationality, class, and gender. Mexican ethnicity and Catholic religiosity were both seen as demonstrations of inferiority by Protestant Anglos, just as Mormon polygamy, which threatened Protestant conceptions of womanhood, overlapped with concerns of Mormons' theocratic separation and rebellion. In this way, anti-Mormon propaganda echoed anti-Catholic nativism, and antipolygamy rhetoric was remarkably similar to accounts of convent cruelties in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Second, nativist attitudes were often the impetus for political action – whether justifying military expansion, shaping legal debate and court decisions, or setting immigration and citizenship policy. In fact, nativism itself is rooted in political activism. At its fundamental core, nativism is an expression of an individual's or a group's sense of national belonging, and of a concomitant desire to challenge others' ability to participate in American democracy. As such, it is not surprising that nativism's power emerges expressly along American borders – both geographical boundaries and in communities that have been marginalized by interreligious conflict.

NATIVISM AND POLITICS

Although the U.S. government eschewed an "official" religion soon after its founding, the widespread belief that America has been founded on Judeo-Christian values has influenced naturalization and education policy, directed political campaigns, and sharpened nativist attacks against other religious minorities. Asian immigrants, in particular, encountered significant obstacles in acclimating to a self-identified white, Christian nation. In the nineteenth century, America's "'Chinamen' (and later Japanese) were regarded as racially outside the pale of American 'peoplehood,' and it was

widely presumed that they had few rights which whites were bound to respect."[12] By the 1870s, both major American political parties pushed for Chinese exclusion and for limiting Asian immigrants' access to employment and public education. In 1907, an agreement between the United States and Japan severely curtailed new Asian immigration to America for several decades.

American fiction conveyed a strong undercurrent of anti-Asian intolerance as well, even in reformist literature. Books that argued for improved labor conditions, nationalization of industries and utilities, and American socialism also conveyed stark images of Asian armies invading America and "hordes" of foreign soldiers assaulting the nation. Even futuristic and utopian literature, imaging perfected communities, expressed fears that America would become a vassal to the tyrannical Chinese empire.

Such "Yellow Peril" fears rested on both race and religion. California politicians in the late nineteenth century, for example, "typified the Japanese as being without Christian virtues." Such sentiments led to the formation of the Asiatic Exclusion League in 1905 and to a drive to segregate Asian students in California schools the following year.[13] Reformer Jacob Riis' photojournalistic examination of Gilded Age New York tenements contained similar contempt for the heathen and atheistic "Chinaman." Arguing that the Chinese could never accept Christian values of generosity, kindness, and morality, Riis insisted, "Ages of senseless idolatry ... have left him without the essential qualities for appreciating the gentle teachings of a faith whose motive and unselfish spirit are alike beyond his grasp. He lacks the handle of a strong faith in something, anything, however wrong, to catch him by."[14] Such a mind-set clearly motivated anti-immigrant legislation, notably the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and perpetuated anti-Asian biases that smoldered until World War II, before igniting in the 1940s with anti-Japanese threats and internment of Japanese Americans.

The overlap between politics and nativism also shaped party platforms and sparked the creation of new political entities. The most influential nativist political party was the vehemently anti-Catholic Order of the Star Spangled Banner, more commonly known as the "American" or "Know Nothing" Party, which rose to prominence in the 1840s and 1850s before disintegrating over sectionalism and debates over slavery. The Know Nothing Party, which got its name from members' secrecy, attempted to

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[12] Knobel, "*America for the Americans*," 228.

[13] Eldon R. Penrose, *California Nativism: Organized Opposition to the Japanese, 1890–1913* (San Francisco, 1973), 1.

[14] Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (New York, 1890), 92.

reduce immigration from Catholic countries and pledged not to employ or elect Catholics. The party unified working-class and middle-class Protestants in antebellum cities where several Know Nothing candidates were elected mayor, including Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Party candidates also won election in several western states, including the governorship of California.

One of the most striking demonstrations of the Know Nothing's influence occurred when the pope bestowed a ceremonial block of marble to be used in the building of the Washington Monument. While intended to demonstrate the Vatican's goodwill, Know Nothings were outraged that a monument to American heroism would be tainted by papal influence. In 1854, Know Nothing vigilantes, hearing of the papal gift, stormed the construction site, hacked the marble out of the monument, and dumped it into the Potomac River. Know Nothing members continued to dominate the deliberations and construction progress of the Washington Monument until the party dissolved shortly before the Civil War.

This episode of anti-Catholicism not only reveals the Know Nothing's vigilante tactics but also showcases the intellectual contours of nineteenth-century nativism. The American Party abhorred even this minor, ceremonial demonstration of Catholic Americanism and loyalty because accepting Catholic contributions to the monument would suggest that Catholics deserved a place in the nation itself. In later generations, political anti-Catholicism took shape in the American Protective Association. The APA was founded in the 1880s by politician Henry Bowers, who believed that Catholic voter fraud had cost him an election in the small town of Clinton, Iowa. Although similar in tone to the Know Nothings (APA members, for example, attempted to remove Catholics from local school boards), the APA achieved limited prominence and was divided over the free silver issue in national politics.

Perhaps the most direct expression of nativism in politics occurred in the 1920s. The decade witnessed not only the dramatic reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan as a political force but also the intense anti-Catholicism surrounding Al Smith's presidential campaign in 1928. Fears that Smith would bow to the pope and compromise American sovereignty, along with his anti-Prohibition stance and Irish ethnicity, drove voters overwhelmingly to favor Republican Herbert Hoover and his pledge for continued national prosperity. While certainly not an exhaustive list, these three episodes of anti-Catholicism – the Know Nothings, the APA, and the Smith campaign – demonstrate nativism's political breadth and historical impact. In all three examples, nativism united individuals from a broad spectrum of American society, temporarily easing class, occupational, and geographic divisions. Patriotic rhetoric and pride swelled the ranks of nativist political

factions. Members of these parties "accepted the movement out of a feeling of American dedication.... The organization sensed that its strength derived from the ordinary citizen."[15]

By correlating American patriotism with ethnic and religious exclusivity, nativists created a series of potent political coalitions. This is similarly true in the issue of immigration restriction in the 1920s, culminating in the Johnson-Reed Act or the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924. This federal legislation aimed to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, whose immigrants were viewed as ethnically, linguistically, and religiously dissimilar to American-born Protestants. Promoters of immigration restriction argued that the "open door" policy of previous decades threatened the nation's moral integrity by permitting an influx of Catholics and Jews to descend on the United States. Debate over this restrictionist law featured blatant ethnic and religious prejudice. A report issued by the House of Representatives, for instance, argued that Jewish immigrants were physically and mentally "deficient" as well as economically and socially "undesirable," and that they lacked "patriotic or national spirit."[16] Rallying to cries of "Keep America Protestant" and to eugenic arguments, legislators imposed a quota system that linked future immigration to ethnic populations in America's 1890 census. In effect, immigration restriction rolled back American demographics in the 1920s to re-create conditions in the nineteenth century, hoping thereby to reestablish Protestant hegemony and dominance that was in danger of fading away. This immigration restriction, which remained in place until the 1960s, had dramatic and long-lasting consequences in later decades, particularly because it allowed American lawmakers to turn away refugees during the rise of European Fascism. The anti-Semitism of the 1920s had a pronounced influence later when America's isolationist policies left millions of Jews stranded in Europe where they could be attacked, persecuted, and eventually eradicated.

MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AND THE "INVISIBLE EMPIRE"

Nativism is fundamentally a belief that portions of the population are unpatriotic and disloyal and their un-American actions are based on religious or ethnic characteristics. Such a perspective, however, was fundamentally challenged during wartime when religious minorities worked to showcase their contributions and sacrifice, and as military preparedness required a

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[15] Les Wallace, *The Rhetoric of Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association, 1887–1911* (New York, 1990), 55, 84–5.
[16] Michael, *Concise History of American Anti-Semitism*, 135.

united home front. This was certainly the case during the Civil War when ethnic and religious minorities enlisted in the Union and Confederate forces at tremendous rates. "All over the country foreign-born Americans flocked to the colors.... Everywhere the anti-foreign movement of prewar years melted away."[17] This observation could certainly be repeated in later generations. American participation in World War I, for instance, sparked a dramatic decrease in anti-Catholic journalism that had flourished just a few years earlier.

While wartime concerns often muted nativists' vigor, military campaigns occasionally exacerbated ethnic and religious tensions. In 1862, for instance, General Ulysses S. Grant expelled all Jews from his military district, alleging that they were trading with and assisting the Confederate enemy. Although Lincoln countermanded the expulsion order, anti-Semitism and accusations of Jewish wartime profiteering persisted throughout the Civil War. The same intolerant views continued in later decades. During World War I, Henry Ford alleged that the European aggression was the product of a worldwide conspiracy by profiteering Jewish bankers who used bloodshed to fund their financial empires. Ford reiterated such anti-Semitic diatribes throughout the 1920s in regular columns in the *Dearborn Independent*. Compilations of his writings reached the attention of Nazi Germany, and Ford earned praise from Adolf Hitler for both his automobile manufacturing and his anti-Jewish leanings. In the 1920s, Ford was also instrumental in disseminating a profoundly anti-Semitic text, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to American audiences. *The Protocols* claimed to recount secret strategies of financial manipulation and propaganda dissemination through which Jews planned to destabilize and corrupt the government. Though discredited as a forgery, *The Protocols* reinforced Ford's notion that Jews hoped to replace democracy with a Jewish cabal bent on world domination.

Likewise, Catholics were accused of desertion and wartime espionage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nativists alleged that Catholics' religious identity would trump American patriotism, and Catholics would side with America's Catholic enemies (Mexico and Spain) during battle. Thus, despite their efforts, America's religious "outsiders" found that patriotic service was not a panacea against vindictive attacks. This was particularly true by the 1920s with the rise of America's most powerful nativist organization – the Second Ku Klux Klan. While the Klan initially emerged in response to Reconstruction and black enfranchisement in the South, by the late nineteenth century this movement had largely disappeared. In 1915, however, D. W. Griffith's film, *Birth of a Nation*,

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[17] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 12–13.

reinvigorated popular interest in the movement, and a second wave of Klan activism swept through America.

Griffith's film, based on the 1905 Thomas Dixon novel *The Clansman*, presented a highly fictionalized portrayal of the nineteenth-century South to justify white supremacy and the Klan's vigilantism. The film reinforced older nativist conceptions, particularly a sense that white Protestant America was threatened by racial inferiors and political disorder. Unlike the first Ku Klux Klan (KKK), however, the movement that took shape in the 1910s and 1920s had a broader geographical impact and a longer list of enemies. Along with upholding white supremacy, the KKK of the twentieth century worked to curtail European immigration, challenged industrialization and popular entertainment, and, above all, revived older anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic diatribes in an effort to "keep America Protestant." It was no longer based exclusively in the South, and Klan participation swelled throughout the nation (topping five million dues-paying members by the mid-1920s), including the Midwest, New England, and the West. Individual chapters or "klaverns" of the KKK embraced a variety of agendas, such as stopping bootleggers and harassing local residents accused of sexual promiscuity. But what made Klan membership attractive for twentieth-century men and women – a women's KKK emerged in the 1920s – was the notion that the organization was upholding patriotism and venerable traditions, which were in danger of ebbing away in a modern industrialized nation. Klan members harbored an intense feeling that "[t]ime was chipping away at the traditional religious and moral values of small-town America."[18] *Birth of a Nation* and its escapist vision of America saved by chivalrous Klansmen were attractive for men who felt trapped by rapid social change and squeezed by "the vise of modernity."[19] The Klan's anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism therefore must be understood alongside its racism and opposition to women's suffrage and popular amusements. Each of these was an affront to the KKK's sense of American traditionalism, which privileged masculinity, white supremacy, and Protestant superiority.

Above all, the KKK became a potent twentieth-century movement because members styled themselves as self-appointed guardians not only of American morality but also of American tradition itself. In this way, the KKK echoed sentiments common to all xenophobic groups – the contention that nativists and their nationalistic crusades were the upholders and

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[18] David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham, 1987), 291.

[19] Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1994), 23.

culmination of American tradition and history. Klansmen literally cloaked their nativism and prejudice in pageantry and ritual, adding to the organization's mystique and appeal. But, in an important sense, the KKK was merely following a pattern established throughout the prior generations – styling themselves as patriotic guardians while portraying their opponents as threats to American nationalism.

Although the Klan was the most visible and politically influential manifestation of nativism, its combination of exclusivity and intolerance, on one hand, and patriotic symbolism, on the other, resonated with all nativist crusades since the Revolution. While nativist movements waxed and waned in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they shared some prominent similarities. Each facet of nativism embraced the notion that America's majority – in general, white Protestants – was victimized by outsiders, but stood motionless and oblivious to these dire threats. The responsibility of nativist agitators, then, was to awaken the American public. Nativist literature is replete with calls, urging readers to "wake up" and realize American vulnerability. The nativist crusades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries aimed to do just that, namely, to alert loyal Americans to religious outsiders and the threat they presented to an imperiled nation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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BETWEEN GOD AND CAESAR: WORLD WAR I AND AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

RICHARD M. GAMBLE

Pleading the demands of "urgent war work," the U.S. Bureau of the Census waited until 1919 to publish its two-volume compendium of data collected during the war from 202 religious denominations, over 150,000 ministers, 227,487 individual congregations, and just fewer than 42 million members. The report aspired to provide a useful snapshot of the nation's religious institutions as of 1916. The bureau boasted a 97 percent response rate while admitting it had been constrained by an incomplete list of churches. Limiting its survey to "organizations for religious worship," the bureau ignored such bodies as the YMCA, the American Bible Society, and even the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose followers shunned the institutional church. It also had to contend with "a considerable number of churches [that] protested against the inquiries, claiming that the United States government had no constitutional authority to make any investigation in regard to religious matters, and one denomination [that] refused to furnish any figures, whatever" – bold acts of defiance in a mass democracy mobilized for total warfare and demanding an unprecedented degree of national unity.[1]

Even a cursory glance at this incomplete profile of America's religious bodies suggests some of the challenges facing historians grappling with the scope, magnitude, and complexity of the religious experience in the United States during the Great War of 1914 to 1918. Expand that task to include North America as a whole, and discerning patterns and offering generalizations seems impossible. What, after all, did Russian Jews in New York have in common with German Mennonites on the Kansas frontier? Or Polish Catholics in Chicago with old-stock Anglo-American Congregationalists in Boston? Or French Canadian Catholics in Quebec

[1] Figures and quotations from Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1916, Part I: Summary and General Tables* (Washington, DC, 1919), 11, 13, 14, 32.

with English Protestants in Ottawa? A single religious narrative in the midst of this unwieldy diversity never existed. Contemporaries may have lectured and written about an experience they called "The Church and the War," but nothing as uniform and coherent as this title implies ever happened.

Already in the 1920s and 1930s, the press and the earliest scholars of the war and religion tended to map the relationship between the two as a debate between militants and pacifists, radically oversimplifying the war's spiritual topography. Granville Hicks reflected this tendency in a 1927 essay for the *American Mercury*. The Marxist professor and literary critic blasted Protestant and Catholic clergy for how eagerly they mobilized the churches for a holy war "between God and the Devil," lamenting that so few pacifist voices had been heard among them.[2] With Hicks' files in hand, University of Pennsylvania sociologist Ray H. Abrams published his influential *Preachers Present Arms* in 1933. Scouring a prodigious number of newspapers and religious periodicals, Abrams heaped up the most embarrassing things the clergy and rabbis had said during the war, aiming to show how the churches and synagogues wittingly or unwittingly functioned as "mechanisms of social control."[3] Abrams' impact could be seen immediately. In 1934, the British pacifist George Bedborough offered a thin volume he called *Arms and the Clergy*, relying exclusively on Abrams for ten pages of warmongering quotations from leading American Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons.[4] Published by the Secular Society of London, the book intended to prove that organized religion makes the world a more dangerous and violent place.

As Abrams later expanded his book to include the Second World War and then American involvement in Vietnam, he remained the resource of choice for historians working on the Great War. Consequently, studies such as H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite's *Opponents of War* perpetuated the impression that America had been populated only by bigoted zealots and their peace-loving victims. Peterson and Fite operated largely within two options: belligerent clergy who backed the war fully and pacifist clergy who opposed all wars. To be sure, their topic was resistance to the war, but they offered no counterpoint to the dissidents they studied other than the warrior clergy.[5] They and other scholars since have seemed

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[2] Granville Hicks, "The Parson and the War," *American Mercury* 10 (Feb. 1927): 129–42.

[3] Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (New York, 1933), xiii.

[4] George Bedborough, *Arms and the Clergy, 1914–1918* (London, 1934).

[5] H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917–1918* (Madison, 1957; repr., Westport, 1986).

unaware that there might be reasons other than pacifism for pastors to remove American flags from their sanctuaries or for not displaying them there in the first place.

A more useful account of American religions during the First World War, while continuing to give prominence to crusaders and pacifists, must also accommodate those falling outside these categories, those who both consciously resisted waging holy war and yet participated in the nation's fight. Abrams' way of narrating the war and religion tells us true things about America from 1914 to 1918. But it renders invisible significant features of the historical landscape, namely, those patriotic Americans who accepted the war, however eagerly or reluctantly, as an episode in their earthly pilgrimage and not as crusaders who waged war as a means to cultural redemption or as pacifists who opposed all wars as matter of conviction, whether that pacifism was motivated by a world-denying desire to be left alone or by a world-affirming desire to remake international relations through America's moral example of nonviolence – two quite different things. A more precise and sensitive engagement with American religions during the First World War ought to consider responses ranging from those who waged redemptive war, to those who kept the war and their faith in two separate realms, to those who shunned all the world's profane kingdoms and their wars.

Protestant Evangelicals in the United States and Canada, both liberals and conservatives, waged redemptive war. Even some Catholic bishops and priests could strike a surprisingly nationalistic note. Evangelicals, as heirs of revivalist, activist nineteenth-century American Protestantism, had long promoted the nation's mandate as God's new Israel to spread civil and religious liberty, had practiced little distinction between the sacred and secular, and had mobilized their churches and voluntary associations to "Christianize" society and defeat Romanism, alcohol, and slavery. They fused social reform, national mission, and a redemptive brand of imperialism into versions of what a few Canadian scholars have described in their similar context as "national gospels."[6] Wielding this transformative gospel decades before the First World War, they had waged their domestic "war for righteousness."[7] Theologically conservative Evangelicals, such as the Nebraska populist William Jennings Bryan and the whirlwind evangelist Billy Sunday, often shared their platforms and joined forces with theological

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[6] See Duff Crerar, *Padres in No Man's Land: Canadian Chaplains and the Great War* (Montreal, 1995), 188.

[7] For the theologically liberal side of "applied Christianity," see Richard M. Gamble, *The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation* (Wilmington, DE, 2003), chaps. 1–3.

liberals, such as Lyman Abbott and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. – the former for the sake of international arbitration and the latter for the sake of his crusade against alcohol and other social vices. Previous wars, including the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the Boer War, had been justified in terms of national regeneration. Indeed, Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" gained a second life during World War I as activist pastors again saw God's truth marching on, this time across the globe.[8]

While the pacifist William Jennings Bryan resigned as Secretary of State in 1915 over President Wilson's handling of the *Lusitania* crisis, evangelicals in general embraced war in 1917 as a means to achieve their highest goals for the church, the nation, and the world. At their most belligerent, Newell Dwight Hillis, pastor of the liberal Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, and the former baseball player Billy Sunday sounded almost indistinguishable. In one of his lurid wartime books about German atrocities, Hillis infamously recommended that ten million German soldiers be sterilized on the model of Indiana's pioneering 1907 forced-sterilization law.[9] On Easter Sunday 1917, Billy Sunday mounted his revival pulpit in Manhattan and asked his audience of twenty thousand, "What grave is deep enough to inter this thousand-footed, thousand-headed, thousand-fanged demon [of Prussian militarism]?" And just before being handed Old Glory, he proclaimed that the United States was "unfurling the flag for the liberty of the world."[10]

Woodrow Wilson had used nearly identical language to describe the flag back in the summer of 1914, and many evangelicals embraced the Presbyterian President's "faith-based foreign policy," as one historian has called it.[11] The Wilsonian leadership of the Federal Council of Churches, in particular, echoed much of the commander in chief's idealistic wartime rhetoric about national self-sacrifice, world democracy, international cooperation, and permanent peace. The Federal Council, claiming to speak for at least eighteen million American Protestants, eagerly embraced the war as a means to advance its entire prewar reform agenda for church and society. It sanctified the war as an unselfish act of service on behalf of God, nation, and humanity. In the striking words of a Federal Council report in 1917, the churches promised "to guard the gains of education, and of social progress and economic freedom, won at so great a cost, and to make full use of the occasion to set them still further forward, *even by and*

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[8] *Ibid.*, 174–5.
[9] Newell Dwight Hillis, *The Blot on the Kaiser's Scutcheon* (New York, 1918), 59.
[10] *New York Times*, 9 April 1917, 4.
[11] Malcolm D. Magee, *What the World Should Be: Woodrow Wilson and the Crafting of a Faith-Based Foreign Policy* (Waco, TX, 2008); Gamble, *War for Righteousness*, 87.

through the war."[12] Similar expectations could be heard among mainline Protestants in Canada. The Presbyterian W. T. Herridge "preached that Christ's 'supreme passion at whatever cost is to sweep the earth clean of the evils which defile it.... It will be our own fault, then, if we do not make this war a holy war ... [a] war which has no meaner purpose than the establishment of Christian principles among the nations of the world.'"[13]

The well-publicized showdown between modernists and premillennialists in the United States in 1918 may seem to strain the credibility of any interpretive framework that lumps liberal and conservative Evangelicals together. The premillennialists within the emerging Fundamentalist movement, expecting the world's imminent demise, certainly thought they had little in common with progressive meliorists. Indeed, some of the premillennialists' world-denying theology could take striking form. Arno C. Gaebelein urged readers of *Our Hope* to stay out of the war and politics and not campaign for social reform. Christians ought to submit to the government in all biblical demands, he wrote, but should serve only as noncombatants if called upon to fight.[14] Gaebelein sounded about as far from a partisan of holy war as imaginable. Such views made it easy for liberals to portray the premillennialists as an urgent threat to Christianity, the nation, and the war for democracy.

The University of Chicago Divinity School's Shailer Matthews and Shirley Jackson Case charged the premillennialists with defeatist pessimism and wondered aloud how they funded their organizations and publications.[15] In an interview with the press, Case resorted to a common wartime tactic: "Where the money comes from is unknown, but there is a strong suspicion *that it emanates from German sources. In my belief the fund would be a profitable field for governmental investigation*." He warned that "if the belief spreads many would not be able to see the need of fighting for democracy."[16] In the pages of *The Biblical World*, he soon charged that a premillennialist was "a pronounced enemy of democracy and a serious menace to the nation's morale in this hour of its need."[17] Premillennialists countered that

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[12] Charles S. Macfarland, ed., *The Churches of Christ in Time of War* (New York, 1917), 133, quoted in John F. Piper, Jr., *The American Churches in World War I* (Athens, OH, 1985), 17, emphasis added.

[13] Crerar, *Padres in No Man's Land*, 41.

[14] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2006), 144.

[15] For a full account of this bizarre episode, see *ibid.*, 143–8; Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1982*, with a new preface (Chicago, 1987), 117–21; and Gamble, *War for Righteousness*, 195–8.

[16] Quoted in "Unprincipled Methods of Post-Millennialists," *King's Business* 11 (April 1918): 276.

[17] Shirley Jackson Case, "The Premillennial Menace," *Biblical World* 52 (July 1918): 16–23, quoted in Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 120.

while their movement's funding did not come from Germany, the evils of higher criticism and modernist theology certainly did.[18]

This bitter hostility easily obscured a shared concern for American culture and a common faith in Christianity's capacity to rescue that culture. "As premillennialists," George Marsden writes, "they had to say that there was no hope for culture, but at the same time they were traditional American evangelicals who urged a return to Christian principles as the only cultural hope." By late 1917 and into the summer of 1918, as the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) engaged in intense fighting on the Western Front and casualties mounted, the premillennialists adopted the intense patriotism of the wider culture, even to the point of resorting to the rhetoric of holy war. They supported Wilson's national day of prayer in May 1918, attributing the U.S. Army's advances later that summer as God's answer to those petitions. At this point in the war, Marsden concludes, "these premillennialists sounded as convinced as mid-nineteenth-century evangelicals that God was on the side of America."[19]

But Evangelicals of whatever variety did not speak for the sixteen million Roman Catholics in the United States in 1916. The Church's accustomed role as the great menace to American civilization had only recently been assumed by Prussian militarism. Nevertheless, Catholic clerics and laity could sound as nationalistic and redemptive as the Protestant mainstream. The American archbishops, who assembled in Washington, D.C., soon after the declaration of war in 1917, spoke of the "great and holy cause of liberty" and announced, "We are all true Americans, ready as our age, our ability and our condition permit, to do whatever is in us to do for the preservation, the progress and triumph of our beloved country." The lay Knights of Columbus, moreover, promised "continued and unconditional support of the President and the Congress of this nation in their determination to protect its honor and its ideal of humanity and right."[20] Despite these pledges of loyalty, the Church remained conscious of its status as an outsider, sought the full acceptance as Americans that so far had been denied them, worried about the war's ability to tear apart multiethnic dioceses, and maintained clear boundaries between its agenda and the government's. These tensions appeared in one instance as the Church tried to preserve the integrity of its chaplains' sacramental office under expectations from the army that they would perform quite a different function. One Catholic author complained after the war about unnamed government officials who

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[18] Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 121.

[19] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 149, 150–1; Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 124–5.

[20] Michael Williams, *American Catholics in the War: National Catholic War Council, 1917–1921* (New York, 1921), 4, 5, 98.

could not grasp the chaplains' primary calling. "To such men, until they learned better," he lamented, "the chaplain was a moral, or an intellectual 'uplifter'; or he was a high-grade entertainer, useful for entertaining and even befriending the men; but his religious value, in the Catholic sense of what religion means, was most difficult for them to grasp; it was at its highest, too often, a merely natural conception of the chaplain."[21]

Whatever its ambiguities, the Catholic Church's balancing act points to a more complicated way of understanding religion and war than that offered by the proponents of redemptive war. And this tension appeared among Protestants as well and at times with great clarity. One frustrated Canadian Methodist chaplain in 1918 showed just how determined some clergy were to distance themselves from the whole idea of holy war:

> That's all Tommy rot to me. Most of us here know ourselves and the fight too well to presume to identify it with the cause of Jesus.... It is true we have our orators pointing to the Union Jack and shouting "Jehovah my Banner" ... but most of us, for one reason or another, would prefer that the Union Jack, for all its crosses, should be mingled less freely with the emblems of our religion. My reason is that it lowers the standard of Jesus. Yet I believe it is every Christian's duty and privilege to contribute ... to the winning of this war, not as a Christian, but as a citizen of our warring country – not presuming to identify, in our case, that which is Caesar's with that which is Christ's.[22]

This chaplain, though likely in a minority, articulated a religious category that was self-consciously distinct from both redemptive war and pacifism. He wrote as a Christian in uniform (who had also served in the Boer War) offended by the war's attempt to mobilize the gospel for its own ends. He feared that the mixing of church and state and the confusion of their symbols would degrade Christ's gospel.

Often invisible in histories of the war, those who took this stance found it possible to support the war as just and necessary without for a moment seeing it as holy. These Christians did not blame the church for having failed to prevent or end the war. It had neither the calling nor the capacity to do so. It could not "reconcile the irreconcilable," as the Catholic essayist Agnes Repplier reminded readers of the *Atlantic Monthly*.[23] The state, not the church, had been charged with the power of the sword. The church had been entrusted with the ministry of mercy, and therefore was a "pacifist" body in the sense that it does not bear a literal sword to do its work in the

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[21] *Ibid.*, 238.
[22] Quoted in Crerar, *Padres in No Man's Land*, 175.
[23] This essay was later reprinted in Agnes Repplier, "Christianity and War," in *Counter-Currents* (Boston, 1916), 63.

world, but not "pacifist" in the sense that it denies the sword to the state and demands that the state live by the ethics of the Church. The Church had to obey those in authority and honor the king. Neither crusaders nor pacifists, these believers joined the armed services, registered for the draft, bought Liberty bonds, and served as chaplains and YMCA workers. But they refused to see the war as an episode in the unfolding drama of the Kingdom of God. They willingly defended lives and property, sought a tolerable level of safety and justice in the world, but did not think that military might coupled with the church had the capacity to remake the world. They found themselves in a nation at war, accommodated themselves to the war emergency, but tried not to sacrifice their faith's first principles while doing so.

Lest this stance seem a bit too theoretical, the experience of German-American Lutherans, Catholics, and Mennonites during the war gives a human face to those who had to negotiate a difficult line of resistance and accommodation both as hyphenated Americans and as creedal Christians who valued their orthodoxy more than cultural or nationalist ends. German Americans constituted the largest ethnic group in the United States by the time of the First World War. Out of a total U.S. population of some 92 million in 1910, 2.5 million were German-born and another 5.8 million were second-generation Germans. Despite their common homeland and language, these communities differentiated among themselves along clear religious lines. Recognizing these distinctions, the ethno-cultural historian Frederick Luebke argues that "they identified themselves first of all as Catholics, Lutherans, Evangelicals, Mennonites, or Methodists, and only secondarily (and sometimes incidentally) as Germans." And within their denominations they divided still further between pietists and confessionalists, meaning that these immigrant communities lived through the Great War not just as Germans, but as German Lutherans, or even more precisely as confessional German Lutherans. In facing the problems of war and religion, therefore, a confessional Lutheran could find he had less in common with a pietist fellow Lutheran than with a Catholic who shared his desire to preserve liturgy and dogma while resisting social reformers and ecumenists.[24]

This level of precision appears rarely in histories of American religion,[25] and even more rarely in studies of American religion and war. Luebke's meticulous approach, moreover, shows that the story becomes still more

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[24] Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, IL, 1974), 34–5, 38.
[25] One important exception is D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* (Lanham, MD, 2004).

complicated once the changing circumstances from 1914 to 1918 come into play. The balance of resistance and accommodation necessarily changed across three distinct time periods: the German-American experience before the war, from 1914 to 1917 while the United States remained officially neutral, and then from 1917 to 1918 as their adopted homeland waged all-out war. Before 1914, many German Catholics, Lutherans, and Mennonites had resisted the social reform agenda of pietist Evangelicals, especially Sabbatarianism, Prohibition, women's suffrage (feared as a means to enact Prohibition), attacks on parochial schools, and aggressive campaigns against so-called hyphenated Americans. These Christians had maintained their language and culture as a means to the church's ends, namely, to preserve theological orthodoxy and proper forms of worship and to insulate their youth from worldly corruption. The more pietist Germans, such as the Methodists and Evangelicals, though often retaining their language in worship, found themselves more at home with dominant American Evangelicalism and more likely to engage in political activism.[26]

Generally, from 1914 to 1917, Luebke writes, "church officials refrained from endorsing either side in the conflict." Some church publications defended the Kaiser's policies and glorified the German army. Others were more circumspect. The two leading papers of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod reminded readers of the guilt of every nation at war, lamented the war's "frightful toll in money and men," and urged respect for Wilson's neutrality proclamation. Overall, German pastors ranged from stridently pro-German, to openly critical of the Prussianism they had fled for religious liberty, or they prudently remained silent.[27]

When America entered the war in 1917, the majority of German pastors conceded, in Luebke's words, the nation's "God-given authority to wage war and the right to demand the loyalty of citizens." Aside from the Mennonites, German Americans fought willingly. Nevertheless, rendering Caesar his due – but only his due – remained a constant challenge. Theological liberals "freely violated their liturgical sensibilities by displaying the American flag in their sanctuaries and by having their congregations sing the 'Star-Spangled Banner,'" while conservatives believed that such "patriotic display would violate the boundary between church and state and cheapen both in the process." The wider public, little bothered by wartime America's fusion of church and state, often misconstrued Lutheran pastors' reluctance to preach sermons about liberty loans, to join in ecumenical patriotic rallies, to campaign for either Democratic or Republican candidates in the 1916 and 1918 elections, or to protect a sphere in which the church could follow its calling regardless of the government's agenda.

[26] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 41, 50, 59, 99, 188.
[27] *Ibid.*, 102–6.

Violence broke out in 1918 against a German Lutheran pastor and a Catholic priest in Illinois, and the Nebraska state council of defense pressured churches to end the use of German in their worship services and parochial schools. As a result, even conservative Lutheran churches across middle America gave up the fight to keep their language. Where once they had maintained their German cultural identity as a means to serve the church's ends, now they abandoned part of that cherished identity as an obstacle to those same ends.[28]

The historically pacifist Mennonites, one large and complex exception to German-American efforts to occupy a middle ground, take the story of American religion and the war into a third category. While these resisters, along with Quakers, Brethren, Hutterites, Seventh-day Adventists, and multiple subgroups within these peace churches, varied in kind and degree, they all tried to yield as little ground as possible to the demands of mobilization for modern war, whether institutionally or personally, as individuals, families, churches, and communities. They drew on a consistent set of biblical arguments: Jesus' ethics from the Sermon on the Mount, his distinction between the "things of God" and the "things of Caesar," and the Apostles' statement in the book of Acts that they must obey God rather than man. At the same time, they balanced all of these teachings against the Apostle Paul's injunction in Romans 13 to submit to earthly rulers, which for many included paying taxes (in some cases even purchasing war bonds), raising crops, and conserving food. In general, pacifists took Jesus' command not to resist evil and applied it to all their political, economic, and social relations. They took the Christian's identity as a stranger and pilgrim to an extreme and drew the sharpest possible line between the church and the world.

For most Mennonites, that line meant that the young men of their communities had to take a stand as conscientious objectors (COs), both as a matter of theological conviction and in fidelity to their historic Anabaptist confessions and to centuries of established practice. Not all Mennonites felt the same way about the war. The "Old" Mennonites, whose Swiss and south German ancestors had come to colonial America in the seventeenth century, tended to feel more detached from the European war. More recent immigrants to the American West with close ethnic ties to Germany tended to be more pro-German, while Russian Mennonites favored the Allied cause. For some congregations, resisting conscription was a matter of individual conscience, but others expelled their members for taking up arms.[29]

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[28] *Ibid.*, 206, 233–4, 238, 315–16.
[29] James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890–1930* (Scottdale, PA, 1989), 210–13.

In previous American wars there either had not been a national draft, or pacifists had been assigned to noncombatant service (such as hospital work) or allowed to pay money in exchange for their exemption. Canadian law had provided exemptions from combat service for Mennonites, Quakers, and Dunkers as far back as 1808, and in 1873 it encouraged Russian Mennonites to settle farmland west of Ontario by offering explicit exemptions from all military service. While the U.S. Congress debated whether and how to compete for these industrious immigrants, three states took the initiative of exempting them from militia duty. From 1914 to 1917, Canada relied on an all-volunteer army. When that changed in 1917, Canada's Military Service Act exempted current members of peace churches from combat service while leaving the blanket exemption in place only for the Russian Mennonites. But in practice the Ontario government tended to construe and apply the law broadly to exempt all religious COs from combat and other service.[30]

U.S. conscription law, on the other hand, left COs in a somewhat more ambiguous position. The Selective Service Act of 18 May 1917 explicitly provided for religious exemptions from combat duty:

> [N]othing in this act contained shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in any of the forces herein provided for who is found to be a member of any well recognized religious sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form and whose religious convictions are against war or participation therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organization, but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be noncombatant.[31]

No law can cover every contingency, but this legislation left some gaping holes. COs had to be members of a "well recognized" religious group that opposed all bearing of arms, stipulations that left out the marginalized Jehovah's Witnesses on both counts. The government also never produced a list of approved groups, leaving inconsistent local draft boards to judge for themselves who qualified for such exemptions.[32] And even what

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[30] J. S. Hartzler, *Mennonites in the World War, or, Nonresistance Under Test*, 2nd ed. (Scottdale, PA, 1922) 72–8; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*, corrected with a new preface (New Brunswick, NJ, 1963; repr., Westport, 1981), 17.

[31] U.S. War Department, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army* (Washington, DC, 1919), 14.

[32] See John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, 1987), 215–16; and David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York, 1980), 163.

constituted a "member" became a problem for highly voluntarist sects that had no formal membership or whose young men customarily waited until marriage to join the local congregation. The law also mandated that draftees would serve in some way other than combat, thereby keeping them under the authority of the armed services and posing a dilemma for so-called absolutists among the Mennonites and other sects who would not wear a uniform or perform even simple tasks around the camps, fearing to contribute in any way to the taking of life. Finally, it left the definition of "noncombatant" to the president's discretion, a step Wilson delayed until the following year.

The peace churches responded immediately. The Mennonites' Ohio District Conference met a few weeks after passage of the draft bill. It advised its young men to register, to secure a "certificate of membership" from their local church, to educate themselves in the church's doctrine of nonresistance and applicable scriptures, and to submit in humility. In August, the General Conference appealed to hundreds of years of faith and practice behind nonresistance, adding poignantly that "for us now to accept service under the military arm of the government, would be equivalent to a denial of the faith and principles which we have held as vital to our spiritual well-being and eternal salvation."[33] Unlike those who waged redemptive war, or those who accepted the war as earthly government's prerogative, the Mennonites saw total war as the greatest threat imaginable to their faith, a war not of fulfillment but of profound trauma. Indeed, the Mennonite General Conference voted in the fall of 1917 to withdraw from the Federal Council of Churches, objecting to the "war spirit" evident in that body from the moment of American intervention.[34]

Until registration day came in June 1917, the president and the War Department could only guess at the scale of resistance. With a note of relief, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker reported to Wilson in September that the problem did not appear "unmanageably large," certainly not large enough to make "a very generous and considerate mode of treatment" impossible.[35] That "mode of treatment," which included the psychological pressure of segregating the COs into separate quarters, was clearly meant to break down their resistance. Baker visited Camp Meade, Maryland, in October and wrote to Wilson about the COs there. "I am pretty sure that no harm will come in allowing these people to stay at the camps, separated from the life of the camp but close enough to come gradually to

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[33] Hartzler, *Mennonites in the World War*, 58–9, 64.
[34] Piper, *American Churches in World War I*, 18–19.
[35] Daniel R. Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort, 1917–1919* (Lincoln, 1966), 232.

understand. The effect of that I think quite certainly would be that a substantial number of them would withdraw their objection and make fairly good soldiers."[36]

The War Department's own figures published after the war indicate that 64,693 of those who registered claimed noncombatant status, a statistically minute fraction of the estimated 24 million men who registered, but from the local point of view sufficient to involve entire farm communities and define the war experience for them. Draft boards certified 56,830, or nearly 90 percent, of these COs as legitimate. About 30,000 passed the army physical and just fewer than 21,000 of these men were inducted by the time of the armistice. When these draftees reported to the training camps, only about 4,000, or 20 percent, persisted in their exemption claim – a remarkable success rate for Baker's strategy. Some of these inductees, the army later admitted, had "received pretty rough treatment."[37] In March 1918 Wilson finally designated the medical, quartermaster, and engineering corps as acceptable noncombatant service; and later in 1918 Congress passed the Farm Furlough Bill, allowing COs to be released on "leave" to work the fields at a private's pay.

John Whiteclay Chambers estimates that about 3,000 of the 4,000 holdouts came from the historic peace churches, the rest accounted for by other denominations and by a few hundred secular political objectors.[38] The larger group of 4,000 COs can be broken down with even greater precision when it comes to the training camps. Of them, 1,300 accepted noncombatant service; 1,200 were released to the farm furlough program; and 99 were sent abroad with the Friends' Reconstruction Unit, often meaning dangerous ambulance service at the front.[39] Courts-martial tried 504 absolutists, convicted nearly all of them, and sentenced 17 to death (though none was executed), 142 to life in prison, and 345 to prison terms of varying lengths. The official report thought it worth pointing out that COs typically came "from the most isolated social groups in the United States, and consisted of men of the most limited social outlook."[40]

While the majority of religious COs accepted either noncombatant service or alternative service on farms or as relief workers, or simply refused

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[36] Frederick Palmer and Newton D. Baker, *America at War* (New York, 1931), I: 342, quoted in James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites* (Newton, KS, 1975), 100.

[37] U.S. War Department, *Statement Concerning Conscientious Objectors*, 9, 16.

[38] Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 216–17.

[39] Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708–1941* (Elgin, IL, 1944), 218.

[40] U.S. War Department, *Statement Concerning Conscientious Objectors*, 9; Peterson and Fite, *Opponents of War*, 131–2.

to report, hundreds of young men, alone or as part of families, headed to Canada. Generations of Mennonites had fled European militarism in times past, and they prepared to migrate once again if necessary to maintain their practice of religious liberty. Canada's proximity, open border with the United States, and more liberal draft laws made the northern neighbor a logical choice, as did family connections to Russian Mennonite settlements there. A few leaders even considered organizing mass migrations of whole communities. But flight to evade the draft meant violating U.S. law, and young men doing so risked a year in jail if apprehended. Nevertheless, individuals and families in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota sold their farms and equipment and headed north. What began as a small migration of one to two hundred in 1917 increased in 1918 to an estimated five hundred or so Mennonites and one thousand Hutterites.[41]

Outside of the historic peace churches in the United States and Canada, other groups found themselves caught not only in the web of the Selective Service Act but also by wartime espionage and sedition laws. Under sweeping wartime powers, the U.S. and the Canadian governments went after entire religious bodies. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, later renamed the Jehovah's Witnesses, faced surveillance, censorship, and criminal prosecution. Founded in the 1870s by Charles Taze Russell, and often known in the press as "Russellites," the movement had perhaps twenty thousand members worldwide in 1916. Active in the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, Germany, and beyond, the movement distributed more than fifty thousand copies of each edition of the *Watchtower*.[42] Russell rejected the organized church, whether Catholic or Protestant, and objected to the doctrines of the Trinity, Christ's divinity and bodily return, predestination, the immortality of the soul, and eternal punishment. As early as the 1870s, Russell had identified the year 1914 as the end of the "time of the Gentiles" when the Jews would once again become the focal point of God's work in history. Expectations ran high, therefore, when Europe plunged into war at the predicted moment. On the morning of 2 October, Russell walked into a breakfast staff meeting and announced, "The Gentile times have ended; their kings have had their day."[43]

Russell died in October 1916. After a two-month internal struggle, Joseph Rutherford emerged to lead the movement through its most difficult years. Rutherford decided to compile and publish Russell's *Finished*

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[41] Allan Teichroew, "World War I and the Mennonite Migration to Canada to Avoid the Draft," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 45 (July 1971): 219–49.

[42] M. James Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech and Worship* (Toronto, 1976), 10.

[43] Quoted in A. H. Macmillan, *Faith on the March* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1957), 47.

Mystery, the apocalyptic seventh and final volume of his authoritative *Studies in the Scriptures*. The founder blasted all earthly governments, the Papacy, the "clergy class" in general for its relentless warmongering, and the Federal Council in particular as the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation's "False Prophet." Together, but unwittingly, these enemies of Christ had prepared the world for Armageddon as they engaged in a desperate effort to maintain the political, religious, and economic status quo and thwart the coming of God's new order, Messiah's reign. Bluntly, Russell blamed the Great War on the "sects and creeds of Christendom." Only the "Lord's saints" would escape the final conflagration. Along the way he managed to cast aspersions on the "civic-betterment gospel," military preparedness, and conscription.[44]

The Canadian and American governments took action in early 1918. Rumors of German funding and infiltration circulated, similar to the charges then being leveled at the premillennialists. The Canadian government banned *The Finished Mystery* and the *Bible Students Monthly* for undermining the war effort and promoting "treason." Its grounds for prosecution rested on a bit of convoluted logic: the churches of all denominations and Jewish rabbis supported the government's war effort, recruitment, and patriotism, but Jehovah's Witnesses attacked the clergy as anti-Christian; therefore, the Jehovah's Witnesses attacked the government and could be prosecuted under Canadian law.[45] The Winnipeg *Tribune* reported that "the banned publications are alleged to contain seditious and anti-war statements."[46] The Canadian government's chief censor claimed that the churches' wartime service to the nation had earned them "the right to claim to be public organizations" and therefore to come under the protection of the law. Any Jehovah's Witness found with the banned publications faced heavy fines and imprisonment, and the number of proscribed publications widened in 1918.[47]

In the United States, the Jehovah's Witnesses' anticlericalism and antimilitarism ran afoul of the Espionage Act. The attorney general claimed that *The Finished Mystery*'s "only effect" was "to lead our soldiers to discredit our cause and to inspire a feeling at home of resistance to the draft." Rutherford and seven of his colleagues were arrested, charged with conspiracy to obstruct the war effort, convicted by a jury after less than five hours

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[44] Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in Scripture, Series VII: The Finished Mystery* (Brooklyn, 1918) 247–53, 406–7, 469.
[45] Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 50–4, 67.
[46] Quoted in Macmillan, *Faith on the March*, 85.
[47] Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 75.

of deliberation, and sentenced to concurrent sentences that would have put them behind bars for twenty years in the federal prison in Atlanta. All eight were released on appeal in March 1919, and the government dropped its charges now that the war had ended.[48]

For the majority of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, news reports about COs and minority religious groups may have seemed small matters in light of the massive effort underway to mobilize institutionalized religion to meet the needs of soldiers and their families during history's largest war to date. As millions of young men left their homes, communities, and churches, headed off to training camps, and then embarked for the Western Front or even farther afield, they needed pastoral care, the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, comfort when lonely, sick, or wounded, and consolation in the hour of death. Churches and synagogues near the cantonments offered their help, seminary students and pastors volunteered as chaplains, and denominations set up wartime committees to deal with fund-raising, aid distribution, and ministry to soldiers. Nationally, and often in close cooperation with the government, the Federal Council of Churches created the General War-Time Commission of the Churches, the Catholic Church established the National Catholic War Council, and the Jewish community organized the Jewish Welfare Board.[49] The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) also mobilized along with the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, the YWCA, the Red Cross, the American Bible Society, and dozens of other agencies. The Knights of Columbus alone supported a staff of two thousand to operate 360 facilities at U.S. training camps and about again as many in Europe.[50]

The Protestant YMCA organized a massive operation in the United States, Canada, and overseas.[51] Prior to World War I, the YMCA had operated for decades among U.S. and Canadian militia, national guard units, and soldiers and sailors while maintaining its well-known centers in cities and on college campuses. The Y had worked among U.S. forces during the Spanish-American War in 1898 and more recently with the U.S. Army along the Mexican border from 1911 to 1916, and then accompanied Pershing's troops into Mexico. By 1914, the association already had sizeable operations in place at naval bases and army forts. From 1914 to

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[48] Macmillan, *Faith on the March*, 89–108.
[49] Piper, *American Churches in World War I*.
[50] Aaron I. Abell, *American Catholicism and Social Action: A Search for Social Justice, 1865–1950* (New York, 1960; repr., Westport, 1980), 191.
[51] Unless otherwise noted, the following material on the YMCA is drawn from C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York, 1951), 436, 455–6, 485–502.

1917, YMCA "secretaries" worked among prisoners of war in Britain and Germany. On the day the United States declared war on Germany, General Secretary John R. Mott cabled President Wilson to pledge "the full service of the Association movement." Within days, Mott's organization had created the National War Work Council, and later in April Wilson instructed the military to "render the fullest practicable assistance and co-operation" to the Y.

Stateside, the YMCA set up its famous "huts" at training camps, shipyards, munitions plants, and naval bases and ports. The YMCA operated as the government's authorized agent to run canteens and post exchanges. By war's end, the Y mobilized 26,000 workers and spent over \$150 million on staff, administration, facilities, fund-raising, and transportation. Through more than 10,000 stations of all kinds in Europe, it organized entertainment, lectures, traveling libraries, movies, athletic events, religious services, and Bible studies. It sold coffee, cookies, chocolate, cigars, and cigarettes; and with the American Bible Society, it distributed over 4.5 million Bibles to the armed services.[52] The YMCA employed about 3,000 women overseas among the American Expeditionary Force and a few hundred elsewhere in Europe. They staffed canteens and Y kitchens, worked as nurses at the front, cared for victims of the 1918 influenza epidemic, and entered Germany with the occupation army after the armistice. A handful of African American YMCA secretaries, both men and women, served the thousands of black troops in France, about half of whom worked as stevedores unloading and transporting supplies.[53] General Pershing, a friend of Mott's, summed up the high command's view of these activities: "There is no one factor contributing more to the morale of the army in France than the YMCA."[54]

Despite all of this welcomed attention to the soldiers' care and comfort, the troops still required the services of thousands of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains. The U.S. Army had only 147 chaplains in April 1917. The Catholic Church at the time had fewer than 35 chaplains serving in the Army, Navy, and National Guard combined. To meet war demands, Congress authorized the recruitment of more than 3,000 chaplains, but this number proved impossible to fill, and overall only about 2,300 served. Of these, 25 rabbis were active chaplains at war's end, struggling to care for some 50,000 Jewish soldiers in the AEF. Over 1,000 priests served in the

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[52] Richard Schweitzer, *The Cross and the Trenches: Religious Faith and Doubt among British and American Great War Soldiers* (Westport, 2003), 31.

[53] Lettie Gavin, *American Women in World War I: They Also Served* (Niwot, CO, 1997), 130–9.

[54] Quoted in Schweitzer, *Cross and the Trenches*, 81.

chaplaincy and in the Knights of Columbus, helping to shepherd an army estimated to be 35 percent Catholic.[55]

When the First World War ended, many assumed reasonably enough that the war's impact on religion would continue to concern pastors and other religious leaders as they considered their role in postwar reconstruction, ongoing relief work in Europe, plans for the League of Nations, and meeting the needs of returning soldiers and their families. In 1919, a joint committee of the Federal Council of Churches and its General War-Time Commission of the Churches produced an annotated bibliography on the war and religion.[56] Filling 133 pages, this still "preliminary" bibliography catalogued hundreds of English-language sources, covering mostly the Protestant and Catholic churches in the United States and Britain. The editor's brief notes following some of the books reflected the Federal Council's wartime preoccupation with ecumenism, with preserving the "simple message" of Jesus against dogma and formalism, and with sustaining a vibrant "social Christianity" that would meet the needs of the nation and the world. One underlying presupposition seemed to guide the editor's choice of books and articles and his comments: the Great War of 1914 to 1918 ought to have left a visible and deep mark on preaching, on theology, and on the churches' task in the world. After a war that was supposed to change everything, how could religion remain untouched? Even those who had tried to limit war's intrusion into religion's sphere had to meet the demands of changing circumstances and articulate anew where the boundary between the things of God and the things of Caesar belonged in postwar America.

For modern students of the war there is a sad irony embedded in the now yellowed pages of the Federal Council's bibliography. The breadth and depth of scholarship on the war and religion that it seemed to expect and to prepare for never really appeared. Aside from some important denominational histories, the larger story of American religions and the war remains fragmentary, disassembled, or ignored. Even the best histories of American society during the war have failed to integrate religion into their accounts, certainly not to the degree it mattered to Americans from 1914 to 1918.[57] A comprehensive account of American religions and the First World War waits to be written. Nearly a century has passed since the war, but the war that many Americans and Canadians experienced first and foremost within a religious framework has not yet made it into the history books.

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[55] Roy John Honeywell, *Chaplains of the United States Army* (Washington, DC, 1958), 171–2, 180, 185; Piper, *American Churches in World War I*, 78, 108.

[56] Marion J. Bradshaw, ed., *The War and Religion: A Preliminary Bibliography of Material in English prior to January 1, 1919* (New York, 1919).

[57] See, for example, Kennedy's *Over Here*.

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WORLD WAR II AND AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

G. KURT PIEHLER

World War II profoundly transformed American society and the relationship of the United States with the world. The demands of total war led to an unprecedented mobilization of American society that had a profound influence upon religious life. Religious ideals played a prominent part in the ideological struggle against the forces of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan. Even before America's entrance into the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed freedom of religion and conscience as one of the essential Four Freedoms that the United States sought to promote in a new world order that emerged after the defeat of Nazi Germany. He sought to enlist the support of religious leaders in the fight against Fascism, especially in the heated debates in 1940 and 1941 over mobilization and providing aid to Great Britain and later the Soviet Union. America's clergy and theologians were divided over whether the United States should enter the war, and their divisions mirrored those of the wider public. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the vast majority of religious leaders and believers supported the war.

Religion served as an important influence on Franklin Roosevelt, who was an Episcopalian, and his speeches throughout his presidency echoed appeals to the Christian values of social justice and charity as well as stressed the need for interfaith tolerance. Many members of his family and closest advisors viewed his Christian faith as an important source for sustaining him, but Roosevelt had little interest in or patience for doctrinal disputes, and he viewed matters of faith as personal. He remained a member of the vestry of St. James Episcopal Church in his hometown of Hyde Park, New York, until his death. Although FDR attended church irregularly as president, during World War II on several occasions he attended church services with key Allied leaders. Perhaps the most famous instance was when he and Prime Minister Winston Churchill closed their historic meeting in August 1941 off the coast of Newfoundland with church services on the *Prince of Wales*. Besides speaking publicly in favor of religious tolerance

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and condemning bigotry, Roosevelt also played a role in transforming his late mother's New York City home in 1942 into an interfaith center run by Hunter College to promote understanding among Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. During the war, FDR issued proclamations calling upon Americans to observe several national days of prayer, and he offered a prayer in a radio address on 6 June 1944, announcing the invasion of France by American forces.[1]

A range of religious leaders had access to Roosevelt while president. Among Protestants, FDR regularly consulted with the Federal Council of Churches, and during the war he especially welcomed the support of mainline Protestants who supported his programs for preparedness and aid to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. In an era of lingering anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiment, FDR appointed a record number of Roman Catholics and Jews to public office. The Roosevelt administration devoted significant attention to courting Roman Catholic support for the New Deal in the 1930s. Not only did FDR seek to build close personal relations with several prominent members of the American hierarchy, but in 1936 he met with the Vatican Secretary of State and future pontiff, Eugenio Pacelli (Pius XII), during his visit to the United States. In an action that garnered significant public support among American Catholics, FDR in late 1939 appointed a personal representative to the Vatican. Similarly, he regularly met with a number of Jewish leaders, most notably Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress. Roosevelt's ties with evangelicals and the Orthodox Jewish community remained more tenuous and limited.[2]

American involvement in World War II fostered a growing sense of ecumenicalism and laid the groundwork for the flowering of the Judeo-Christian tradition in the Cold War years. Roosevelt, in making the case for war, argued that the Axis powers, especially Nazi Germany, not only threatened American national security, but also threatened to destroy all religion. In an October 1941 radio address, Roosevelt even cited a captured German document that described in detail the Nazis' ultimate plan to destroy all religion. Although this document provided by the British government proved a forgery, historians of the Nazi regime stress the regime's ultimate desire not only to exterminate Judaism, but also to suppress

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[1] Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the Presidency: From George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York, 2006), 191–220; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Richard E. Bishop, Nov. 4, 1943, file copy; Henry M. Rosenthal, "The Roosevelt Interfaith House: After One Year," typescript, President Personal File: 8061: Hunter College [NYC], Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

[2] David B. Woolner and Richard G. Kurial, eds., *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church in America, 1933–1945* (New York, 2003), 1–43.

orthodox Christian belief within Germany. Contemporaries and historians have often wrestled with the question whether Roosevelt was an opportunist who simply followed prevailing public opinion or whether he possessed a deeply held set of values. Prior to Pearl Harbor, while often exercising caution in order not to get too far ahead of public opinion, FDR played a pivotal role in mobilizing American society for war, but also in providing aid to Great Britain and later the Soviet Union.

Until Pearl Harbor, deep divisions existed over the question of war and peace, and many Americans yearned to avoid the mistakes of the First World War. A number of church leaders and theologians regretted the uncritical support offered to the war effort in 1917 and the branding of the struggle against Germany as a "holy war." During the interwar period, the peace movement gained significant support among mainline Protestant denominations, but also among Roman Catholics involved in the Catholic Worker movement. Not only did a number of Protestant denominations go on record against using war as an instrument of diplomacy, but they also supported the passage of a series of neutrality laws in the 1930s to forestall America's entrance into another European war. Moreover, a number of mainline Protestants that traditionally adhered to a "just war" tradition lent their support to members who adhered to conscientious objection to military service.[3]

At the same time, the views of many theologians and clergy were in flux during the late 1930s and early 1940s. For some, the rise of Fascist nations and their aggressive actions called into question the efficacy of pacifism. By the late 1930s, Reinhold Niebuhr had abandoned his earlier support for pacifism, and he called into question the liberal views regarding the perfectibility of man and the means to build a more just global society. In the early 1940s, Niebuhr and other Christian realists would be among the most ardent supporters of preparedness, and ultimately of America's entrance into the war. Breaking with the dominant voice of liberal theologians, *The Christian Century*, Niebuhr founded a new journal, *Christianity and Crisis.* In contrast, John Haynes Holmes, one of the most prominent liberal clergymen of the time, remained a pacifist and advocated noninterventionism prior to Pearl Harbor. After the United States entered the war, Haynes still continued to call for a negotiated settlement. At the same time, along with many other Protestants who embraced pacifism, Holmes argued that the United States should provide a refuge for Jews and others fleeing Nazi tyranny. Many evangelical and Fundamentalist clergy and theologians tended to avoid the political debates surrounding

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[3] Gerald L. Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 17–48.

intervention, instead stressing the sinful character of man and the need for acceptance of Jesus Christ.[4]

In the case of the Roman Catholic Church, opposition to Fascism would be muted by a stronger fear of Communism. Pius XI in March 1937 issued the encyclical *Mit Brenneder Sorge*, expressing misgivings about Fascism and the threat it posed to Roman Catholicism in Germany. In the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*, Pius XI announced in explicit terms the incompatibility of Communism and Christianity, and he urged Roman Catholics to avoid any alliances with the former. After the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Vatican Radio publicized the plight of Polish civilians for several months. Despite the Vatican's antipathy toward Communism, the new pope, Pius XII, refused to endorse the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. But the Vatican under Pius XII remained largely silent through much of the war, for instance, rejecting pressure from the Roosevelt administration in 1942 to publicly condemn Nazi atrocities aimed at the Jews and other civilians.[5]

Even among American Jewry, there remained significant differences in the 1930s on how to respond to the rise of Adolf Hitler. More conservative factions represented by the American Jewish Committee sought to rely on quiet diplomacy and opposed public protests. In contrast, more militant organizations, most notably the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish War Veterans, organized a boycott of German-made goods and staged public protests. The Zionist movement divided the Jewish community on religious and ideological grounds. A minority movement in the Jewish community in the 1930s and during the war, Zionism tended to attract recent immigrants from Eastern Europe. Many American Jews from the Reform movement embraced assimilation and an American national identity that saw no need for an independent Jewish state. A significant number of Orthodox Jews rejected Zionism as inconsistent with the Torah and believed an independent Jewish state required the return of the Messiah.[6]

Religious leaders from all major faiths joined prominent political leaders and intellectuals in condemning the anti-Semitic policies aimed at German Jews, especially after *Kristallnacht* in 1938 when mobs in countless

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[4] Richard Wightman Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (New York, 1985), 142–223; Heather A. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920–1948* (New York, 1997), 56–115; Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism,* 54–5.

[5] Woolner and Kurial, *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church*, 153–61; George Q. Flynn, *Roosevelt and Romanism: Catholics and American Diplomacy, 1937–1945* (Westport, 1976), 13, 98–183.

[6] Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism* (Bloomington, 2000), passim; Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton, 2000), 41–81.

German cities destroyed synagogues and Jewish businesses, and sent scores of Jews to concentration camps. Jewish organizations, most notably the Joint Distribution Committee, joined by the Quaker-sponsored American Friends Service Committee as well as several other Christian and secular relief organizations, provided significant aid to Jews seeking to flee Nazi Germany and later other countries conquered by Germany. Less successful would be the efforts of the Federal Council of Churches in 1939 to win approval for the Wagner-Rogers bill in Congress that sought to liberalize the immigration quota to admit an increased number of German Jewish children. To educate the public, the Federal Council even sponsored a national radio program featuring Katharine Hepburn and Burgess Meredith reading a radio play highlighting the plight of German Jewish children under Nazi rule. At the same time, many churches remained silent, and calls for welcoming more refugees had little impact on softening public opinion or on congressional opposition to support more permissive immigration.[7]

Anti-Semitism certainly contributed to the reluctance of Franklin Roosevelt and even many Jewish leaders to press the U.S. Congress to relax immigration restrictions. The lingering impact of the Great Depression and high levels of unemployment discouraged a more generous attitude toward refugees. There remained several religious leaders with large followings that openly espoused anti-Semitism, most notably the Roman Catholic priest Father Charles Coughlin and the Protestant minister Gerald L. K. Smith. Although the Roosevelt administration had a number of high-level Jewish officials – most notably Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau and speech writer and close advisor Samuel Rosenman – there also existed important pockets of anti-Semitism, especially among consuls charged with issuing immigration visas to Jewish refugees seeking to flee Europe. Moreover, the United States, while credited for organizing an international conference at Evian in 1938 to consider the refugee question, did little to prod other nations to open their doors to refugees.[8]

In considering the response to the plight of German Jewry on the part of the United States and other nations, one must take into account the successes that did occur. For instance, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) managed to shepherd 85,000 Jews out of Germany by 1939. A network of Jewish charities sustained those able to make it to the

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[7] Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York, 1984), 98–111; Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order,* 95; Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, 1999), 49–52.

[8] Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia, 1983), passim; David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (New York, 1984), 189–91.

United States, and the National Refugee Service spent in 1940 $3.5 million to aid their integration into American society.[9] As one historian has noted, "[F]ully 72 percent of German Jewry escaped from Nazi Germany before emigration became impossible, including 83 percent of German Jewish children."[10] Unfortunately, many German Jews had the misfortune of finding refuge in Poland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other countries that would be overrun by the Nazis during the course of the war.

When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, sparking the beginning of the Second World War, Roosevelt affirmed American neutrality and urged the major combatants to avoid bombing civilians. After defeat of France by German forces in the spring of 1940, FDR embarked on an unprecedented military mobilization that included the enactment of the nation's first peacetime draft. Passing over significant opposition from anti-interventionists, including many churches and peace groups, the draft dramatically increased the size of the military. In contrast to earlier conflicts, the Roosevelt administration and the armed forces established policies that strived to make the chaplaincy representative of the composition of the rank and file; this meant the appointment of an unprecedented number of Roman Catholic priests and Jewish rabbis as army and navy chaplains. Moreover, besides increasing the chaplaincy, significant resources were devoted to promoting religious life in the military. Congress appropriated funds to build chapels at the scores of new military bases being established. Franklin Roosevelt encouraged Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations to provide each GI entering the service with a Bible, and he authored a forward to each edition commending the value of reading sacred scriptures.[11]

Under the Burke-Wadsworth Act authorizing conscription, clergy and theological students were exempted from the draft, and conscientious objectors were also granted exemption from military service. Only a relatively small portion of those drafted claimed exemption from military service even after America's formal entry into the war. In contrast to the First World War, the federal government remained more solicitous of those with a legitimate opposition to war. Moreover, both traditional peace churches, but also other denominations that had embraced a "just war" doctrine, established special service camps for conscientious objectors.[12]

[9] Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, 1963), 387–9.
[10] William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London, 1997), 16.
[11] Robert L. Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920–1945* (Washington, DC, 1977), 100–1, 170–1.
[12] Martin E. Marty, *Under God, Indivisible, 1941–1960*, vol. 3, *Modern American Religion* (Chicago, 1996), 17–34.

The Roosevelt administration insisted that Nazi Germany threatened American national security, but also the survival of Western civilization, and that it remained essential to support Great Britain and later the Soviet Union in their struggle against Hitler. Opponents of America's entry into World War II prior to Pearl Harbor saw moral ambiguity, criticizing the imperialism practiced by the British in India and the totalitarian nature of Soviet society. *The Christian Century*, catering to mainline Protestants, took a skeptical stance regarding FDR's policies and expressed misgivings about the drift to war. Roman Catholic leaders joined mainline Protestants in stressing the antireligious character of the Soviet regime, and they opposed offering American assistance to this nation. The Roosevelt administration downplayed the official atheism espoused by Stalin and pressed church leaders to see the wisdom of helping the Russian people. To diffuse religious opposition, the administration pressed the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels to show greater tolerance to religion.[13]

Paradoxically, the growing threat posed by Fascism produced a movement in some quarters to encourage greater ideological unity. The refusal by the children of Jehovah's Witnesses to salute the American flag or to recite the Pledge of Allegiance led to widespread harassment, and a number of school districts adopted policies expelling students unwilling to undertake these rites. In 1940, the Supreme Court, in an opinion authored by the lone Jewish member of the court, Felix Frankfurter, affirmed that the expulsion of students for refusing to salute the flag did not abridge the free exercise of religion clause. Following the ruling, mobs in a number of communities across the United States attacked Kingdom Halls and Jehovah's Witnesses seeking to proselytize.[14]

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and the German and Italian declarations of war that followed three days later ended significant public debate over intervention. Pearl Harbor united the nation, and most anti-interventionist groups quickly dissolved. Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish leaders proclaimed their support of the war effort and encouraged members to fulfill their obligations as citizens. Many individuals and mainline denominations that had embraced pacifism were persuaded by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor of the justness of the American cause. At the same time, historic peace churches such as the Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren continued to reject the call to arms and provided considerable support to members

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[13] Justus D. Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939–1941* (Lanham, 2003), 189–227.

[14] Shawn Francis Peters, *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious Persecution and the Dawn of the Rights Revolution* (Lawrence, KS, 2000), 46–95.

who sought conscientious objector status. They also mounted relief efforts for war victims.

The United States, after joining the war effort, embarked on an unprecedented mobilization; over fifteen million men and women served in the armed forces during this conflict. Never would so many serve within the military at one time. Similarly, the number of chaplains called into the service remains unprecedented, with 2,934 in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and 8,896 with the U.S. Army. Even with the expansion of the chaplaincy, the numbers remained insufficient to ensure that a GI would have immediate access to a clergyman of his or her faith. Given the relative shortage of personnel, official policies stressed the need for clergy to cater to the spiritual needs of men and women of all faiths. The stress on ecumenicalism, emphasized in the official chaplain school established by the army and navy, would be reinforced by the demands of military life. In practical matters it meant clergy were required to lead nondenominational services and also serve the pastoral faith of men and women of all faiths. As a result, when a Protestant minister was not present, a Catholic priest would not only offer a mass, but also lead general Protestant services. Tensions existed; although chaplains served as officers, they could refuse to take part in interfaith services if it violated their conscience. The Roman Catholic Church remained adamant that only a priest could administer the sacrament of last rites to the dying or hold a mass.[15]

Although the military embraced policies promoting religious diversity and ecumenicalism, there remained biases that favored mainline Protestant churches and the Reform and Conservative movements of Judaism. Clergy seeking military appointments were required to obtain ecclesiastical endorsement, and this policy favored established denominations. Moreover, educational requirements initially established by the army and navy required a college and a theological school degree. Although the army modified these requirements, it led to an underrepresentation of evangelicals and African American ministers. Also the military pressed for cooperation along denominational lines among both Protestant and Jewish chaplains. In the case of Jewish chaplains, the military prodded the Jewish Welfare Board to develop one uniform prayer book to be used by Jews from the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox traditions.[16]

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[15] Gushwa, *Best and Worst of Times,* 90–140; Clifford Merrill Drury, *The History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy*, *Volume Two, 1939–1949* (Washington, DC, 1950), 50; Albert Isaac Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*: *Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York, 1999), 74–108; Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews*: *How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), passim.

[16] Moore, *GI Jews*, 118–55.

Although the government devoted substantial resources to the chaplaincy, many religious groups supplemented these efforts. Virtually every denomination developed pamphlets and other reading material for distribution to GIs. Protestant and Catholic organizations provided their clergy with communion sets, but they also met a range of other needs that could not be covered by their salaries and public funds. The Jewish Welfare Board provided sacramental wine and kosher foods for the holiday – most importantly matzah for Passover.

Religious beliefs and rites sustained many troops, and army social scientists, when surveying soldiers, found that prayer remained crucial to soldiers in combat. Many Roman Catholics before entering battle sought to attend mass and gain general absolution. For many Jewish GIs, the opportunity to attend Shabbat and High Holiday services took on special meaning when liberating European Jews from the clutches of Nazi tyranny. Although the military rigidly segregated black and white troops, the army and the navy were religiously integrated and brought together individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In the case of the army, a standard trope of wartime journalism, films, and postwar memoirs focused on the platoon that contained Protestants, Jews, and Catholics. Comradeship across religious and ethnic lines would often be reflected by men, especially in times of stress, attending religious services together.[17]

Despite the popularly held adage "there are no atheists in foxholes," it is difficult to gauge the religiosity of the American GI. As one chaplain stationed in France in 1944 observed, "I can't see that men overseas are much more religious or irreligious than at home. They stack up about as usual. Habits assert them one way or the other with normal people. There are plenty of atheists in foxholes and many who are not. Some get religion under fire, some get mad, and others simply get."[18] The army and navy stressed as a crucial role for chaplains discouraging enlisted men from engaging in casual sex outside of marriage. Despite countless lectures and sermons urging sexual abstinence, venereal disease soared during the war. Chaplains also had little success in curbing a military culture that often provided ready access to alcohol. Moreover, calls by Fundamentalists and

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[17] Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*, Volume 2, *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II* (Princeton, 1949), 172–3; John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (San Diego, CA, 1976), 53–89; Gerald F. Linderman, *The World within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II* (New York, 1997), 263–99.

[18] Harold E. Mayo to Robert Cummins, 18 July 1944, General Correspondence, Jan.–Aug., 1944, Universalist Church of America, Chaplains, bms 00392 (17), Manuscript and Archives, Andover Harvard Theological Library, Cambridge, MA.

such mainline churches as the United Methodist Church for Congress to restrict consumption of alcohol fell on deaf ears.[19]

As noncombatants, chaplains often had a difficult time comforting men who needed them most – those under enemy fire. Under international law and custom, chaplains remained unarmed and generally stayed sufficiently behind the lines to avoid direct enemy fire. Roman Catholic priests gained a reputation for staying close to the fighting in order to administer last rites to dying Roman Catholic soldiers. Even though chaplains were noncombatants, the nature of the Second World War meant many chaplains, especially those serving aboard naval and coast guard vessels, were in harm's way. Seventy-seven army chaplains and twenty-seven navy chaplains died in service. In the most dramatic instance, four army chaplains – two Protestant ministers, a rabbi, and a Roman Catholic priest – perished when their troopship in February 1943 was torpedoed in the North Atlantic. In utter disregard for their own survival, the four chaplains gave up their life preservers to other soldiers, and before the ship sank into the sea, survivors reported seeing them united in prayer. The four chaplains would be widely commemorated by national and religious leaders as an important symbol of ecumenicalism and sacrifice for a generation.[20]

To serve the spiritual needs of the American GI, the Roosevelt administration intervened in other ways beyond the chaplaincy. At the behest of the War Department, representatives of the YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, Jewish Welfare Board, Salvation Army, and National Travelers Aid Association gathered and formed the United Service Organization (USO) to cater to the spiritual and recreational needs of servicemen. Although the USO would be best known for overseas shows featuring such entertainers as Bob Hope, this organization created an extensive network of clubs throughout the United States.[21]

The continental United States and neighboring Canada would be unique among the major belligerents in the Second World War: With only minor exceptions, neither nation came under direct enemy attack and thus avoided the massive loss of civilian life. Despite this good fortune, the demands for mobilization placed significant strains upon civilians. Many families, especially those with young children, struggled with the absence

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[19] John Costello, *Virtue Under Fire: How World War II Changed Our Social and Sexual Attitudes* (New York, 1987), 88–9; Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism*, 199–200.

[20] Donald F. Crosby, *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II* (Lawrence, 1994), passim; Gushwa, *Best and Worst of Times*, 127–30, 215–17; Drury, *Chaplain Corps, Navy*, 50.

[21] Maryann Lovelace, "Facing Change in Wartime Philadelphia: The Story of the Philadelphia USO," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 123 (July 1999): 143–75.

of fathers who served in the military and remained absent for years. The Second World War produced a full employment economy and placed pressures on women with young children to enter the workforce. Adequate day care remained in short supply, and cases of child neglect and juvenile delinquency soared.[22]

The war fostered massive internal migration; scores of African Americans and whites left the South in search of better opportunities in urban centers in the North, Midwest, and Far West. Religiously and culturally, this had profound implications on American religious life, increasing the concentration of evangelical and Fundamentalist churches in the Midwest and California. Explosive growth stemming from this migration also spawned racial tensions in countless communities, sparking a brutal race riot in Detroit in 1943.

Despite the burden and sacrifices brought by the war, it also sparked unprecedented prosperity. Even with rationing, Americans in 1944 consumed more goods and services than they had in 1940. Religious institutions, while buffeted by wartime inflation, witnessed an increase in donations after the lean years of the Great Depression. At the same time, churches struggled to serve communities that experienced explosive population growth stemming from mobilization. Migrants who moved to urban centers attended church less regularly, and several denominations organized special ministries for communities that faced an influx of defense workers. Government restrictions on building materials placed a low priority on religious institutions, and spending on new church and synagogue construction declined during the war and even fell below the lean years of the Great Depression. Moreover, the influx of clergy into the military compounded the national shortage of clergy.[23]

Calls for national unity did not completely erase all vestiges of pacifism within mainline churches. Many churches stood loyal to their conscientious objectors, and several denominations cooperated in establishing Civilian Public Service Camps. Although the "just war" tradition remained the dominant response of Roman Catholics to the advent of the war, the Catholic Worker movement led by Dorothy Day continued to reject the legitimacy of the war and supported Roman Catholic conscientious objectors. Moreover, mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders and theologians consciously avoided declaring the Second World War a holy war. By the same token, many Quakers answered the call to

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[22] William M. Tuttle, Jr., *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children* (New York, 1993), 49–90.

[23] Blum, *V Was for Victory*, 91; Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, 1988), 25–7.

military service, and a number of Friends meetings, especially in the Midwest, accepted this decision and did not move to censure or expel them from membership.[24]

Japanese Americans would not fare well during the Second World War. After Pearl Harbor, Americans viewed the Japanese in highly racialized and dehumanized terms: propaganda often equated them with being akin to monkeys or apes. Racism, combined with a series of dramatic defeats in the opening months of the war, fostered both intense fear and anger that was directed at the small Japanese American community living on the West Coast. Even before the outbreak of war, the federal government had denied citizenship to Japanese and other Asian immigrants. While the children of Japanese Americans (Nisei) gained citizenship by virtue of their birth in the United States, they faced widespread discrimination in employment and education. When Roosevelt issued an Executive Order in 1942 granting authority to the U.S. Army to relocate Japanese Americans living on the West Coast, few national religious or secular organizations protested this action in unequivocal terms. The American Civil Liberties Union, American Jewish Congress, and most Protestant denominations stood silent. The Federal Council of Churches issued a statement expressing misgivings about the plight of Japanese Americans, but they did not call for reversal of the policy.[25]

Although many religious periodicals refused to condemn the internment, a number, including *The Christian Century*, ran stories about the plight of Japanese American Christians and the toll it took on them and their communities. A number of courageous Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish clergy on the West Coast denounced the internment, and in some instances they and their congregations extended aid to individual Japanese Americans as they put their affairs in order before departing for internment camps. Located in arid regions of the West, the internment camps forced Japanese Americans to endure primitive housing and an environment that weakened ties between parents and children. Several Christian denominations and Buddhist organizations did establish ministries to succor those interned in the camps. As in the case of the military, the War Relocation Agency encouraged ecumenical cooperation between religious groups seeking to serve the internees.[26]

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[24] Thomas D. Hamm, Margaret Marconi, Gretchen Kleinhen Salinas, and Benjamin Whitman, "The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a Case Study," *Indiana Magazine of History* 96 (March 2000): 45–71.

[25] Ellen M. Eisenberg, *The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal during WW II* (Lanham, MD, 2008), passim.

[26] Marty, *Under God, Indivisible*, 76–88.

Even before the war ended, several Christian denominations played a pivotal role in starting to dismantle the camps, resettling internees into the midwestern and eastern United States. Several mainline churches sponsored programs that paroled young Nisei from the internment camps and enrolled them in colleges, often church affiliated. In the case of Chicago, the relief arms of the Church of the Brethren and of the American Field Service working with the War Relocation Administration established a hostel in Chicago to aid Nisei in the transition back to civilian life and provided assistance in locating employment. Local churches were encouraged to invite Japanese Americans to attend services, and interdenominational organizations such as the YWCA sponsored teas.[27]

The Japanese Americans would not be the only minority group facing discrimination. African Americans continued to endure legalized segregation in the South and within the armed forces. One of the few significant gains made by the civil rights movement occurred when A. Phillip Randolph threatened to stage a march on Washington that led FDR in June 1941 to issue an executive order mandating equal employment in defense factories and prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, or national origin. Although the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), established to ensure compliance with the executive order, had only limited enforcement actions and often faced significant resistance from business and organized labor, it still had some notable successes, especially in promoting greater religious tolerance. In 1943, after an exhaustive investigation and hearings, the FEPC successfully won the reinstatement of a group of Jehovah's Witnesses fired from a West Virginia factory for refusing to salute the flag.[28]

Jehovah's Witnesses continued to face public hostility, and the Selective Service generally refused to grant ministerial status to all members of the Jehovah's Witnesses movement, which claimed that all adherents were clergy. But with support from some Christian and Jewish leaders and the American Civil Liberties Union, Jehovah's Witnesses continued to turn to the courts to fight for their religious freedom. Over the course of the war, attorneys working for the Witnesses filed a series of court cases asserting their right to proselytize as well as to challenge the mandate that school children salute the American flag. In the midst of war, the Supreme Court dramatically reversed itself and in 1943 declared unconstitutional a West

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[27] Charlotte Brooks, "In the Twilight Zone between Black and White: Japanese American Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942–1945," *Journal of American History* 86 (March 2000): 1655–87.

[28] Chuck Smith, "War Fever and Religious Fervor: The Firing of Jehovah's Witnesses in West Virginia and Administrative Protection of Liberty," *American Journal of Legal History* 43 (April 1999): 133–51.

Virginia law mandating such rites for those with religious objections. Given the deference given by the Supreme Court to precedent, this decision was a remarkable shift in the court's thinking. Scholars partly attribute this more permissive decision to the more secure position of the United States. Although victory had not been achieved in 1943, the threat of defeat no longer loomed, and more deference could be given to individual freedom.[29]

Overall, the Second World War furthered the cause of religious tolerance and ecumenical cooperation within the United States. Both the federal government and the military favored working with broad interdenominational groups, such as the USO, to ensure greater uniformity and efficiency. During the war, official propaganda called for tolerance across ethnic, religious, and racial lines – most famously in Frank Sinatra's short film, *The House I Live In*, that sharply condemned anti-Semitism, and in Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series, that stressed the religious liberty of the United States and the religious diversity it protects. Journalists and many clergy visiting Americans serving abroad noted the spirit of brotherhood and mutual understanding that existed among GIs.

Liberal Christians and Fundamentalists remained sharply divided, and cooperation between denominational lines could be strained. Many refused on doctrinal grounds to join the Federal Council of Churches. The war years saw an effort among evangelicals and Fundamentalists to form organizations to counter the influence of the Federal Council of Churches. In 1941, Carl McIntire founded the American Council of Christian Churches that militantly rejected the Federal Council of Churches. The National Association of Evangelicals founded in 1942 took a more moderate position, and along with the National Religious Broadcasters (1944) it sought to challenge the influence of the Federal Council in several areas, including access to radio time and in the appointment of Protestant ministers as military chaplains.[30]

In 1939, despite their doctrinal differences, mainline Protestants as well as evangelicals and Fundamentalists protested FDR's appointment of Myron Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican. They sponsored an avalanche of editorials, articles, and letters to FDR attacking Taylor's appointment as a violation of the separation of church and state and as undue governmental favoritism to one church. Protestant misgivings would be echoed over other issues, too; many expressed concerns about the

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[29] Peters, *Judging Jehovah's Witnesses*, 230–59.
[30] Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York, 1997), 144–60; Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 116–32.

growing power of the Roman Catholic Church within the United States. For instance, claims of bias would be directed at how the Selective Service administered the draft by not exempting preministerial students enrolled in college. Protestants claimed that it worked to the advantage of the Roman Catholic Church that started training clergy at an earlier age.[31]

The Roman Catholic Church embraced a "just war" tradition that called for limits on use of force in wartime and the need to protect civilians. Through diplomatic channels, Pius XII and other Vatican officials pressed the Roosevelt administration to spare Rome from American and British aerial bombing in 1943, and they expressed more general misgivings about the morality of targeting civilians in air campaigns. Several American Catholic publications, including *Commonweal* and the *Catholic Worker*, ran articles on the bombing of civilians. Similar calls for restrictions on the use of air power would be echoed by pacifists affiliated with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and several mainline Protestant leaders. In 1942, the Fellowship reprinted in pamphlet form Vera Britain's denunciation of area bombing of German cities on ethical and practical grounds. In March 1944, twenty-four Protestant theologians and leaders, including such liberal luminaries as Harry Emerson Fosdick, John Haynes Holmes, and Oswald Villard, added their voice to Britain's appeal when the Fellowship of Reconciliation again reprinted her article for distribution in the United States. Covered as a front page story in the *New York Times*, the newspaper would be inundated with letters to the editors, most denouncing the call to place limits on the bombing campaign on moral grounds.[32]

Ultimately, the calls for limitation of the use of arms had only minimal impact in a war that saw the almost complete eroding of the distinction between combatants and civilians. Despite Vatican pleas, Rome on several occasions would be attacked by British and American bombers. In one incident, the papal residence outside of Rome would be hit by American bombs, promoting significant protest from the Vatican. In contrast to the Royal Air Force, which engaged in area bombing as early as 1940, the U.S. Army Air Force initially adhered to a prewar doctrine that called for precision bombing of strategic targets. Although the United States concentrated on bombing such sites as submarine pens, factories, and transportation facilities, because of the technological limitations, American

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[31] Woolner and Kurial, *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church*, 179–208; Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism*, 115–16.

[32] Woolner and Kurial, *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church*, 209–51; Conrad C. Crane, *Bombs, Cities, and Civilians: American Airpower Strategy in World War II* (Lawrence, KS, 1993), 28–47; Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism,* 216–20; "Obliteration Raids on German Cities Protested in U.S.," *New York Times*, 6 March 1944, 1.

bombers could not deliver their bomb loads precisely, and civilian deaths were inevitable on most missions. Over the course of the war, the Army Air Force increasingly accepted the usefulness and legitimacy of area bombing in the war in Europe, most notably in the raids against Dresden in 1945. When the United States began to launch regular bombing campaigns over Japan in late 1944, precision bombing quickly gave way to area bombing. Even before the dropping of the atomic bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States had dropped a staggering quantity of munitions on Japanese cities, killing over one hundred thousand in Tokyo during two days of raids in March 1945.[33]

The American bombing campaign that ultimately targeted civilians represented only part of a wider drift toward total war that made civilians a target of warfare. World War II produced staggering casualties, and civilian deaths numbered over forty million, many the victims of deliberate war crimes perpetrated by the German and Japanese armies. The war created millions of refugees, and civilian populations in countries occupied by Axis forces were often in desperate need of food, medicine, and clothing. A number of Christian and Jewish organizations confronted this massive need to aid the victims of war with a number of initiatives, especially in unoccupied France from 1940 through 1942 and in such neutral countries as Portugal and Switzerland. American philanthropic giving for war relief soared over the course of the war, growing from $2.9 million in 1939 to $233 million in 1945; over the six years of the war, the total exceeded a half billion dollars. Among the major faiths, Protestant organizations outstripped Roman Catholic and Jewish organizations in overseas relief in the early years of the war; but by 1944, as the full extent of the Holocaust was revealed, Jewish organizations surpassed them.[34]

One of the greatest moral challenges of the war, the American response to the Holocaust, sparked an intense wartime debate that has continued in the postwar era. Why did the United States not do more to rescue European Jewry, especially after it learned in 1942 of the implementation of the Final Solution? Even after the outbreak of war in 1939, the Joint Distribution Committee continued to provide significant relief to Jews in Germany, France, and Poland. After the fall of France, American relief groups, most notably the American Friends Service Committee and the Unitarian Service Committee, remained active in unoccupied France, aiding Jews and other refugees until the United States broke diplomatic relations with Vichy in 1942. Although the persecution of European Jewry would be reported in both the secular and religious press, much of the coverage often failed

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[33] Crane, *Bombs, Cities, and Civilians*, passim.
[34] Curti, *American Philanthropy*, 450–2.

to grasp the full extent of Nazi genocidal policies and often did not merit front page coverage. At the same time, the cause of the Allies remained perilous in the critical years from 1940 to 1942. Not until the victories of the British at El Alamein in 1942 and the Soviet Union at Stalingrad in January 1943 did the strategic tide decisively shift. In response to calls to do more to rescue Jews, many policy makers stressed the need to devote all resources to the swift defeat of German forces as the best way to liberate the persecuted.[35]

In considering the response of the United States and the Allies to the Holocaust, there were significant barriers and moral dilemmas. For instance, American entrance into the war against Germany deprived American relief organizations of the opportunity to work directly to aid German and Polish Jewry, although these organizations continued to function in such neutral countries as Switzerland and Portugal. After Pearl Harbor, the State Department adamantly rejected most efforts to channel funds from the United States into occupied Europe for humanitarian reasons, fearing it would strengthen the Nazis. Critics of the State Department observed that these restrictions were not ironclad; for instance, food shipments were sent through the auspices of the International Red Cross to the starving Greek population. Overall, humanitarian considerations generally were subordinated to military necessity. Prior to American entry into the war, the United States refused to press the British government to modify their blockade to allow American humanitarian organizations to provide food to Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway. Similarly, the efforts by the Vatican, after Rome was occupied by German forces in 1943, to charter oceangoing vessels and to import food into Rome were also rejected by the American government. In both cases, the American government insisted Germany as the occupying power had the ultimate responsibility for feeding the civilian population.[36]

Jewish organizations, most notably the World Jewish Congress, played a pivotal role in channeling information in 1942 of the unfolding Holocaust to the British and American governments as well as to Jewish leaders in these two countries. Although the State Department sought to keep this information from American Jewish leaders and the general public, it did eventually reach Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress. Initial reactions to this news were muted on the part

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[35] Haim Genizi, "Christian Charity: The Unitarian Service Committee's Relief Activities on Behalf of Refugees from Nazism, 1940–5," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2 (1987): 261–76; Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, passim; Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews* (Minneapolis, 1980), passim.

[36] Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 280–4; Woolner and Kurial, *FDR, the Vatican, and the Roman Catholic Church*, 231–9.

of the State Department; there remained some doubts about the veracity of these reports and misgivings about the course of action to be taken. For instance, Wise agreed to remain publicly silent about the genocide until he received confirmation by the State Department, and he withheld this information even when addressing a major Madison Square Garden rally in Manhattan protesting German persecution of European Jewry. In December 1942, Jewish leaders pressed FDR to issue strong condemnation of Nazi atrocities against the Jews and called for establishment of an agency to investigate war crimes.[37]

At the same time, there remained skeptics. In December 1942, *The Christian Century* ran an editorial that, while expressing sympathy for the plight of European Jewry, expressed fears of resurrecting the atrocity propaganda of World War I. Efforts by Jewish groups to funnel relief funds to Jews in Eastern Europe through the World Jewish Congress were stymied by the State Department. Moreover, there remained a strong fear in some segments of the Roosevelt administration and the Jewish community that it could be unwise to focus too much attention on the plight of European Jewry, that it might potentially sap public support for the war and validate Hitler's propaganda that blamed Jews for starting the war.[38]

In 1944, Roosevelt took perhaps the most decisive action of his administration in ameliorating the plight of Jewry. Prompted by a memorandum from his subordinates, "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews," Henry Morgenthau personally met with FDR and convinced him to create a new agency to supplant the State Department. In response, FDR issued an executive order on 22 January 1944, creating the War Refugee Board to expedite aid to European Jewry. One of the notable actions of the Board would be to coordinate efforts to rescue the Jews of Hungary in 1944 and 1945. Not only did the U.S. government issue explicit warnings to the Hungarian government regarding the plight of Hungarian Jewry, but Pius XII also joined the king of Sweden in issuing appeals to the Regent of Hungary to halt further deportation of Jews. The War Refugee Board coordinated efforts with Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish businessman granted diplomatic status by his neutral government, to channel relief supplies to Hungarian Jews. Wallenberg, along with diplomats from several other neutral countries, issued protective passports to Jews. These efforts were remarkable and certainly were aided by the growing tide of defeat. At the same time,

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[37] Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York, 1981), 57–62; Arad, *Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, 209–24.

[38] Ross, *American Protestant Press and Nazi Persecution*, 156–64; Arad, *Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, passim.

these efforts would not be enough to rescue scores of Hungarian Jews, and over five hundred thousand perished at the hands of the Nazis and their Hungarian collaborators.[39]

The liberation of death and concentration camps proved a galvanizing influence for the American Jewish community. Although the extermination camps located in Eastern Europe would be liberated by Soviet troops, American and British forces found the conditions at such concentration camps as Dachau and Bergen Belsen ghastly. Even many battle-hardened veterans – Jews and non-Jews alike – were shocked and appalled. Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, not only toured Ohrdruf, the first concentration camp liberated by American forces, accompanied by senior commanders and journalists, but also ordered American troops as well as German civilians to tour the liberated camps so they grasped the full extent of German inhumanity.[40]

After the fighting ended in Europe, many Jewish GIs went to great lengths to locate family members and to aid survivors of the Holocaust. Given their status as officers and their relative autonomy within the military hierarchy, Jewish American army chaplains played a pivotal role in coming to the aid of Holocaust survivors. Although divisions over Zionism continued within the American Jewish community, the Holocaust swayed many to support a Jewish state in Palestine as a place of refuge for the remnant of European Jewry. By the 1970s, the Holocaust would be considered by American Jews as one of the defining events of Jewish history, and the commemoration of this horrendous event would be incorporated into the liturgical calendar.[41]

Despite the discovery of the death camps, anti-Semitic attitudes did not disappear, and there continued to exist significant opposition to lowering immigration barriers to admit Jews. Moreover, anti-Semitic attitudes lingered, and a significant portion of American troops serving in the occupation army in Germany harbored negative stereotypes about the displaced persons in their care. Support for the creation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine faced significant opposition within the American government, especially on the part of the State Department fearing a worsening of relations with the Arab world.[42]

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[39] Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews*, 235–54; Rubenstein, *Myth of Rescue*, 91–197; Tsvi Erez, "Hungry – Six Days in July 1944," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 3 (1988): 37–53.

[40] Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart*: *Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camp* (New York, 1985), passim.

[41] Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*: *American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry*, *1944–1948* (Detroit, 1993), 6–64; Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, 138–9, 207–63.

[42] Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart*, 152–68.

In contrast to World War I, the United States did not retreat into isolationism. Mainline Protestants, joined by many Roman Catholics and Jews, played an important role in building public support for internationalism. Even before the United States entered the war, the Federal Council of Churches established a commission to consider the postwar world order. Headed by the politically well-connected John Foster Dulles, this commission influenced American diplomats as they designed an international organization to replace the League of Nations.[43] The support of religious leaders for internationalism certainly helped shape as well as reflect the American public's willingness to see the United States remain active in world affairs and join the United Nations. Support for internationalism also would be strengthened by the advent of the atomic bomb. Although many Americans, especially those in the armed forces, accepted the use of the atomic bomb, the unprecedented destructiveness of this weapon proved troubling. Religious leaders would be divided over the atomic bomb: some theologians argued that it remained a legitimate weapon, but others condemned the bomb as an immoral weapon that could not be used in good conscience on innocent civilians. Until the lines of the Cold War hardened, support for international regulation of the bomb and some form of world government enjoyed significant public support, including among some religious leaders.[44]

World War II left an ambiguous legacy. Mainline, evangelical, and Fundamentalist Protestants joined the Roman Catholic hierarchy in rejecting efforts by the Truman administration to enact universal military training. But these challenges to the militarization of American society would be fleeting. The U.S. embrace of internationalism would quickly become synonymous with the policies intended to deter the expansion of Communism. The Soviet Union, a wartime ally in World War II, by the outbreak of the Korean War became demonized as an atheistic regime bent on world conquest. But World War II certainly promoted a sense of greater religious tolerance within the United States. By 1955 the sociologist and theologian Will Herberg would declare that the old sectarian divisions had faded and that there existed a common faith in the American way of life that united Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews.[45]

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[43] Sittser, *Cautious Patriotism*, 238–40.

[44] Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light*: *American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Bomb* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 33–45, 211–29.

[45] Anne C. Loveland, *American Evangelicals and the U.S. Military*, *1942–1993* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1996), 1–4; Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*: *An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY), 1955.

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Section V

COMPARATIVE ESSAYS

RELIGION IN CANADA, 1867–1945

DAVID B. MARSHALL

When the final draft of the British North America Act was being completed at the London conference in December 1866, one of the thorniest problems facing the delegates was a name for the new nation. While reading the Bible, as was his custom every evening, Samuel Tilley of New Brunswick stumbled upon a phrase from Psalm 72, "His Dominion shall also be from sea to sea." The suggestion of "the Dominion of Canada" was seized upon by the Fathers of Confederation as an appropriate choice. Although the churches in Canada did not play a significant role in confederation, this phrase inspired a sense of mission to build a Christian nation from sea to sea. The biblical reference also resonated with the overwhelmingly Christian character of the new country. Over 98 percent of the people indicated to Canada's first census takers in 1871 that they were Christian. Of the population, 43 percent was Roman Catholic, while another 52 percent was from one of four mainstream denominations – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist. Most of the remaining population was either Lutheran or members of a pacifist group, such as Quakers or Mennonites. The non-Christian population was very small, with only eleven hundred Jews, and most of them concentrated in the city of Montreal.

There were some important differences in the religious composition of each of the colonies joining in confederation. In the Maritime colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Catholic minority made up almost 30 percent of the population. In New Brunswick many of the Catholics were French-speaking Acadians, while in Nova Scotia the majority of Catholics were either Irish or Scots Highlanders. The other unique feature of religious affiliation in the Maritimes was the strong presence of the Baptists, who were largely descendants of those swept up in the Great Awakening led by Henry Alline during the American Revolutionary period. In Canada West (Ontario), the Methodists composed 30 percent of the population, followed by the Presbyterians with 23 percent and the Anglicans with 20 percent. The Baptists trailed far behind. The Catholic minority composed

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approximately 17 percent of the population. In Canada East (Quebec), the Catholic majority composed around 86 percent of the population. The largest Protestant minorities were the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans, but they composed a mere 2 to 5 percent of the population, respectively. At confederation, Canada was a country with a Protestant majority dispersed across the county and a concentrated Catholic majority in the French-speaking province of Quebec.

What kind of Christian nation Canada would become was a matter of intense sectarian dispute. The danger of opening up the potentially explosive religious questions that divided Protestants and Catholics simmered beneath the surface of British North American politics during the confederation debates. The old battles over the existence of an established Church of England had been settled in the 1840s and 1850s with the secularization of the clergy reserves and the creation of a common or public school system. The public schools were designed to be nondenominational. Scripture, however, was part of the daily exercises, and biblical passages formed the basis of reading exercises. Beyond this rudimentary religious content, there was no catechism, no doctrinal teaching or religious instruction, and no visible Christian presence in the classroom, except for the Bible. From a Catholic perspective, the public schools were obviously Protestant; and therefore separate Catholic schools, where images of the Pope, the Virgin Mary, and the Crucifix were prominently displayed and catechism was a central part of the curriculum, were necessary. But from a Protestant perspective, such separate Catholic schools were disturbing signs of Catholic aggression. For ultramontane Catholics, being a Protestant outside the sacramental life of the Church was tantamount to being beyond redemption. For Protestants, direct access to the Bible as the word of God was the only way anyone could escape the clutches of the papacy and Catholic superstition. Furthermore, in their view, Catholic veneration of the papacy and commitment to Rome could not be reconciled with absolute loyalty to the British crown. Although they differed in theology and culture and often language, Catholics and Protestants resembled each other in temperament. They were dangerously similar in their zeal, intransigence, righteousness, bigotry, and sense of mission.

The Fathers of Confederation were determined to minimize the sectarian issues that might tear the new nation apart. Ever sensitive to the interests of the French-speaking Catholic minority, Georges Etienne Cartier, the leading proponent of confederation from Quebec, made it clear that Canada was to be a "political nationality," not a nation based on identification with religion, ethnicity, or language. The Fathers of Confederation concurred, and they constructed a constitutional arrangement whereby potentially divisive matters relating to religion were confined to local or

provincial legislatures rather than to the national parliament where the greatest potential for destructive sectarian conflict existed. Consequently, education and social welfare were delegated to provincial jurisdiction, where in the case of the province of Quebec the Catholic Church could protect its devotional school system and its hospitals, orphanages, and other welfare institutions.

Despite these intentions, the issue that almost derailed the confederation scheme was the question of minority educational rights. The Protestant minority in the overwhelmingly Catholic Canada East wanted to ensure they had their own public school system in which there was no hint of Catholic teaching, catechism, or iconography. A bill guaranteeing an autonomous Protestant school system, separate from the Catholic confessional system, was introduced. In response, the Catholic minority in Canada West demanded the same privileges, arguing that it was a matter of justice and equal rights. The Catholic minority in Ontario should have the same educational rights as the Protestant minority in Quebec. What struck the bill's sponsor as a "proposition so fair that no man, whether Catholic or Protestant, would reject it,"[1] caused bitter sectarian debate. The Protestant majority in Ontario could not accept a fully funded separate Catholic school system, and in response the Catholic majority in Quebec threatened to oppose the bill protecting the Protestant school system there. To avoid stalemate and deepening sectarian strife, both bills were withdrawn. Ultimately, provisions protecting the Protestant school system in Quebec were introduced into the final draft of the British North America Act (BNA Act). With regard to the more general issue of minority educational rights, section 93 of the BNA Act guaranteed the separate school systems in Quebec and Ontario as they existed in law at confederation. Despite resolution of the conflict, this debate indicated how fragile questions concerning religion and minority rights were. The most embittered and acrimonious conflicts in Canadian society related to religion and were defined by Protestant-Catholic conflict.

Shortly after confederation, the new Dominion entered into negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company for transfer of its vast lands in the Northwest to Canadian jurisdiction. Initially these talks proceeded without any consultation with the settlers living in the Red River colony, where a large number of French-speaking Catholic Metis lived. Anxious to ensure that French language and Catholic rights would be protected in the transfer of jurisdiction to Canada, Louis Riel led an uprising that forced the Canadian government to negotiate. The team of negotiators representing the Red River colonists included a local Roman Catholic priest. Under the

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[1] "Robert Bell," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. X, 1871–1880* (Toronto, 1972).

terms of the Manitoba Act of 1870, a confessional school system alongside a public school system was guaranteed. Catholics had full educational rights in the new western province of Manitoba. Some interpreted this to be an indication of the spirit of confederation, whereby respect for minority rights, both Protestant and Catholic, would be established and guaranteed throughout the Dominion.

In another part of the country, another minority rights issue exploded onto the national scene. Prior to confederation, Catholics had their own schools in the Maritime colonies, but these schools were not enshrined in law or legislation. They operated by custom. In 1871 the government of New Brunswick, acting within the terms of the BNA Act, introduced legislation creating a nonsectarian school system in which there would be no public funding or support for separate or Catholic schools. Certain aspects of the legislation seemed designed specifically to undermine Catholic schools. One clause forbade the display of any symbols or emblems of religion, including the wearing of habits in the classroom by teachers. This legislation was a serious infringement on the ability of Catholic parents to educate their children in a suitable setting. The Catholic minority in New Brunswick was encouraged by the provisions for separate schools in the Manitoba Act, and so they demanded that the federal government disallow the New Brunswick Schools legislation and restore the privileges of the Catholic minority. Under the terms of the BNA Act, the federal power had the right to intervene in provincial jurisdiction over education whenever minority rights were endangered. Despite this guarantee, the federal government hesitated to get involved for fear of further aggravating sectarian conflict.

The 1872 provincial election in New Brunswick was fought on the schools question. Exposing the raw sectarian emotions that had erupted, the battle cry of those supporting the common schools legislation was "vote for the Queen against the Pope." Burdened by the additional costs of supporting their own schools, many Catholics refused to pay the school tax for the public system as a form of protest. Courts seized and sold the property, including livestock and farm goods, of those Catholics refusing to pay. Others who failed to comply with the law were jailed. Finally, a riot in the Acadian community of Caraquet, during which two citizens were killed, forced a resolution. The Compromise of 1875 allowed the Catholic minority to send their children to a school where they were taught catechism during school hours by a member of Catholic religious orders. This arrangement was probably the best that was possible in the atmosphere of religious intolerance and bigotry that characterized Victorian Canada, but it fell far short of a state-supported school system for the Catholics of New Brunswick.

Whether Canada would be a nation that respected minority rights and recognized the fundamental duality of its Catholic and Protestant heritage, or one where the Anglo-Protestant majority established precedence for its religious beliefs and practices were highly contentious questions. In the opening years of confederation, the answer was inconclusive. Events in New Brunswick indicated the determination of many Protestants to create "His Dominion" in the image of their beliefs and values. Events in the Northwest indicated the resolve of the Catholic minority to assert and protect its rights and privileges. These issues became only more pressing as the West was settled.

THE PROMISE OF THE WEST

Both Catholics and Protestants viewed the West as an integral part of their historic mission in the new Dominion. They regarded planting their faith in the "virgin land" as a fulfillment of providence. Initially the Catholic missionary effort concentrated on converting the native people; but as they realized their position was being challenged by the rising tide of settlers in the 1880s and 1890s, they focused increasingly on establishing Catholic churches, schools, and other social institutions, such as hospitals. Protestant missionary activity in the West was also changing, from aiding the native's transition "from range to reservation" to building churches and providing worship services for the settlers. This missionary activity stretched the resources of the Protestant churches and forced them to consolidate their efforts by ending duplication and unnecessary intradenominational competition. A number of church unions resulted. Four groups of Presbyterians, including the Old Kirk Presbyterian Church and the Free Presbyterian Church, joined in 1875 to form the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Similarly, the largely English Wesleyan and New Connexion churches joined with the American Methodist Episcopal and the Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians to form the Methodist Church in Canada in 1884. The nationalist sentiment in Canada that accompanied the challenge of building a new transcontinental nation also inspired the churches to look beyond old divisions that were rooted in their past and to look toward creating a new national church that was designed to meet the new Canadian reality.

By equating their denominational interests with those of the nation, however, the mainstream Protestant churches were essentially defining Canada in their own image. Both newly created Methodist and Presbyterian churches appointed special superintendents of missions for the West. They developed an aggressive strategy of appointing energetic and devoted men to the mission stations and raising money to build churches. The objective

was to create a strong physical presence of the church in the newly settled frontier communities. In the estimation of the Protestant mainstream, there was little room for Catholicism outside of Quebec and especially in the West where the major characteristics of the new nation could be worked out. Catholic missionaries expressed growing alarm in their reports with respect to the aggressiveness of Protestant missionaries. The sectarian conflict of the East was transplanted to the West.

The West also offered the churches in Canada an opportunity to be revitalized. As Superintendent James Robertson suggested, the religious future of the country would be determined by whether God's call "to go in and possess" the West was answered. He insisted that no mission to the West would be successful unless a purified and accessible gospel, unencumbered by the difficulties and doubts of complicated modern thought, was preached.[2] Similarly, the Methodist Alexander Sutherland wrote that the West provided Canadians with the "opportunity of working out the problems of a Christian civilization on a purely virgin soil." A renewed purified faith, emancipated from compromises with urban society and modern thought, could emerge in the West, he thought, and be an inspiration for the troubled churches of the East.[3]

By the 1880s, a great deal of the energy of the Protestant churches was consumed by battles over doctrine, church membership, and forms of worship. Methodists debated whether personal conversion experiences and attendance at class meetings were necessary. Presbyterians fought over whether organ and choral music enhanced worship or was an unnecessary distraction from the word of God. Both churches suffered a number of sensational heresy trials over matters of doctrine. More generally, a host of disturbing questions were in the air. Was there everlasting punishment of the wicked? Was prayer to God effective? How did one read the Bible? Was the Bible true? Did the miraculous, specifically the virgin birth and physical resurrection of Christ, occur? Was Jesus divine? Could there be communication with the dead? The churches were confused about their message and mission. Clergy agonized over what to preach. The people in the pews wondered about what was true. Doubt seemed to prevail, and this lack of certainty undermined the churches. It was hoped that on the virgin soil of the West the essentials of the Christian faith could somehow be rediscovered.

The promise of the West was perhaps best captured by a series of best-selling novels by the Reverend Charles W. Gordon, who wrote under

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[2] James Robertson, "Report to the Board of Home Missions," in *Acts and Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1887).

[3] Alexander Sutherland, *A Summer in Prairie Land: Notes of a Tour through the Northwest Territory* (Toronto, 1881).

the pseudonym "Ralph Connor." His novels, such as *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (1898) and *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899), were romanticized and dramatized versions of what he and many other Presbyterian missionaries experienced in western Canada. They featured the heroic exploits of missionaries faced with the challenges typical of frontier conditions in the early West. They had to reach the unattached young men working in mining and logging camps, cut off from family, community, and their home church. As a result, these young men had become hardened, blasphemous, and easily attracted to the saloon and gambling hall on the rugged frontier. The dedicated missionary heroes of Connor novels are "muscular Christians." Through the force of their character, their vigorous activity, and their plain, straightforward preaching, which emphasized biblical stories instead of complicated doctrine, they persuade the men to commit themselves to an upstanding Christian life. In the end, the converted men led the community in wiping out the drink trade and establishing a local church. Connor novels demonstrated the power of the pure gospel to transform both individuals and the moral and social order of society.

As a growing number of Protestant settlers from Ontario arrived in the West, the issue of minority educational rights erupted again. The delicate balance between Catholic and Protestant that had been at the foundation of Manitoba society had rapidly disappeared by 1891. Catholics now composed only 13 percent of the population. The historic Protestant denominations dominated the religious landscape. Manitoba's institutions were remade in their image. Most threatening to the Catholic minority was the legislation that created a nondenominational school system. Under the new system, Catholic schools received no public funding, and parents who continued sending their children to a Catholic school had to bear the cost of supporting the parish school as well as supporting the public system. This "double taxation," legislators hoped, would end the inefficient and unnecessarily costly separate Catholic school system. This legislation led to a long drawn-out controversy in both Manitoba and in federal politics, as the issue touched fundamental issues concerning minority rights, the future of the West, and the nature of Canada. The Catholic minority sought redress. After six long years of acrimony and conflicting court decisions, the compromise finally reached did little to restore the full minority educational rights of Catholics in Manitoba. Under the terms of the Public Schools Act of 1897, religious instruction at the end of the day was permitted on petition; and where numbers warranted, a teacher of the minority denomination could be employed. Manitoba's public schools were not "Godless." Daily religious exercises, such as reciting the Lord's Prayer and reading passages of the Bible, were continued. Archbishop Tache of Saint

Boniface in Manitoba, however, was not fooled by the compromise, for he realized that the Catholic minority had lost their schools.

The question of whether minority rights would be protected still loomed large in the minds of Canadians. Catholics faced an aggressive Protestant effort in the West. It turned out that attracting settlers from Quebec to the Northwest was very difficult. Concerns about the fate of Catholic institutions and the French language in what seemed to be an ever more Anglo-Protestant part of the nation dampened any resolve among Catholics from Quebec to settle in the West. For many French Canadian Catholics, the only place where their language and faith seemed safe and where they could be assured that their children would not be overwhelmed by an Anglo-Protestant atmosphere was Quebec.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND CANADIAN SOCIETY

During the first decade of the twentieth century the traditional pattern of religious affiliation in Canada changed. The historic churches of Canada still dominated. The number of Canadians from different religious traditions was relatively minor in terms of overall population. But the massive influx of immigrants, particularly from Europe, began to change the religious composition of Canada toward more diversity.

As a way to settle the West as quickly as possible, the federal government encouraged the immigration of experienced farmers who could thrive in the harsh Canadian prairie. By the late 1890s, an increasing number of immigrants were arriving from Germany, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These immigrants often settled in a concentrated rural area or colony. Pockets of Ukrainian settlement dotted the prairie landscape, and soon the distinctive features of their religious life and worship were very noticeable. By 1911, the almost ninety thousand Ukrainian people from the Eastern Orthodox tradition were one of the largest and most visible ethnic groups living on the prairies. The sixteen thousand Mormons who had migrated from Utah under the leadership of Charles Ora Card in the late 1890s were exclusively concentrated in southern Alberta, where they formed a clear majority in certain districts. A similar concentration of foreign immigrants existed in urban areas. For example, there were only seventy-five thousand Jews in Canada in 1911, but they were concentrated in the cities of Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, Jews amounted to over 6 percent of the total population, and by 1916 they accounted for over 8 percent of Winnipeg's population, making them a significant and visible minority as one of the fastest growing religious groups in the city. By living in concentrated areas, ethnic groups were able to pool their resources in order to re-create their religious traditions on Canadian

soil. Their faith provided them with a sense of community, a bridge to their past, and a means to survive with their dignity intact. For example, Ukrainians, either struggling to cope with the wretched conditions in the slums of Winnipeg or breaking prairie sod on the harsh prairie, found comfort and support within the domed candle-lit basilicas, where timeless liturgy celebrating Christ's sacrifice reassured them that their suffering and hardship were not futile or meaningless.

To encourage further settlement, the government also facilitated the migration of Anabaptists, who they thought would be successful settlers and agriculturalists because of their communal lifestyle. Arrangements were made so that the Mennonites obtained many adjoining lots of land. Large self-contained reserves of land were secured where many smaller Mennonite communities could thrive. The Mennonites were also promised absolute immunity from military service and full freedom to exercise their religious principles and educate their children in their own schools. Their separatist tendencies and pacifist belief were officially tolerated by the government. Mennonite settlement in Manitoba began in the 1870s on two large reserves, and by the early 1900s it had spread across the prairies. There were thirty-nine Mennonite settlements in Saskatchewan and eighteen in Alberta. The Hutterites entered negotiations with the Canadian government in 1898, and they were guaranteed "absolute immunity from military service"[4] and promised the right to hold property in common, to have their own schools, and to be exempted from voting and pledging an oath. Only one Hutterite colony was established in Manitoba at the turn of the century. As concerns about militarism erupted during World War I and assurances were given that their pacifist beliefs and separatist style of life would be accommodated and tolerated, the Hutterites purchased land for six colonies in Manitoba and nine in Alberta in the early 1920s. Finally, after long negotiations in 1899, the Doukhobors were guaranteed blocks of land and immunity from military service. Other aspects of the Doukhobors' separatist lifestyle, including their refusal to swear allegiance and to register births, marriages, and deaths, were not negotiated; and these issues became serious points of contention after they had settled. In 1911, there were ten thousand Doukhobors living in three different colonies in western Canada. These new immigrants were seeking a place of refuge where their particular form of religious faith and devotional practice could flourish free from prejudice and persecution.

The greater ethnic and religious diversity that characterized early twentieth-century Canada made the schools even more important and

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[4] William Janzen, *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto, 1990), 14.

controversial. For the Catholic hierarchy, confessional schools were now crucial for the inculcation of the particular traditions of the Canadian church and the Roman rite among the new immigrants. For the Protestants, the rallying cry surrounding the public school system was that a "national school system" had to be developed. There was a danger, many thought, that without a school system that imparted Canadian ideals and Christian principles, meaning Anglo-Protestant values, the fabric of society would devolve into chaos. Schools were not just a battleground of Protestant-Catholic antipathy; they were becoming a weapon of assimilation.

The central place of "national" or public schools in the crusade to make the West an Anglo-Protestant society was vigorously asserted in the debates surrounding the autonomy bills of 1905 that created the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Prime Minister Laurier hoped that a system in which the minority Catholic population would have the right to a fully funded separate school system would be guaranteed in the new western provinces. When the legislation came forward with provisions for a fully funded separate school system and guarantees for minority educational rights, there was a storm of public protest. The opponents argued that separate schools would entrench different faiths and languages. By contrast, a public school system would hold together a society of many cultures, languages, and religions by inculcating the "national" values that would form the foundation for a strong cohesive Canadian nation. A public school system was essential for Canadianizing the ethnically diverse West. In the end, after months of tense negotiations, a system that restricted minority schools rights in Saskatchewan and Alberta was agreed upon. Any hopes for equal minority rights were dashed by the insistence on a Canadian norm. For the Protestant majority, a separate Catholic school system that would protect and foster a distinct Catholic culture in the West was not tolerated.

The 1911 census also revealed that Canada was diversifying beyond the Christian tradition. It reported over fourteen thousand Confucians, ten thousand Buddhists, and seventeen hundred Sikhs or Hindus, all mostly concentrated on Canada's West Coast, as well as eight hundred members of the Islamic faith. That people of a non-Christian background presented a new threat to Canadian society was dramatically demonstrated during the incident of the *Komagata Maru*, a shipload of four hundred Sikh immigrants seeking entry into Canada in early 1914. After a two-month standoff in which the Sikhs were confined to their ship only to endure extreme physical privation and harassment from immigration officials, the *Komagata Maru* was forced to return to India with its passengers. The Sikhs had failed to gain the same rights of entry into Canada as other members of the British Empire. They were excluded partially because of their faith. Behind

some of this panic was the growing realization that Canadian society was changing quickly and that efforts to change the foreign immigrants so that they fit into a Canadian mold were not having the desired effect.

One other aspect of the census returns pointed to the changing character of religious life in Canada. Over twenty-six thousand people declared that they had "no religion." It is difficult to know exactly what people were indicating when they told the census taker that they had "no religion." Some, no doubt, were either atheists or agnostics. Included in this category were probably those who had no affiliation with one of Canada's recognized churches or religions. In some cases they might have developed "new age" religion beliefs that combined aspects of their Christian heritage with certain features of one of the world religions. Exposure to world religions, especially from the popular literature on the exploits of Canada's foreign missionaries as well as from the news and information missionaries brought back to their sponsoring churches in Canada while on furlough, gave many an appreciation of other religious traditions. While still deeply committed to Christianity, more progressive Canadians were developing a more open view of the world's religions. Whatever the case in this complicated story of religious syncretism, the fact that people could declare that they had "no religion" indicated that religious culture in Canada was shifting in a manner that allowed people to declare their iconoclastic views without suffering blows to their status of respectability.

One of the most stunning examples of this more tolerant attitude toward religious dissent occurred in the Methodist Church of Canada. In 1907, after years of agonizing doubts about his faith, James Shaver Woodsworth decided to resign from the ministry. In his letter of resignation, he explained that he no longer could subscribe to the *Methodist Discipline* that forbade drinking alcohol, dancing, playing cards, and a host of other activities. He confessed that he never had a conversion experience, and he outlined his objections to the Methodist mode of worship surrounding baptism and communion. Finally, he indicated that he could not accept the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, or the physical resurrection. The Bible and the teachings of Jesus, he concluded, were inspiring, but they were not divinely inspired. Finally, he admitted that he thought Jesus was just a man, not the divine Son of God. In his appeal to the church to accept his resignation, he concluded that he could not possibly continue to preach in good conscience. Despite this wholesale denial of Methodist doctrine and Christian teaching, Woodsworth's resignation was not accepted. Instead he was charged with running the All People's Mission in Winnipeg. As another clergyman who struggled with such doubts about doctrine concluded, "[I]t is a great thing to have practical work to do for it prevents too much speculation." A minster's practical or pastoral work, including

attention to moral reform and social activism, "tends to correct the evils of theological study."[5]

MORAL AND SOCIAL REFORM

The tide of foreign immigration, the rise of cities, and the industrialization of Canadian society during the Laurier boom years presented new challenges for the churches and the middle class that dominated the pews. In the popular imagination, ethnic and working-class communities were apparently overrun by prostitution, street gangs, rapacious landlords, scheming promoters, vulgar leisure and entertainment activities, and evil purveyors of alcohol. From the perspective of churchgoers, there was an alarming lack of religion among the immigrant, the poor, and the workingman. A sense of urgency developed with respect to the Christian character of the country, especially in the cities where the problems could not be hidden from view. As one progressive-minded Presbyterian clergyman and newspaper editor proclaimed, "The city is the strategic point in the warfare against evil, the storm centre is there; there the fiercest battle is waged."[6] This "moral panic" inspired a number of moral and social reform initiatives to reach out to the immigrant, the impoverished city dweller, and the nonchurchgoing working man. The idea of "His Dominion" provided symbolic coherence for a host of broadly based nondenominational moral and social crusades.

The most prominent and persistent of these movements for reform was temperance. Alcohol was thought to be the direct cause of poverty, crime, poor diet and health, political corruption, workplace accidents leading to joblessness, as well as domestic strife and family violence. The evangelical emphasis on personal responsibility and redemption through conversion formed the basis for the temperance movement. Temperance meetings were designed to encourage people to take the pledge to abstain from alcohol, and this oath was often accompanied by a vow to no longer gamble, swear, or blaspheme. Many of the popular evangelists in urban Canada stressed how individual lives had changed as a result of taking the temperance pledge. The eradication of a host of social problems was believed to be possible through personal moral redemption. By the 1890s, the crusaders for temperance sought national Prohibition through federal legislation because the existing local option laws did not end the drink trade or the flow of alcohol.

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[5] J. F. McCurdy, *Life and Work of D.J. Macdonnell* (Toronto, 1897), 48–50.

[6] *The Westminster* (Toronto), 15 September 1900; see Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875–1915* (Waterloo, 1988), 80.

The temperance movement, however, came up against significant opposition from other groups in society that did not share the same assumptions about moral reform. The limits of this Protestant moral crusade became most apparent in the results of the national plebiscite on the question of Prohibition. On 28 September 1898, Canadians went to the polls to answer the following plebiscite question: "Are you in favour of the passing of an Act prohibiting the importation, manufacture, or sale of spirits, wine, ale, beer, cider and all other alcoholic liquors for use as beverages?" All the provinces voted for Prohibition, except heavily Catholic Quebec, where the vote was overwhelmingly against. Prime Minister Laurier was faced with yet another dilemma involving the Protestant-Catholic duality in Canadian society. In the end, the skillful Laurier, ever mindful of the necessity of national unity and the perils of religious or sectarian strife, was able to avoid action by refusing to pass any further legislation prohibiting the liquor traffic on the grounds that the Prohibition forces had failed to win anywhere near an absolute majority of eligible voters. Despite convincing victories in most provinces, the overall national majority for Prohibition was only a slight thirteen thousand votes. This narrow majority was the result of a very low voter turnout for the plebiscite. Clearly, many either did not feel strongly enough about the issue or were reluctant to impose such morality on the rest of society. This disappointing result energized the campaign for women's suffrage. For these women, gaining the vote was not merely a matter of democratic rights; it would guarantee moral legislation such as Prohibition and bring about the Kingdom of God in Canadian society.

The crusaders for a Protestant Canada suffered other setbacks in their quest for moral reform. The mainstream churches, in particular, were becoming alarmed by indications that regular Sunday worship was trailing off. Clergy thundered from their pulpits against Sunday sporting activities, excursions, and amusement park activities. It appeared that for many people Sunday was just another day; it was not considered a day of rest, and certainly not a day for worship and spiritual sustenance. The battle against the desecration of the Sabbath was frequently contested over the running of Sunday streetcars. In every case, the Lord's Day campaign ultimately lost the debate in municipal plebiscites. Nothing dramatic happened as a result of these defeats. Church attendance did not trail off precipitously. Still, Sunday worship service at church had to compete with a host of activities. Not even the powerful preacher's pulpit, which many regarded as a source of entertainment in Victorian Canada, could forestall the inexorable tide of the rise of organized sports and commercial entertainment. In 1906, the Lord's Day Alliance finally had success with the passage of the federal Lord's Day Act, which prohibited a number of activities on Sundays that

"disturb[ed] other people's attendance at public worship or observance of that day."[7] This legislation was a significant attempt by the state to regulate moral and social conditions. But there were so many exemptions for "works of mercy and necessity" as well as an opting out clause for provinces, which Quebec immediately invoked, that it proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for the strict demands of the Lord's Day Alliance. The fate of the Sabbath as a day exclusively for worship and rest reflected a deeper transition toward a multicultural and urban-industrial society in Canada. The values of evangelical Protestantism that so venerated a worshipful Sunday and dominated Victorian Canada could no longer be imposed on an increasingly diversified Canadian society. The strident tone of many clergy over this issue reflected the fact that they quite correctly discerned that they were losing some of their influence. They could no longer assume a monopoly on Sunday.

The role of religion in reform became a divisive question, as not everyone could agree with the focus on personal salvation as a way to improve the lives of the immigrant and the poor. Many Anglicans, for example, attempted to uplift people in their congregations by holding worship services with elaborate ritual and ceremony. Apart from providing certain worshipers with something that was clearly lacking in their often impoverished drab and bleak lives, emphasis on the visual and ritualistic aspects of Christianity was a way to overcome the language barrier. Others were developing a view of social problems that concentrated on eradicating the underlying social conditions as opposed to reforming the religious belief or moral character of the individual. Problems related to poverty, public health and sanitation, poor housing, and industrial strife seemed to be too entrenched and complicated for moral reform crusades to be effective. The underlying social conditions had to be attacked for there to be significant reform.

In the cities, social service activities and institutions sponsored by the churches and middle-class voluntary associations emerged to help eradicate the social problems of urban-industrial society. Most notable among these institutions was the Methodist settlement house run by the Reverend James Woodsworth in the north end of Winnipeg. The All People's Mission offered a broad range of social services, including Sunday school classes, prayer meetings, visitations, relief to the sick and destitute, mothers' meetings, classes on domestic science, and language instruction. Many of these activities were designed by reformers to provide an alternative to the unsavory entertainment and amusements, specifically the dance hall, tavern, nickelodeon, and vaudeville show, which robbed the immigrant and

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[7] "An Act Respecting the Lord's Day" (1906), reprinted in Paul Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada* (Yorkton, SK, 2004), 197–200.

workingman of his hard-earned and much-needed family money. Other activities, especially those related to domestic science, were designed to ensure that Canadian values and norms regarding family life, child rearing, cleanliness, health, and diet were conveyed to the immigrant and the poor. In rural areas, some of these activities were also sponsored, but many of the mission posts situated near an immigrant colony had an adjoining hospital or medical dispensary.

The objective of this missionary outreach to the foreign immigrant was perhaps best captured by a fictional missionary in another best-selling Ralph Connor novel, *The Foreigner: A Tale of the Saskatchewan* (1909). Connor's missionary hero was working among the Ukrainian population in rural Saskatchewan, and he confessed that there was not very much opportunity to preach in his work. His "mainline" was teaching and medicine, or as he explained, "I can teach them English, and then I am going to doctor them, and if they'll let me, teach them some of the elements of domestic science; in short, do anything to make them good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing."[8] This statement captured perfectly the notion that being Canadian should be equated with the values of Anglo-Protestantism.

Despite the reformers' intentions that these social services assimilate the immigrant into the cultural mainstream, the immigrants took advantage of services, especially language instruction, as a way to advance in Canadian society. As soon as the missionary activities were more directed toward evangelization or religious conversion, immigrants usually lost interest in the services being provided. They were rarely willing to sacrifice their religious beliefs. The Social Gospel had little success beyond providing the immigrant with necessary social services. It was most effective in spearheading numerous reform initiatives to improve conditions in urban-industrial society, but it led to few new church members or the Christianization of the foreign immigrant population in the manner intended by the largely middle-class churchgoing reformer.

The impressive bureaucracy and infrastructure that developed to organize and fund this social activism may have removed the churches from the spiritual needs of their parishioners. New fissures were developing in Canadian Protestantism as a result of the emphasis on social salvation as opposed to personal conversion. The Social Gospel emphasized the image of Christ as a social reformer and man of action, and not the risen Christ of the cross or the gospel of life everlasting. It was based on an interpretation of Christianity that downplayed the importance of traditional evangelical doctrines. Objectives such as an equitable division of wealth and the

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[8] Ralph Connor, *The Foreigner: A Tale of the Saskatchewan* (Toronto, 1909), 253.

abolition of poverty were regarded as the way to build the kingdom of God. In the most progressive circles, sociology was being regarded as the pinnacle of theology and practical Christianity in the form of social work, the height of the minister's responsibilities.

The Roman Catholic Church did not enjoy much success in attracting immigrants from the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, or Italy into the prevailing religious culture of either the French Canadian or predominantly Irish church in Canada. Questions of language, tradition, and culture continued to divide Catholics. This situation was particularly apparent among the Ukrainians. These Orthodox Christians practiced the Eastern Rite. Worship services were in the vernacular as opposed to Latin, and the priesthood was married, not celibate. Initially the Roman Catholic Church refused to make any concessions to the Ukrainian community by not allowing the practice of the Eastern Rite. Ukrainian requests for their own married priests were rejected by the hierarchy in the hope that the Ukrainians would ultimately convert to the worship and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. Only when it was apparent that Ukrainians were not going to do so did the Catholic hierarchy finally relent and appoint a Ukrainian priest to serve the Orthodox community in Canada. The Catholic Church was the institution that most clearly reflected Canada's emerging multicultural reality. It was a church with distinct Ukrainian, Hungarian, Polish, German, and Italian constituencies in addition to the historic French Canadian and Irish or Celtic church.

As Canadian society became more diversified, some of the older, at times formulaic, Protestant-Catholic tensions and battles subsided. Hostilities still erupted on the political stage over issues such as separate schools, but the more flagrant form of sectarian warfare that had frequently exploded in riots during Orange Day parades had disappeared. Reports from Canadian bishops in 1900–01 indicated that there was little overt, organized, or direct Protestant proselytizing. Grudging respect emerged on the mission fields as a result of years of working in proximity and facing the same difficult challenges. In his history of the Baptist church in western Canada, C. C. McLaurin admitted that very few Protestant missionaries had undertaken the hard tasks that the Catholic priests willingly performed. They had endured, he wrote, terrible journeys, living in the most primitive conditions, and food scarcity. They suffered these sacrifices without complaint because of their unquestioning loyalty to their faith.[9]

The most significant change behind moderating Protestant Catholic relations probably was the noticeable upward mobility Irish Catholics enjoyed

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[9] C. C. McLaurin, *Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists* (Calgary, 1939), 18–21.

in the late nineteenth century. They also eschewed overt expressions of Irish nationalism as they had embraced many of the values of Canadian society. As a result of the "waning of the green," intermarriages took off in the early twentieth century, especially in the cities and throughout the West. They were still rare occurrences in those areas with a large Catholic population, most notably Quebec. Concern about the fate of children in these mixed marriages prompted the Church to issue the *Ne Temere* decree in 1908. A Catholic entering a mixed marriage was obliged to be married before a Catholic priest. The couple was directed by the local priest to baptize their children in the Catholic Church and to raise them as Catholics. The non-Catholic partner could also be obligated to attend Catholic religious instruction. This decree raised a small storm of protest and legal objections from an alliance of evangelical Protestants. But far more significant was the underlying social movement of intermarriage, indicating an even more widely dispersed interfaith fraternization in business, commerce, recreation, and neighborhood life.

WORLD WAR I

The most telling indication of the end of the old order of Protestant-Catholic conflict in Canada occurred with the outbreak of World War I. Irish Catholic priests encouraged enlistment during World War I and spoke out as vociferously as their Protestant counterparts in insisting that Britain's cause was a sacred one and the war against Germany should be fully supported. The churches helped to create the militant nationalism that characterized the war years, and they identified with the cause of the state at war. No statement better captures the general enthusiasm that equated the war with a Christian crusade than the Methodist Superintendent Reverend S. D. Chown's October 1914 proclamation: "Khaki has become a sacred colour."[10] Support for the war on the part of the churches was unconditional, and any tolerance for pacifism disappeared. Prior to the outbreak of war, liberal pacifist notions were frequently aired in church councils and expressed in the pages of the denominational press. But statements that warfare defied Christian values and the teaching of Jesus were no longer tolerated. At the height of the conscription question in 1917, J. S. Woodsworth charged that the church had turned its pulpits into "recruiting stations," and he outlined his ethical objections to the war. Even though Woodsworth's pacifist beliefs were based on his understanding of the social teachings of Jesus, his resignation from the ministry was now accepted by the Methodist Church.

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[10] See David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto, 1992), 158.

Some believed that the sacrifices made during the war would herald
the coming of a new Christian social order. They argued that the sacri-
fices of war, including those made by people remaining on the domes-
tic front, were Christ-like and therefore redemptive. There seemed to be
real evidence of the redemptive power of the spirit of sacrifice when two
pillars of the Christian crusade for reform, Prohibition and suffrage for
women, came into effect. Some hoped that the war was the beginning of a
new era. The churches, as a result, were encouraged to call for far-reaching
social reform to usher in a better postwar world. In 1918, the Methodist
Church's Committee on the Church, the War and Patriotism proclaimed
that Christian ethics meant "nothing less than transference of economic
life from a basis of competition and profits to one of co-operation and
service."[11] This endorsement of a Christian form of socialism was accom-
panied by more specific recommendations for old-age pensions, fairness
in labor-capital relations, a living wage, and the nationalization of natu-
ral resources, the means of communication and transportation, and public
utilities. Expectations were high that such a new social order would bring
about the Kingdom of God.

A great deal of this utopian enthusiasm came crashing down at war's end.
The churches had to explain their militant crusade, like commitment to
a war that was increasingly regarded as little more than senseless carnage.
The growing conviction that the war's toll and sacrifices were far too great
cast a long and dark shadow over the churches. An era of reform was not
inaugurated at war's end. Instead it was a period of bitter social and poli-
tical strife. The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 was only the most dra-
matic indication of a society that was torn apart and brutalized by the war.
Capturing the somber, repentant, and now deeply pessimistic mood of the
postwar churches, S. D. Chown said in remorseful and self-condemnatory
tones that the church can never again "paint roses on the lid of hell."[12] But
to suggest that Christianity was in peril or total disrepute would be inac-
curate. The rhetoric and imagery of noble sacrifice inspired many of the
war memorials and rituals of commemoration that emerged in Canadian
society during and in the years after the war. Associating the sacrifices of
Canada's soldiers to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was one of the few
ways that people could find solace or ascribe any meaning or value to the
terrible toll of lives that were lost. Thinking otherwise rendered the sacri-
fice of loved ones to be worthless, and such a position could not be endured.
People may not have been attending churches in the same numbers or

[11] See J. M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review*
49:3 (September 1968): 229–30.
[12] See Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 180.

with the same frequency or sense of commitment, but for the purposes of memorializing the soldiers' sacrifices, they remained deeply committed to certain tenets of the Christian faith. The image of Christ's sacrifice on the cross perhaps had never resonated as powerfully with Canadians as it did in the aftermath of the war. Still the churches were the only institutions with the spiritual resources to console and comfort those many Canadians who were discouraged, frightened, despairing, and still in mourning.

CREATING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

One aspect of reform that endured after the war was the ecumenical commitment to bring about church union between the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. The idea for church union had its roots in the interdenominational cooperation that fueled the moral and social reform crusades and was necessary to maintain the church in the West. In many prairie communities, duplication of resources between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches could not be sustained, and so informal local union churches were created. Formal church union negotiations between the three churches began in 1902 and lasted for over a decade. Negotiations became acrimonious as a growing number of Presbyterians feared losing their identity and doctrinal traditions in an organic union. They sought a federal union where each church would maintain its identity. In 1916, the increasingly difficult negotiations were suspended for the duration of the war.

The war gave the advocates of church union powerful new arguments. The chaplains who had served overseas issued an urgent call for the resumption of church union talks. Their experiences at the front, whether it was providing comfort and spiritual advice to the soldier or praying for the badly injured and dying, were powerful indicators of how inappropriate denominational differences could be. They insisted that cooperation between the churches was one of the great lessons of the war. An emerging Canadian nationalism was also a powerful new impetus for church union. A more assured sense of Canadian independence and distinctiveness in the wake of Canada's clear contribution and considerable sacrifices during the war made the creation of a uniquely Canadian church appropriate. There was something particularly appealing about a church that was not defined by the denominational and doctrinal battles that were rooted in the legacy of war-torn European history. It was an auspicious time to build something new, and something Canadian.

The first service of the United Church of Canada was held on 10 June 1925. The mood of ecumenical victory was not restrained by the bitter end to the negotiations and the fact that one-third of Presbyterians refused to

join an organic union. The atmosphere in the United Church was optimistic as the vision of building "His Dominion" from sea to sea was revived. In the first issue of the United Church's denominational newspaper, *The New Outlook*, the church's national mission was declared: "Canada is our parish. It is the vision of the Dominion wide service that inspires the new Union. There will be not a hamlet or a rural community in the whole land where the United Church of Canada will not serve."[13] *The New Outlook* also trumpeted the idea that the new national church would be a powerful and effective agent for the assimilation of foreign immigrants in an early editorial, "The Church as Melting Pot." It argued that since the church was responsible for the maintenance and transmission of Canada's most sacred ideals and values, then "it seemed obvious that only through the Canadian church could the immigrant be introduced to what it meant to be a true Christian." On "this sacred ground" of national church life, the editorialist proclaimed, "we are drawn most closely and sympathetically together."[14]

DIVISION AND DEPRESSION

The most dynamic activity in Canadian Protestantism in the interwar years occurred outside the historic mainstream churches, and it indicated division as opposed to ecumenicalism in Protestantism. Numerous evangelical and Fundamentalist churches, particularly in the West, were thriving. These newer churches in Canada were still very small in number and were dwarfed by the historic churches. For example, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada soared from five hundred in 1911 to over fifty-seven thousand in 1941. Similar growth but on a smaller scale was experienced by the Seventh-day Adventists, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Church of Christ (Disciples). The institutional foundation for future growth of these churches, however, was laid during this period. Between 1921 and 1945 approximately twenty-five Bible colleges were established on the prairies. The more successful, such as the non-denominational Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, boasted hundreds of students. Other Bible colleges had specific ties to an evangelical or a Fundamentalist church or a particular ethnic group, such as the Mennonites. The curriculum in these Bible colleges treated the Bible as the inspired word of God and emphasized biblical literalism and literacy. Biblical criticism was ignored. Their primary objective was to train young people for mission work. The importance of personal conversion was emphasized. The colleges often imposed strict ascetic discipline and

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[13] *New Outlook* (Toronto), 10 June 1925.
[14] *Ibid.*, 2 December 1925.

separated themselves and their students from the surrounding community. They stood apart from the mainstream.

In many cases these sectarian movements grew on the strength of a charismatic leader. Most notable was William "Bible Bill" Aberhart, who became the leading religious figure in the prairie West in the late 1920s. Despite the deeply conservative message of these lay preachers, they were highly innovative and modern in their methods of evangelization. They were not constrained by the formal liturgies of the traditional churches. Aberhart developed a radio ministry at his Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. His radio addresses featured prophetic talks that were based on his literal and dispensational reading of the Bible. The bleak times of recent history, especially the carnage and indecisive outcome of World War I, the growing international tensions and militarism of the 1930s, and finally the economic cataclysm of the Great Depression, gave credence to the deeply pessimistic message in biblical prophecy. Things seemed so bad that the view that the sinful world could be saved only with Christ's Second Coming was compelling. No amount of human effort through moral or social reform would be sufficient. Fundamentalist religion thrived in the bleak atmosphere of the 1930s because, at least for the "true believers," it provided certainty and hope.

By contrast, for some in the mainstream churches the high unemployment and widespread destitution of the Great Depression encouraged a reconsideration of social Christianity. Some ordained ministers, such as the ex-Methodist J. S. Woodsworth and the Baptist T. C. Douglas decided that direct political action as opposed to preaching social reform was necessary. They became major forces in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a democratic socialist party in Canada. Others stayed outside of politics but called for changes similar to those being advocated by the CCF. There were numerous appeals for the introduction of the welfare state, particularly family allowances, old-age pensions, and unemployment insurance. These reforms as well as state control of certain crucial industries and the right to collective bargaining for workers were regarded as enlightened policy that applied Christ's social teaching to Canadian society. The radical clergy were highly visible in certain committees of the churches and in the theological colleges, but despite these stirrings of social and political radicalism, for the most part the churches in Canada lacked powerful, bold, prophetic leadership. A more modest approach prevailed. A great deal of the social activity of the churches was confined to sending massive relief packages to those parishes, especially in the prairie West where the livelihood of so many prairie farmers and those dependent upon them had been destroyed. The traditional Christian virtues of self-reliance, philanthropy, and stewardship persisted. Many could not but help to think that the combination of falling

commodity prices along with drought and pestilence on the prairie was not a mere coincidence, but somehow divine punishment for the materialism and drift away from the churches that characterized the 1920s.

Although some were inclined to attribute the struggles of these mainstream churches to the challenging economic conditions of the Depression, one United Church moderator disagreed. Richard Roberts suggested in numerous columns in the *New Outlook* that the church had focused more on bureaucratic reform as opposed to spiritual renewal, and as a result it failed to provide either moral or religious leadership. Church life in Canada, he suggested, was in the "doldrums," and the churches were bereft of an inspiring message for the times. They had become "temples of an encrusted faith."[15] Typical of this loss of confidence that besieged the churches in Canada was their growing commitment to the idea that the influx of foreign and especially non-Christian immigrants should be governed by the capacity of the churches to assimilate and Christianize them. The emergence of the anti-Catholic and also antiforeign Ku Klux Klan on Saskatchewan and Alberta soil in the late 1920s was symptomatic of the fear and defensiveness that characterized the outlook of many Protestants.

Nowhere was this failing confidence and declining spiritual vision and moral authority more tragic than in the timidity concerning the Jewish refugee question. There were some voices of concern about the fate of the refugees and an outcry against the federal government's refusal to open up the doors of immigration. But these challenging voices struggled to be heard above the deafening silence or prevailing ambivalence of the majority. Despite valiant efforts by some congregations and a few prominent clergy, there was not a national church-led campaign to aid the Jewish refugees in the aftermath of the *Kristallnacht* pogroms or during the painfully slow revelations of the horrors of the Nazi holocaust. Too many ignored the pleas of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the more compassionate clergy. The churches did not lead a crusade to pressure the Canadian government to reconsider its grudging refugee and immigration policies that would allow for the admission of Jews. To suggest that Canada's churches were anti-Semitic as a matter of policy would be too harsh. But they failed to speak out in a unified, strong, and prophetic manner.

Among Catholics, one of the most influential responses to the Great Depression was the Antigonish movement, which was committed to the cooperative movement and adult education. This movement was particularly powerful in the Maritime region, where it came under the inspired leadership of Fathers Moses Coady and Henry Sommerville. The virtue of cooperative movements was that they provided a practical blueprint for

[15] Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 198, 247.

the application of Catholic social teachings as outlined in *Rerum Novarum* and reiterated in *Quadragesimo Anno*, which emphasized the importance of the common good over individual gain. Individual spiritual welfare was based on the social welfare of all. Canadian Catholic social reform movements acknowledged the right for everyone to receive a fair wage, live and work in decent conditions, and hold their own property, provided none of these rights impinged on the interests of the community or broader social justice. Implicit in Catholic social reform were objectives such as protection against accident and illness, old age, and unemployment and guarantees of a fair family wage. These Catholic reforms held significant common ground with the platforms of the mainstream Protestant churches. Social activists in the Catholic Church were asserting a view quite similar to Protestant social reformers that Christ came to attack unjust institutions and social customs, not to save souls.

WORLD WAR II

As Canadians tried to fathom the Holocaust and horrific conclusion to the Second World War that came with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, certainty about the possibility of human perfectibility through Christian action was shattered. Indeed, the inability to end the Depression except through waging war, thwart the rise of Hitler and the politics of racism and genocide, and restrain massive destruction and killing led to the most pessimistic conclusions about the human condition. This pessimism became only deeper as the news of the devastating potential of the atomic bomb to destroy civilization began to sink in, despite some hope that the ultimate weapon may be used to restrain aggression and secure a peaceful world.

A new Christian message that confronted these new realities was required, but if anything, the churches had become much more modest in their mission and message. The idea of building Canadian society, or His Dominion, on the basis of the values and beliefs of the Anglo-Protestant churches had all but disappeared. Building the welfare state as part of the program to reconstruct Canadian society after World War II may have been inspired by the Social Gospel, but it marked the triumph of social sciences and bureaucracy. The state was replacing the church as the major institution of social welfare. The dangers and potentially horrifying consequences of equating a particular religion or race with national character became crystal clear in the aftermath of the war. On Canadian soil, the internment of the Japanese and confiscation of their property forced consideration of these issues. To impose an understanding of the Canadian nation based only on Christian, and more particularly Anglo-Protestant, principles

seemed un-Christian. This new understanding was articulated in 1945 by the United Church of Canada when it announced with a note of contrition that it must abandon its "racial and national prejudice ... and must develop a spirit of real Christian fellowship."[16] While many Protestants sought a new gospel, others were assured by the straightforward message of Ernest Manning, who had taken over Aberhart's radio ministry after his death in 1943. Manning quickly expanded the radio ministry into a national broadcast, called "Canada's Back to the Bible Hour." It had a plain but folksy atmosphere, where the necessity of conversion was emphasized and listeners were entertained with popular hymns and gospel tunes. Every Sunday, Ernest Manning led his listeners out of the dark, confusing, and fearful times by going "Back to the Bible."

On the surface, religion in Canada in 1945 did not look much different from the way it did at confederation in 1867. The Catholic Church still dominated Quebec society. Outside of Quebec, the Catholic Church was flourishing and changing profoundly due to the continuing influx of Catholic immigrants from Europe. It was a multicultural institution, and in that regard it reflected the emerging reality of Canadian society. It was also becoming a more significant minority in English-speaking Canada and was beginning to challenge mainstream Protestantism's central and dominant position. In terms of adherents or numbers, the historic mainstream Anglican, Baptist, United, and Presbyterian churches still dominated Protestantism. But those claiming affiliation with these churches, as a percentage of the population, were declining marginally. Jews remained a small minority composing less than 2 percent of the population. But as a result of their contribution to the war effort, the Jewish community was more integrated with Canadian society; and dialogue between Christians and Jews on a host of issues, especially those surrounding displaced persons, was increasing. Nothing dramatic was happening, but it was more difficult to define Canada in terms of its Protestant past. The conservative evangelical churches were thriving and were beginning to enter the public square, as the mainstream churches' self-assured role in Canadian society was receding. No longer could the religious outlook or temperament of historic mainstream Protestantism define the Canadian experience or norm. Religious diversity was on the rise throughout the nation.

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Section V

COMPARATIVE ESSAYS

RELIGION IN CANADA, 1867–1945

DAVID B. MARSHALL

When the final draft of the British North America Act was being completed at the London conference in December 1866, one of the thorniest problems facing the delegates was a name for the new nation. While reading the Bible, as was his custom every evening, Samuel Tilley of New Brunswick stumbled upon a phrase from Psalm 72, "His Dominion shall also be from sea to sea." The suggestion of "the Dominion of Canada" was seized upon by the Fathers of Confederation as an appropriate choice. Although the churches in Canada did not play a significant role in confederation, this phrase inspired a sense of mission to build a Christian nation from sea to sea. The biblical reference also resonated with the overwhelmingly Christian character of the new country. Over 98 percent of the people indicated to Canada's first census takers in 1871 that they were Christian. Of the population, 43 percent was Roman Catholic, while another 52 percent was from one of four mainstream denominations – Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist. Most of the remaining population was either Lutheran or members of a pacifist group, such as Quakers or Mennonites. The non-Christian population was very small, with only eleven hundred Jews, and most of them concentrated in the city of Montreal.

There were some important differences in the religious composition of each of the colonies joining in confederation. In the Maritime colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Catholic minority made up almost 30 percent of the population. In New Brunswick many of the Catholics were French-speaking Acadians, while in Nova Scotia the majority of Catholics were either Irish or Scots Highlanders. The other unique feature of religious affiliation in the Maritimes was the strong presence of the Baptists, who were largely descendants of those swept up in the Great Awakening led by Henry Alline during the American Revolutionary period. In Canada West (Ontario), the Methodists composed 30 percent of the population, followed by the Presbyterians with 23 percent and the Anglicans with 20 percent. The Baptists trailed far behind. The Catholic minority composed

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approximately 17 percent of the population. In Canada East (Quebec), the Catholic majority composed around 86 percent of the population. The largest Protestant minorities were the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans, but they composed a mere 2 to 5 percent of the population, respectively. At confederation, Canada was a country with a Protestant majority dispersed across the county and a concentrated Catholic majority in the French-speaking province of Quebec.

What kind of Christian nation Canada would become was a matter of intense sectarian dispute. The danger of opening up the potentially explosive religious questions that divided Protestants and Catholics simmered beneath the surface of British North American politics during the confederation debates. The old battles over the existence of an established Church of England had been settled in the 1840s and 1850s with the secularization of the clergy reserves and the creation of a common or public school system. The public schools were designed to be nondenominational. Scripture, however, was part of the daily exercises, and biblical passages formed the basis of reading exercises. Beyond this rudimentary religious content, there was no catechism, no doctrinal teaching or religious instruction, and no visible Christian presence in the classroom, except for the Bible. From a Catholic perspective, the public schools were obviously Protestant; and therefore separate Catholic schools, where images of the Pope, the Virgin Mary, and the Crucifix were prominently displayed and catechism was a central part of the curriculum, were necessary. But from a Protestant perspective, such separate Catholic schools were disturbing signs of Catholic aggression. For ultramontane Catholics, being a Protestant outside the sacramental life of the Church was tantamount to being beyond redemption. For Protestants, direct access to the Bible as the word of God was the only way anyone could escape the clutches of the papacy and Catholic superstition. Furthermore, in their view, Catholic veneration of the papacy and commitment to Rome could not be reconciled with absolute loyalty to the British crown. Although they differed in theology and culture and often language, Catholics and Protestants resembled each other in temperament. They were dangerously similar in their zeal, intransigence, righteousness, bigotry, and sense of mission.

The Fathers of Confederation were determined to minimize the sectarian issues that might tear the new nation apart. Ever sensitive to the interests of the French-speaking Catholic minority, Georges Etienne Cartier, the leading proponent of confederation from Quebec, made it clear that Canada was to be a "political nationality," not a nation based on identification with religion, ethnicity, or language. The Fathers of Confederation concurred, and they constructed a constitutional arrangement whereby potentially divisive matters relating to religion were confined to local or

provincial legislatures rather than to the national parliament where the greatest potential for destructive sectarian conflict existed. Consequently, education and social welfare were delegated to provincial jurisdiction, where in the case of the province of Quebec the Catholic Church could protect its devotional school system and its hospitals, orphanages, and other welfare institutions.

Despite these intentions, the issue that almost derailed the confederation scheme was the question of minority educational rights. The Protestant minority in the overwhelmingly Catholic Canada East wanted to ensure they had their own public school system in which there was no hint of Catholic teaching, catechism, or iconography. A bill guaranteeing an autonomous Protestant school system, separate from the Catholic confessional system, was introduced. In response, the Catholic minority in Canada West demanded the same privileges, arguing that it was a matter of justice and equal rights. The Catholic minority in Ontario should have the same educational rights as the Protestant minority in Quebec. What struck the bill's sponsor as a "proposition so fair that no man, whether Catholic or Protestant, would reject it,"[1] caused bitter sectarian debate. The Protestant majority in Ontario could not accept a fully funded separate Catholic school system, and in response the Catholic majority in Quebec threatened to oppose the bill protecting the Protestant school system there. To avoid stalemate and deepening sectarian strife, both bills were withdrawn. Ultimately, provisions protecting the Protestant school system in Quebec were introduced into the final draft of the British North America Act (BNA Act). With regard to the more general issue of minority educational rights, section 93 of the BNA Act guaranteed the separate school systems in Quebec and Ontario as they existed in law at confederation. Despite resolution of the conflict, this debate indicated how fragile questions concerning religion and minority rights were. The most embittered and acrimonious conflicts in Canadian society related to religion and were defined by Protestant-Catholic conflict.

Shortly after confederation, the new Dominion entered into negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company for transfer of its vast lands in the Northwest to Canadian jurisdiction. Initially these talks proceeded without any consultation with the settlers living in the Red River colony, where a large number of French-speaking Catholic Metis lived. Anxious to ensure that French language and Catholic rights would be protected in the transfer of jurisdiction to Canada, Louis Riel led an uprising that forced the Canadian government to negotiate. The team of negotiators representing the Red River colonists included a local Roman Catholic priest. Under the

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[1] "Robert Bell," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. X, 1871–1880* (Toronto, 1972).

terms of the Manitoba Act of 1870, a confessional school system along-side a public school system was guaranteed. Catholics had full educational rights in the new western province of Manitoba. Some interpreted this to be an indication of the spirit of confederation, whereby respect for minority rights, both Protestant and Catholic, would be established and guaranteed throughout the Dominion.

In another part of the country, another minority rights issue exploded onto the national scene. Prior to confederation, Catholics had their own schools in the Maritime colonies, but these schools were not enshrined in law or legislation. They operated by custom. In 1871 the government of New Brunswick, acting within the terms of the BNA Act, introduced legislation creating a nonsectarian school system in which there would be no public funding or support for separate or Catholic schools. Certain aspects of the legislation seemed designed specifically to undermine Catholic schools. One clause forbade the display of any symbols or emblems of religion, including the wearing of habits in the classroom by teachers. This legislation was a serious infringement on the ability of Catholic parents to educate their children in a suitable setting. The Catholic minority in New Brunswick was encouraged by the provisions for separate schools in the Manitoba Act, and so they demanded that the federal government disallow the New Brunswick Schools legislation and restore the privileges of the Catholic minority. Under the terms of the BNA Act, the federal power had the right to intervene in provincial jurisdiction over education whenever minority rights were endangered. Despite this guarantee, the federal government hesitated to get involved for fear of further aggravating sectarian conflict.

The 1872 provincial election in New Brunswick was fought on the schools question. Exposing the raw sectarian emotions that had erupted, the battle cry of those supporting the common schools legislation was "vote for the Queen against the Pope." Burdened by the additional costs of supporting their own schools, many Catholics refused to pay the school tax for the public system as a form of protest. Courts seized and sold the property, including livestock and farm goods, of those Catholics refusing to pay. Others who failed to comply with the law were jailed. Finally, a riot in the Acadian community of Caraquet, during which two citizens were killed, forced a resolution. The Compromise of 1875 allowed the Catholic minority to send their children to a school where they were taught catechism during school hours by a member of Catholic religious orders. This arrangement was probably the best that was possible in the atmosphere of religious intolerance and bigotry that characterized Victorian Canada, but it fell far short of a state-supported school system for the Catholics of New Brunswick.

Whether Canada would be a nation that respected minority rights and recognized the fundamental duality of its Catholic and Protestant heritage, or one where the Anglo-Protestant majority established precedence for its religious beliefs and practices were highly contentious questions. In the opening years of confederation, the answer was inconclusive. Events in New Brunswick indicated the determination of many Protestants to create "His Dominion" in the image of their beliefs and values. Events in the Northwest indicated the resolve of the Catholic minority to assert and protect its rights and privileges. These issues became only more pressing as the West was settled.

THE PROMISE OF THE WEST

Both Catholics and Protestants viewed the West as an integral part of their historic mission in the new Dominion. They regarded planting their faith in the "virgin land" as a fulfillment of providence. Initially the Catholic missionary effort concentrated on converting the native people; but as they realized their position was being challenged by the rising tide of settlers in the 1880s and 1890s, they focused increasingly on establishing Catholic churches, schools, and other social institutions, such as hospitals. Protestant missionary activity in the West was also changing, from aiding the native's transition "from range to reservation" to building churches and providing worship services for the settlers. This missionary activity stretched the resources of the Protestant churches and forced them to consolidate their efforts by ending duplication and unnecessary intradenominational competition. A number of church unions resulted. Four groups of Presbyterians, including the Old Kirk Presbyterian Church and the Free Presbyterian Church, joined in 1875 to form the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Similarly, the largely English Wesleyan and New Connexion churches joined with the American Methodist Episcopal and the Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians to form the Methodist Church in Canada in 1884. The nationalist sentiment in Canada that accompanied the challenge of building a new transcontinental nation also inspired the churches to look beyond old divisions that were rooted in their past and to look toward creating a new national church that was designed to meet the new Canadian reality.

By equating their denominational interests with those of the nation, however, the mainstream Protestant churches were essentially defining Canada in their own image. Both newly created Methodist and Presbyterian churches appointed special superintendents of missions for the West. They developed an aggressive strategy of appointing energetic and devoted men to the mission stations and raising money to build churches. The objective

was to create a strong physical presence of the church in the newly settled frontier communities. In the estimation of the Protestant mainstream, there was little room for Catholicism outside of Quebec and especially in the West where the major characteristics of the new nation could be worked out. Catholic missionaries expressed growing alarm in their reports with respect to the aggressiveness of Protestant missionaries. The sectarian conflict of the East was transplanted to the West.

The West also offered the churches in Canada an opportunity to be revitalized. As Superintendent James Robertson suggested, the religious future of the country would be determined by whether God's call "to go in and possess" the West was answered. He insisted that no mission to the West would be successful unless a purified and accessible gospel, unencumbered by the difficulties and doubts of complicated modern thought, was preached.[2] Similarly, the Methodist Alexander Sutherland wrote that the West provided Canadians with the "opportunity of working out the problems of a Christian civilization on a purely virgin soil." A renewed purified faith, emancipated from compromises with urban society and modern thought, could emerge in the West, he thought, and be an inspiration for the troubled churches of the East.[3]

By the 1880s, a great deal of the energy of the Protestant churches was consumed by battles over doctrine, church membership, and forms of worship. Methodists debated whether personal conversion experiences and attendance at class meetings were necessary. Presbyterians fought over whether organ and choral music enhanced worship or was an unnecessary distraction from the word of God. Both churches suffered a number of sensational heresy trials over matters of doctrine. More generally, a host of disturbing questions were in the air. Was there everlasting punishment of the wicked? Was prayer to God effective? How did one read the Bible? Was the Bible true? Did the miraculous, specifically the virgin birth and physical resurrection of Christ, occur? Was Jesus divine? Could there be communication with the dead? The churches were confused about their message and mission. Clergy agonized over what to preach. The people in the pews wondered about what was true. Doubt seemed to prevail, and this lack of certainty undermined the churches. It was hoped that on the virgin soil of the West the essentials of the Christian faith could somehow be rediscovered.

The promise of the West was perhaps best captured by a series of best-selling novels by the Reverend Charles W. Gordon, who wrote under

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[2] James Robertson, "Report to the Board of Home Missions," in *Acts and Proceedings of the Thirteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1887).

[3] Alexander Sutherland, *A Summer in Prairie Land: Notes of a Tour through the Northwest Territory* (Toronto, 1881).

the pseudonym "Ralph Connor." His novels, such as *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (1898) and *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (1899), were romanticized and dramatized versions of what he and many other Presbyterian missionaries experienced in western Canada. They featured the heroic exploits of missionaries faced with the challenges typical of frontier conditions in the early West. They had to reach the unattached young men working in mining and logging camps, cut off from family, community, and their home church. As a result, these young men had become hardened, blasphemous, and easily attracted to the saloon and gambling hall on the rugged frontier. The dedicated missionary heroes of Connor novels are "muscular Christians." Through the force of their character, their vigorous activity, and their plain, straightforward preaching, which emphasized biblical stories instead of complicated doctrine, they persuade the men to commit themselves to an upstanding Christian life. In the end, the converted men led the community in wiping out the drink trade and establishing a local church. Connor novels demonstrated the power of the pure gospel to transform both individuals and the moral and social order of society.

As a growing number of Protestant settlers from Ontario arrived in the West, the issue of minority educational rights erupted again. The delicate balance between Catholic and Protestant that had been at the foundation of Manitoba society had rapidly disappeared by 1891. Catholics now composed only 13 percent of the population. The historic Protestant denominations dominated the religious landscape. Manitoba's institutions were remade in their image. Most threatening to the Catholic minority was the legislation that created a nondenominational school system. Under the new system, Catholic schools received no public funding, and parents who continued sending their children to a Catholic school had to bear the cost of supporting the parish school as well as supporting the public system. This "double taxation," legislators hoped, would end the inefficient and unnecessarily costly separate Catholic school system. This legislation led to a long drawn-out controversy in both Manitoba and in federal politics, as the issue touched fundamental issues concerning minority rights, the future of the West, and the nature of Canada. The Catholic minority sought redress. After six long years of acrimony and conflicting court decisions, the compromise finally reached did little to restore the full minority educational rights of Catholics in Manitoba. Under the terms of the Public Schools Act of 1897, religious instruction at the end of the day was permitted on petition; and where numbers warranted, a teacher of the minority denomination could be employed. Manitoba's public schools were not "Godless." Daily religious exercises, such as reciting the Lord's Prayer and reading passages of the Bible, were continued. Archbishop Tache of Saint

Boniface in Manitoba, however, was not fooled by the compromise, for he realized that the Catholic minority had lost their schools.

The question of whether minority rights would be protected still loomed large in the minds of Canadians. Catholics faced an aggressive Protestant effort in the West. It turned out that attracting settlers from Quebec to the Northwest was very difficult. Concerns about the fate of Catholic institutions and the French language in what seemed to be an ever more Anglo-Protestant part of the nation dampened any resolve among Catholics from Quebec to settle in the West. For many French Canadian Catholics, the only place where their language and faith seemed safe and where they could be assured that their children would not be overwhelmed by an Anglo-Protestant atmosphere was Quebec.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND CANADIAN SOCIETY

During the first decade of the twentieth century the traditional pattern of religious affiliation in Canada changed. The historic churches of Canada still dominated. The number of Canadians from different religious traditions was relatively minor in terms of overall population. But the massive influx of immigrants, particularly from Europe, began to change the religious composition of Canada toward more diversity.

As a way to settle the West as quickly as possible, the federal government encouraged the immigration of experienced farmers who could thrive in the harsh Canadian prairie. By the late 1890s, an increasing number of immigrants were arriving from Germany, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These immigrants often settled in a concentrated rural area or colony. Pockets of Ukrainian settlement dotted the prairie landscape, and soon the distinctive features of their religious life and worship were very noticeable. By 1911, the almost ninety thousand Ukrainian people from the Eastern Orthodox tradition were one of the largest and most visible ethnic groups living on the prairies. The sixteen thousand Mormons who had migrated from Utah under the leadership of Charles Ora Card in the late 1890s were exclusively concentrated in southern Alberta, where they formed a clear majority in certain districts. A similar concentration of foreign immigrants existed in urban areas. For example, there were only seventy-five thousand Jews in Canada in 1911, but they were concentrated in the cities of Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, Jews amounted to over 6 percent of the total population, and by 1916 they accounted for over 8 percent of Winnipeg's population, making them a significant and visible minority as one of the fastest growing religious groups in the city. By living in concentrated areas, ethnic groups were able to pool their resources in order to re-create their religious traditions on Canadian

soil. Their faith provided them with a sense of community, a bridge to their past, and a means to survive with their dignity intact. For example, Ukrainians, either struggling to cope with the wretched conditions in the slums of Winnipeg or breaking prairie sod on the harsh prairie, found comfort and support within the domed candle-lit basilicas, where timeless liturgy celebrating Christ's sacrifice reassured them that their suffering and hardship were not futile or meaningless.

To encourage further settlement, the government also facilitated the migration of Anabaptists, who they thought would be successful settlers and agriculturalists because of their communal lifestyle. Arrangements were made so that the Mennonites obtained many adjoining lots of land. Large self-contained reserves of land were secured where many smaller Mennonite communities could thrive. The Mennonites were also promised absolute immunity from military service and full freedom to exercise their religious principles and educate their children in their own schools. Their separatist tendencies and pacifist belief were officially tolerated by the government. Mennonite settlement in Manitoba began in the 1870s on two large reserves, and by the early 1900s it had spread across the prairies. There were thirty-nine Mennonite settlements in Saskatchewan and eighteen in Alberta. The Hutterites entered negotiations with the Canadian government in 1898, and they were guaranteed "absolute immunity from military service"[4] and promised the right to hold property in common, to have their own schools, and to be exempted from voting and pledging an oath. Only one Hutterite colony was established in Manitoba at the turn of the century. As concerns about militarism erupted during World War I and assurances were given that their pacifist beliefs and separatist style of life would be accommodated and tolerated, the Hutterites purchased land for six colonies in Manitoba and nine in Alberta in the early 1920s. Finally, after long negotiations in 1899, the Doukhobors were guaranteed blocks of land and immunity from military service. Other aspects of the Doukhobors' separatist lifestyle, including their refusal to swear allegiance and to register births, marriages, and deaths, were not negotiated; and these issues became serious points of contention after they had settled. In 1911, there were ten thousand Doukhobors living in three different colonies in western Canada. These new immigrants were seeking a place of refuge where their particular form of religious faith and devotional practice could flourish free from prejudice and persecution.

The greater ethnic and religious diversity that characterized early twentieth-century Canada made the schools even more important and

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[4] William Janzen, *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto, 1990), 14.

controversial. For the Catholic hierarchy, confessional schools were now cru-
cial for the inculcation of the particular traditions of the Canadian church
and the Roman rite among the new immigrants. For the Protestants, the
rallying cry surrounding the public school system was that a "national
school system" had to be developed. There was a danger, many thought,
that without a school system that imparted Canadian ideals and Christian
principles, meaning Anglo-Protestant values, the fabric of society would
devolve into chaos. Schools were not just a battleground of Protestant-
Catholic antipathy; they were becoming a weapon of assimilation.

The central place of "national" or public schools in the crusade to make
the West an Anglo-Protestant society was vigorously asserted in the
debates surrounding the autonomy bills of 1905 that created the prov-
inces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Prime Minister Laurier hoped that a
system in which the minority Catholic population would have the right
to a fully funded separate school system would be guaranteed in the new
western provinces. When the legislation came forward with provisions for
a fully funded separate school system and guarantees for minority educa-
tional rights, there was a storm of public protest. The opponents argued
that separate schools would entrench different faiths and languages. By
contrast, a public school system would hold together a society of many
cultures, languages, and religions by inculcating the "national" values that
would form the foundation for a strong cohesive Canadian nation. A public
school system was essential for Canadianizing the ethnically diverse West.
In the end, after months of tense negotiations, a system that restricted
minority schools rights in Saskatchewan and Alberta was agreed upon.
Any hopes for equal minority rights were dashed by the insistence on a
Canadian norm. For the Protestant majority, a separate Catholic school sys-
tem that would protect and foster a distinct Catholic culture in the West
was not tolerated.

The 1911 census also revealed that Canada was diversifying beyond the
Christian tradition. It reported over fourteen thousand Confucians, ten
thousand Buddhists, and seventeen hundred Sikhs or Hindus, all mostly
concentrated on Canada's West Coast, as well as eight hundred members
of the Islamic faith. That people of a non-Christian background presented
a new threat to Canadian society was dramatically demonstrated during
the incident of the *Komagata Maru*, a shipload of four hundred Sikh immi-
grants seeking entry into Canada in early 1914. After a two-month stand-
off in which the Sikhs were confined to their ship only to endure extreme
physical privation and harassment from immigration officials, the *Komagata
Maru* was forced to return to India with its passengers. The Sikhs had
failed to gain the same rights of entry into Canada as other members of the
British Empire. They were excluded partially because of their faith. Behind

some of this panic was the growing realization that Canadian society was changing quickly and that efforts to change the foreign immigrants so that they fit into a Canadian mold were not having the desired effect.

One other aspect of the census returns pointed to the changing character of religious life in Canada. Over twenty-six thousand people declared that they had "no religion." It is difficult to know exactly what people were indicating when they told the census taker that they had "no religion." Some, no doubt, were either atheists or agnostics. Included in this category were probably those who had no affiliation with one of Canada's recognized churches or religions. In some cases they might have developed "new age" religion beliefs that combined aspects of their Christian heritage with certain features of one of the world religions. Exposure to world religions, especially from the popular literature on the exploits of Canada's foreign missionaries as well as from the news and information missionaries brought back to their sponsoring churches in Canada while on furlough, gave many an appreciation of other religious traditions. While still deeply committed to Christianity, more progressive Canadians were developing a more open view of the world's religions. Whatever the case in this complicated story of religious syncretism, the fact that people could declare that they had "no religion" indicated that religious culture in Canada was shifting in a manner that allowed people to declare their iconoclastic views without suffering blows to their status of respectability.

One of the most stunning examples of this more tolerant attitude toward religious dissent occurred in the Methodist Church of Canada. In 1907, after years of agonizing doubts about his faith, James Shaver Woodsworth decided to resign from the ministry. In his letter of resignation, he explained that he no longer could subscribe to the *Methodist Discipline* that forbade drinking alcohol, dancing, playing cards, and a host of other activities. He confessed that he never had a conversion experience, and he outlined his objections to the Methodist mode of worship surrounding baptism and communion. Finally, he indicated that he could not accept the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, or the physical resurrection. The Bible and the teachings of Jesus, he concluded, were inspiring, but they were not divinely inspired. Finally, he admitted that he thought Jesus was just a man, not the divine Son of God. In his appeal to the church to accept his resignation, he concluded that he could not possibly continue to preach in good conscience. Despite this wholesale denial of Methodist doctrine and Christian teaching, Woodsworth's resignation was not accepted. Instead he was charged with running the All People's Mission in Winnipeg. As another clergyman who struggled with such doubts about doctrine concluded, "[I]t is a great thing to have practical work to do for it prevents too much speculation." A minster's practical or pastoral work, including

attention to moral reform and social activism, "tends to correct the evils of theological study."[5]

MORAL AND SOCIAL REFORM

The tide of foreign immigration, the rise of cities, and the industrialization of Canadian society during the Laurier boom years presented new challenges for the churches and the middle class that dominated the pews. In the popular imagination, ethnic and working-class communities were apparently overrun by prostitution, street gangs, rapacious landlords, scheming promoters, vulgar leisure and entertainment activities, and evil purveyors of alcohol. From the perspective of churchgoers, there was an alarming lack of religion among the immigrant, the poor, and the workingman. A sense of urgency developed with respect to the Christian character of the country, especially in the cities where the problems could not be hidden from view. As one progressive-minded Presbyterian clergyman and newspaper editor proclaimed, "The city is the strategic point in the warfare against evil, the storm centre is there; there the fiercest battle is waged."[6] This "moral panic" inspired a number of moral and social reform initiatives to reach out to the immigrant, the impoverished city dweller, and the nonchurchgoing working man. The idea of "His Dominion" provided symbolic coherence for a host of broadly based nondenominational moral and social crusades.

The most prominent and persistent of these movements for reform was temperance. Alcohol was thought to be the direct cause of poverty, crime, poor diet and health, political corruption, workplace accidents leading to joblessness, as well as domestic strife and family violence. The evangelical emphasis on personal responsibility and redemption through conversion formed the basis for the temperance movement. Temperance meetings were designed to encourage people to take the pledge to abstain from alcohol, and this oath was often accompanied by a vow to no longer gamble, swear, or blaspheme. Many of the popular evangelists in urban Canada stressed how individual lives had changed as a result of taking the temperance pledge. The eradication of a host of social problems was believed to be possible through personal moral redemption. By the 1890s, the crusaders for temperance sought national Prohibition through federal legislation because the existing local option laws did not end the drink trade or the flow of alcohol.

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[5] J. F. McCurdy, *Life and Work of D.J. Macdonnell* (Toronto, 1897), 48–50.
[6] *The Westminster* (Toronto), 15 September 1900; see Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875–1915* (Waterloo, 1988), 80.

The temperance movement, however, came up against significant opposition from other groups in society that did not share the same assumptions about moral reform. The limits of this Protestant moral crusade became most apparent in the results of the national plebiscite on the question of Prohibition. On 28 September 1898, Canadians went to the polls to answer the following plebiscite question: "Are you in favour of the passing of an Act prohibiting the importation, manufacture, or sale of spirits, wine, ale, beer, cider and all other alcoholic liquors for use as beverages?" All the provinces voted for Prohibition, except heavily Catholic Quebec, where the vote was overwhelmingly against. Prime Minister Laurier was faced with yet another dilemma involving the Protestant-Catholic duality in Canadian society. In the end, the skillful Laurier, ever mindful of the necessity of national unity and the perils of religious or sectarian strife, was able to avoid action by refusing to pass any further legislation prohibiting the liquor traffic on the grounds that the Prohibition forces had failed to win anywhere near an absolute majority of eligible voters. Despite convincing victories in most provinces, the overall national majority for Prohibition was only a slight thirteen thousand votes. This narrow majority was the result of a very low voter turnout for the plebiscite. Clearly, many either did not feel strongly enough about the issue or were reluctant to impose such morality on the rest of society. This disappointing result energized the campaign for women's suffrage. For these women, gaining the vote was not merely a matter of democratic rights; it would guarantee moral legislation such as Prohibition and bring about the Kingdom of God in Canadian society.

The crusaders for a Protestant Canada suffered other setbacks in their quest for moral reform. The mainstream churches, in particular, were becoming alarmed by indications that regular Sunday worship was trailing off. Clergy thundered from their pulpits against Sunday sporting activities, excursions, and amusement park activities. It appeared that for many people Sunday was just another day; it was not considered a day of rest, and certainly not a day for worship and spiritual sustenance. The battle against the desecration of the Sabbath was frequently contested over the running of Sunday streetcars. In every case, the Lord's Day campaign ultimately lost the debate in municipal plebiscites. Nothing dramatic happened as a result of these defeats. Church attendance did not trail off precipitously. Still, Sunday worship service at church had to compete with a host of activities. Not even the powerful preacher's pulpit, which many regarded as a source of entertainment in Victorian Canada, could forestall the inexorable tide of the rise of organized sports and commercial entertainment. In 1906, the Lord's Day Alliance finally had success with the passage of the federal Lord's Day Act, which prohibited a number of activities on Sundays that

"disturb[ed] other people's attendance at public worship or observance of that day."[7] This legislation was a significant attempt by the state to regulate moral and social conditions. But there were so many exemptions for "works of mercy and necessity" as well as an opting out clause for provinces, which Quebec immediately invoked, that it proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for the strict demands of the Lord's Day Alliance. The fate of the Sabbath as a day exclusively for worship and rest reflected a deeper transition toward a multicultural and urban-industrial society in Canada. The values of evangelical Protestantism that so venerated a worshipful Sunday and dominated Victorian Canada could no longer be imposed on an increasingly diversified Canadian society. The strident tone of many clergy over this issue reflected the fact that they quite correctly discerned that they were losing some of their influence. They could no longer assume a monopoly on Sunday.

The role of religion in reform became a divisive question, as not everyone could agree with the focus on personal salvation as a way to improve the lives of the immigrant and the poor. Many Anglicans, for example, attempted to uplift people in their congregations by holding worship services with elaborate ritual and ceremony. Apart from providing certain worshipers with something that was clearly lacking in their often impoverished drab and bleak lives, emphasis on the visual and ritualistic aspects of Christianity was a way to overcome the language barrier. Others were developing a view of social problems that concentrated on eradicating the underlying social conditions as opposed to reforming the religious belief or moral character of the individual. Problems related to poverty, public health and sanitation, poor housing, and industrial strife seemed to be too entrenched and complicated for moral reform crusades to be effective. The underlying social conditions had to be attacked for there to be significant reform.

In the cities, social service activities and institutions sponsored by the churches and middle-class voluntary associations emerged to help eradicate the social problems of urban-industrial society. Most notable among these institutions was the Methodist settlement house run by the Reverend James Woodsworth in the north end of Winnipeg. The All People's Mission offered a broad range of social services, including Sunday school classes, prayer meetings, visitations, relief to the sick and destitute, mothers' meetings, classes on domestic science, and language instruction. Many of these activities were designed by reformers to provide an alternative to the unsavory entertainment and amusements, specifically the dance hall, tavern, nickelodeon, and vaudeville show, which robbed the immigrant and

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[7] "An Act Respecting the Lord's Day" (1906), reprinted in Paul Laverdure, *Sunday in Canada* (Yorkton, SK, 2004), 197–200.

workingman of his hard-earned and much-needed family money. Other activities, especially those related to domestic science, were designed to ensure that Canadian values and norms regarding family life, child rearing, cleanliness, health, and diet were conveyed to the immigrant and the poor. In rural areas, some of these activities were also sponsored, but many of the mission posts situated near an immigrant colony had an adjoining hospital or medical dispensary.

The objective of this missionary outreach to the foreign immigrant was perhaps best captured by a fictional missionary in another best-selling Ralph Connor novel, *The Foreigner: A Tale of the Saskatchewan* (1909). Connor's missionary hero was working among the Ukrainian population in rural Saskatchewan, and he confessed that there was not very much opportunity to preach in his work. His "mainline" was teaching and medicine, or as he explained, "I can teach them English, and then I am going to doctor them, and if they'll let me, teach them some of the elements of domestic science; in short, do anything to make them good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing."[8] This statement captured perfectly the notion that being Canadian should be equated with the values of Anglo-Protestantism.

Despite the reformers' intentions that these social services assimilate the immigrant into the cultural mainstream, the immigrants took advantage of services, especially language instruction, as a way to advance in Canadian society. As soon as the missionary activities were more directed toward evangelization or religious conversion, immigrants usually lost interest in the services being provided. They were rarely willing to sacrifice their religious beliefs. The Social Gospel had little success beyond providing the immigrant with necessary social services. It was most effective in spearheading numerous reform initiatives to improve conditions in urban-industrial society, but it led to few new church members or the Christianization of the foreign immigrant population in the manner intended by the largely middle-class churchgoing reformer.

The impressive bureaucracy and infrastructure that developed to organize and fund this social activism may have removed the churches from the spiritual needs of their parishioners. New fissures were developing in Canadian Protestantism as a result of the emphasis on social salvation as opposed to personal conversion. The Social Gospel emphasized the image of Christ as a social reformer and man of action, and not the risen Christ of the cross or the gospel of life everlasting. It was based on an interpretation of Christianity that downplayed the importance of traditional evangelical doctrines. Objectives such as an equitable division of wealth and the

[8] Ralph Connor, *The Foreigner: A Tale of the Saskatchewan* (Toronto, 1909), 253.

abolition of poverty were regarded as the way to build the kingdom of God. In the most progressive circles, sociology was being regarded as the pinnacle of theology and practical Christianity in the form of social work, the height of the minister's responsibilities.

The Roman Catholic Church did not enjoy much success in attracting immigrants from the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, or Italy into the prevailing religious culture of either the French Canadian or predominantly Irish church in Canada. Questions of language, tradition, and culture continued to divide Catholics. This situation was particularly apparent among the Ukrainians. These Orthodox Christians practiced the Eastern Rite. Worship services were in the vernacular as opposed to Latin, and the priesthood was married, not celibate. Initially the Roman Catholic Church refused to make any concessions to the Ukrainian community by not allowing the practice of the Eastern Rite. Ukrainian requests for their own married priests were rejected by the hierarchy in the hope that the Ukrainians would ultimately convert to the worship and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. Only when it was apparent that Ukrainians were not going to do so did the Catholic hierarchy finally relent and appoint a Ukrainian priest to serve the Orthodox community in Canada. The Catholic Church was the institution that most clearly reflected Canada's emerging multicultural reality. It was a church with distinct Ukrainian, Hungarian, Polish, German, and Italian constituencies in addition to the historic French Canadian and Irish or Celtic church.

As Canadian society became more diversified, some of the older, at times formulaic, Protestant-Catholic tensions and battles subsided. Hostilities still erupted on the political stage over issues such as separate schools, but the more flagrant form of sectarian warfare that had frequently exploded in riots during Orange Day parades had disappeared. Reports from Canadian bishops in 1900–01 indicated that there was little overt, organized, or direct Protestant proselytizing. Grudging respect emerged on the mission fields as a result of years of working in proximity and facing the same difficult challenges. In his history of the Baptist church in western Canada, C. C. McLaurin admitted that very few Protestant missionaries had undertaken the hard tasks that the Catholic priests willingly performed. They had endured, he wrote, terrible journeys, living in the most primitive conditions, and food scarcity. They suffered these sacrifices without complaint because of their unquestioning loyalty to their faith.[9]

The most significant change behind moderating Protestant Catholic relations probably was the noticeable upward mobility Irish Catholics enjoyed

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[9] C. C. McLaurin, *Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists* (Calgary, 1939), 18–21.

in the late nineteenth century. They also eschewed overt expressions of Irish nationalism as they had embraced many of the values of Canadian society. As a result of the "waning of the green," intermarriages took off in the early twentieth century, especially in the cities and throughout the West. They were still rare occurrences in those areas with a large Catholic population, most notably Quebec. Concern about the fate of children in these mixed marriages prompted the Church to issue the *Ne Temere* decree in 1908. A Catholic entering a mixed marriage was obliged to be married before a Catholic priest. The couple was directed by the local priest to baptize their children in the Catholic Church and to raise them as Catholics. The non-Catholic partner could also be obligated to attend Catholic religious instruction. This decree raised a small storm of protest and legal objections from an alliance of evangelical Protestants. But far more significant was the underlying social movement of intermarriage, indicating an even more widely dispersed interfaith fraternization in business, commerce, recreation, and neighborhood life.

WORLD WAR I

The most telling indication of the end of the old order of Protestant-Catholic conflict in Canada occurred with the outbreak of World War I. Irish Catholic priests encouraged enlistment during World War I and spoke out as vociferously as their Protestant counterparts in insisting that Britain's cause was a sacred one and the war against Germany should be fully supported. The churches helped to create the militant nationalism that characterized the war years, and they identified with the cause of the state at war. No statement better captures the general enthusiasm that equated the war with a Christian crusade than the Methodist Superintendent Reverend S. D. Chown's October 1914 proclamation: "Khaki has become a sacred colour."[10] Support for the war on the part of the churches was unconditional, and any tolerance for pacifism disappeared. Prior to the outbreak of war, liberal pacifist notions were frequently aired in church councils and expressed in the pages of the denominational press. But statements that warfare defied Christian values and the teaching of Jesus were no longer tolerated. At the height of the conscription question in 1917, J. S. Woodsworth charged that the church had turned its pulpits into "recruiting stations," and he outlined his ethical objections to the war. Even though Woodsworth's pacifist beliefs were based on his understanding of the social teachings of Jesus, his resignation from the ministry was now accepted by the Methodist Church.

[10] See David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto, 1992), 158.

Some believed that the sacrifices made during the war would herald the coming of a new Christian social order. They argued that the sacrifices of war, including those made by people remaining on the domestic front, were Christ-like and therefore redemptive. There seemed to be real evidence of the redemptive power of the spirit of sacrifice when two pillars of the Christian crusade for reform, Prohibition and suffrage for women, came into effect. Some hoped that the war was the beginning of a new era. The churches, as a result, were encouraged to call for far-reaching social reform to usher in a better postwar world. In 1918, the Methodist Church's Committee on the Church, the War and Patriotism proclaimed that Christian ethics meant "nothing less than transference of economic life from a basis of competition and profits to one of co-operation and service."[11] This endorsement of a Christian form of socialism was accompanied by more specific recommendations for old-age pensions, fairness in labor-capital relations, a living wage, and the nationalization of natural resources, the means of communication and transportation, and public utilities. Expectations were high that such a new social order would bring about the Kingdom of God.

A great deal of this utopian enthusiasm came crashing down at war's end. The churches had to explain their militant crusade, like commitment to a war that was increasingly regarded as little more than senseless carnage. The growing conviction that the war's toll and sacrifices were far too great cast a long and dark shadow over the churches. An era of reform was not inaugurated at war's end. Instead it was a period of bitter social and political strife. The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 was only the most dramatic indication of a society that was torn apart and brutalized by the war. Capturing the somber, repentant, and now deeply pessimistic mood of the postwar churches, S. D. Chown said in remorseful and self-condemnatory tones that the church can never again "paint roses on the lid of hell."[12] But to suggest that Christianity was in peril or total disrepute would be inaccurate. The rhetoric and imagery of noble sacrifice inspired many of the war memorials and rituals of commemoration that emerged in Canadian society during and in the years after the war. Associating the sacrifices of Canada's soldiers to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was one of the few ways that people could find solace or ascribe any meaning or value to the terrible toll of lives that were lost. Thinking otherwise rendered the sacrifice of loved ones to be worthless, and such a position could not be endured. People may not have been attending churches in the same numbers or

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[11] See J. M. Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review* 49:3 (September 1968): 229–30.
[12] See Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 180.

with the same frequency or sense of commitment, but for the purposes of memorializing the soldiers' sacrifices, they remained deeply committed to certain tenets of the Christian faith. The image of Christ's sacrifice on the cross perhaps had never resonated as powerfully with Canadians as it did in the aftermath of the war. Still the churches were the only institutions with the spiritual resources to console and comfort those many Canadians who were discouraged, frightened, despairing, and still in mourning.

CREATING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

One aspect of reform that endured after the war was the ecumenical commitment to bring about church union between the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. The idea for church union had its roots in the interdenominational cooperation that fueled the moral and social reform crusades and was necessary to maintain the church in the West. In many prairie communities, duplication of resources between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches could not be sustained, and so informal local union churches were created. Formal church union negotiations between the three churches began in 1902 and lasted for over a decade. Negotiations became acrimonious as a growing number of Presbyterians feared losing their identity and doctrinal traditions in an organic union. They sought a federal union where each church would maintain its identity. In 1916, the increasingly difficult negotiations were suspended for the duration of the war.

The war gave the advocates of church union powerful new arguments. The chaplains who had served overseas issued an urgent call for the resumption of church union talks. Their experiences at the front, whether it was providing comfort and spiritual advice to the soldier or praying for the badly injured and dying, were powerful indicators of how inappropriate denominational differences could be. They insisted that cooperation between the churches was one of the great lessons of the war. An emerging Canadian nationalism was also a powerful new impetus for church union. A more assured sense of Canadian independence and distinctiveness in the wake of Canada's clear contribution and considerable sacrifices during the war made the creation of a uniquely Canadian church appropriate. There was something particularly appealing about a church that was not defined by the denominational and doctrinal battles that were rooted in the legacy of war-torn European history. It was an auspicious time to build something new, and something Canadian.

The first service of the United Church of Canada was held on 10 June 1925. The mood of ecumenical victory was not restrained by the bitter end to the negotiations and the fact that one-third of Presbyterians refused to

join an organic union. The atmosphere in the United Church was optimistic as the vision of building "His Dominion" from sea to sea was revived. In the first issue of the United Church's denominational newspaper, *The New Outlook*, the church's national mission was declared: "Canada is our parish. It is the vision of the Dominion wide service that inspires the new Union. There will be not a hamlet or a rural community in the whole land where the United Church of Canada will not serve."[13] *The New Outlook* also trumpeted the idea that the new national church would be a powerful and effective agent for the assimilation of foreign immigrants in an early editorial, "The Church as Melting Pot." It argued that since the church was responsible for the maintenance and transmission of Canada's most sacred ideals and values, then "it seemed obvious that only through the Canadian church could the immigrant be introduced to what it meant to be a true Christian." On "this sacred ground" of national church life, the editorialist proclaimed, "we are drawn most closely and sympathetically together."[14]

DIVISION AND DEPRESSION

The most dynamic activity in Canadian Protestantism in the interwar years occurred outside the historic mainstream churches, and it indicated division as opposed to ecumenicalism in Protestantism. Numerous evangelical and Fundamentalist churches, particularly in the West, were thriving. These newer churches in Canada were still very small in number and were dwarfed by the historic churches. For example, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada soared from five hundred in 1911 to over fifty-seven thousand in 1941. Similar growth but on a smaller scale was experienced by the Seventh-day Adventists, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Church of Christ (Disciples). The institutional foundation for future growth of these churches, however, was laid during this period. Between 1921 and 1945 approximately twenty-five Bible colleges were established on the prairies. The more successful, such as the non-denominational Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, boasted hundreds of students. Other Bible colleges had specific ties to an evangelical or a Fundamentalist church or a particular ethnic group, such as the Mennonites. The curriculum in these Bible colleges treated the Bible as the inspired word of God and emphasized biblical literalism and literacy. Biblical criticism was ignored. Their primary objective was to train young people for mission work. The importance of personal conversion was emphasized. The colleges often imposed strict ascetic discipline and

[13] *New Outlook* (Toronto), 10 June 1925.
[14] *Ibid.*, 2 December 1925.

separated themselves and their students from the surrounding community. They stood apart from the mainstream.

In many cases these sectarian movements grew on the strength of a charismatic leader. Most notable was William "Bible Bill" Aberhart, who became the leading religious figure in the prairie West in the late 1920s. Despite the deeply conservative message of these lay preachers, they were highly innovative and modern in their methods of evangelization. They were not constrained by the formal liturgies of the traditional churches. Aberhart developed a radio ministry at his Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. His radio addresses featured prophetic talks that were based on his literal and dispensational reading of the Bible. The bleak times of recent history, especially the carnage and indecisive outcome of World War I, the growing international tensions and militarism of the 1930s, and finally the economic cataclysm of the Great Depression, gave credence to the deeply pessimistic message in biblical prophecy. Things seemed so bad that the view that the sinful world could be saved only with Christ's Second Coming was compelling. No amount of human effort through moral or social reform would be sufficient. Fundamentalist religion thrived in the bleak atmosphere of the 1930s because, at least for the "true believers," it provided certainty and hope.

By contrast, for some in the mainstream churches the high unemployment and widespread destitution of the Great Depression encouraged a reconsideration of social Christianity. Some ordained ministers, such as the ex-Methodist J. S. Woodsworth and the Baptist T. C. Douglas decided that direct political action as opposed to preaching social reform was necessary. They became major forces in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a democratic socialist party in Canada. Others stayed outside of politics but called for changes similar to those being advocated by the CCF. There were numerous appeals for the introduction of the welfare state, particularly family allowances, old-age pensions, and unemployment insurance. These reforms as well as state control of certain crucial industries and the right to collective bargaining for workers were regarded as enlightened policy that applied Christ's social teaching to Canadian society. The radical clergy were highly visible in certain committees of the churches and in the theological colleges, but despite these stirrings of social and political radicalism, for the most part the churches in Canada lacked powerful, bold, prophetic leadership. A more modest approach prevailed. A great deal of the social activity of the churches was confined to sending massive relief packages to those parishes, especially in the prairie West where the livelihood of so many prairie farmers and those dependent upon them had been destroyed. The traditional Christian virtues of self-reliance, philanthropy, and stewardship persisted. Many could not but help to think that the combination of falling

commodity prices along with drought and pestilence on the prairie was not a mere coincidence, but somehow divine punishment for the materialism and drift away from the churches that characterized the 1920s.

Although some were inclined to attribute the struggles of these mainstream churches to the challenging economic conditions of the Depression, one United Church moderator disagreed. Richard Roberts suggested in numerous columns in the *New Outlook* that the church had focused more on bureaucratic reform as opposed to spiritual renewal, and as a result it failed to provide either moral or religious leadership. Church life in Canada, he suggested, was in the "doldrums," and the churches were bereft of an inspiring message for the times. They had become "temples of an encrusted faith."[15] Typical of this loss of confidence that besieged the churches in Canada was their growing commitment to the idea that the influx of foreign and especially non-Christian immigrants should be governed by the capacity of the churches to assimilate and Christianize them. The emergence of the anti-Catholic and also antiforeign Ku Klux Klan on Saskatchewan and Alberta soil in the late 1920s was symptomatic of the fear and defensiveness that characterized the outlook of many Protestants.

Nowhere was this failing confidence and declining spiritual vision and moral authority more tragic than in the timidity concerning the Jewish refugee question. There were some voices of concern about the fate of the refugees and an outcry against the federal government's refusal to open up the doors of immigration. But these challenging voices struggled to be heard above the deafening silence or prevailing ambivalence of the majority. Despite valiant efforts by some congregations and a few prominent clergy, there was not a national church-led campaign to aid the Jewish refugees in the aftermath of the *Kristallnacht* pogroms or during the painfully slow revelations of the horrors of the Nazi holocaust. Too many ignored the pleas of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the more compassionate clergy. The churches did not lead a crusade to pressure the Canadian government to reconsider its grudging refugee and immigration policies that would allow for the admission of Jews. To suggest that Canada's churches were anti-Semitic as a matter of policy would be too harsh. But they failed to speak out in a unified, strong, and prophetic manner.

Among Catholics, one of the most influential responses to the Great Depression was the Antigonish movement, which was committed to the cooperative movement and adult education. This movement was particularly powerful in the Maritime region, where it came under the inspired leadership of Fathers Moses Coady and Henry Sommerville. The virtue of cooperative movements was that they provided a practical blueprint for

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[15] Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 198, 247.

the application of Catholic social teachings as outlined in *Rerum Novarum* and reiterated in *Quadragesimo Anno*, which emphasized the importance of the common good over individual gain. Individual spiritual welfare was based on the social welfare of all. Canadian Catholic social reform movements acknowledged the right for everyone to receive a fair wage, live and work in decent conditions, and hold their own property, provided none of these rights impinged on the interests of the community or broader social justice. Implicit in Catholic social reform were objectives such as protection against accident and illness, old age, and unemployment and guarantees of a fair family wage. These Catholic reforms held significant common ground with the platforms of the mainstream Protestant churches. Social activists in the Catholic Church were asserting a view quite similar to Protestant social reformers that Christ came to attack unjust institutions and social customs, not to save souls.

WORLD WAR II

As Canadians tried to fathom the Holocaust and horrific conclusion to the Second World War that came with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, certainty about the possibility of human perfectibility through Christian action was shattered. Indeed, the inability to end the Depression except through waging war, thwart the rise of Hitler and the politics of racism and genocide, and restrain massive destruction and killing led to the most pessimistic conclusions about the human condition. This pessimism became only deeper as the news of the devastating potential of the atomic bomb to destroy civilization began to sink in, despite some hope that the ultimate weapon may be used to restrain aggression and secure a peaceful world.

A new Christian message that confronted these new realities was required, but if anything, the churches had become much more modest in their mission and message. The idea of building Canadian society, or His Dominion, on the basis of the values and beliefs of the Anglo-Protestant churches had all but disappeared. Building the welfare state as part of the program to reconstruct Canadian society after World War II may have been inspired by the Social Gospel, but it marked the triumph of social sciences and bureaucracy. The state was replacing the church as the major institution of social welfare. The dangers and potentially horrifying consequences of equating a particular religion or race with national character became crystal clear in the aftermath of the war. On Canadian soil, the internment of the Japanese and confiscation of their property forced consideration of these issues. To impose an understanding of the Canadian nation based only on Christian, and more particularly Anglo-Protestant, principles

seemed un-Christian. This new understanding was articulated in 1945 by the United Church of Canada when it announced with a note of contrition that it must abandon its "racial and national prejudice … and must develop a spirit of real Christian fellowship."[16] While many Protestants sought a new gospel, others were assured by the straightforward message of Ernest Manning, who had taken over Aberhart's radio ministry after his death in 1943. Manning quickly expanded the radio ministry into a national broadcast, called "Canada's Back to the Bible Hour." It had a plain but folksy atmosphere, where the necessity of conversion was emphasized and listeners were entertained with popular hymns and gospel tunes. Every Sunday, Ernest Manning led his listeners out of the dark, confusing, and fearful times by going "Back to the Bible."

On the surface, religion in Canada in 1945 did not look much different from the way it did at confederation in 1867. The Catholic Church still dominated Quebec society. Outside of Quebec, the Catholic Church was flourishing and changing profoundly due to the continuing influx of Catholic immigrants from Europe. It was a multicultural institution, and in that regard it reflected the emerging reality of Canadian society. It was also becoming a more significant minority in English-speaking Canada and was beginning to challenge mainstream Protestantism's central and dominant position. In terms of adherents or numbers, the historic mainstream Anglican, Baptist, United, and Presbyterian churches still dominated Protestantism. But those claiming affiliation with these churches, as a percentage of the population, were declining marginally. Jews remained a small minority composing less than 2 percent of the population. But as a result of their contribution to the war effort, the Jewish community was more integrated with Canadian society; and dialogue between Christians and Jews on a host of issues, especially those surrounding displaced persons, was increasing. Nothing dramatic was happening, but it was more difficult to define Canada in terms of its Protestant past. The conservative evangelical churches were thriving and were beginning to enter the public square, as the mainstream churches' self-assured role in Canadian society was receding. No longer could the religious outlook or temperament of historic mainstream Protestantism define the Canadian experience or norm. Religious diversity was on the rise throughout the nation.

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[16] See N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion* 2:4 (1973): 322.

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RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS
IN MEXICO, 1865–1945

MATTHEW BUTLER

In 1899, Father Ignacio García, a country priest ministering in Atlacomulco, published an epistolary account of popular religious mores titled *El catolicismo expirante*. This now forgotten tract was so damningly picturesque that it is worth citing at length by way of introduction. "I hold as absurd and ridiculous," García fulminated in one of eight "humble treatises" to the archbishop of Mexico, Próspero María Alarcón y Sánchez,

> the custom of believing that pouring pitchers of water over bodies on the sepulchre benefits the dead, simply because the water was near the shroud during the benediction. Absurd and ridiculous the ringing of bells for the bringing to church of every pound of wax; and the coming into church of dancers carrying bulls made of straw or of mummers holding dead squirrels, which are proffered to the lips of the women with the formula: "Kiss the son of your mother." Absurd and ridiculous that the parish priest, dressed in cape and stole and preceded by cross and candles, should process to the cemetery gate to receive such dancers.... Absurd and immoral those customs opposed to morality, such as removing images from church, carrying them to specific places, there bringing two or three barrels of pulque [fermented cactus juice], drinking furiously, and then, in this state of drunkenness, processing to church at 8 or 9 at night. Absurd, superstitious, and immoral ... the foolishness of the so-called cajón ... in which a man rubs the bodies of women who desire it from head to toe. This goes unpunished, since the performer shrouds his hands using an altar pall while another man prays the Creed and Padrenuestros, and rings a little bell.

In sum, true Catholicism was fast "expiring" in Mexico. This fact, García wrote, was due to "secular domination," which he defined as surly indigenous parishioners lording it over cowering pastors.[1]

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[1] Ignacio García, *El catolicismo expirante en algunos pueblos de la archidiócesis de México debido a la dominación secular sobre el clero de la misma* (1899), cited in Régis Planchet, *El derecho canónico y el clero mexicano ó sea anotaciones al concilio V mexicano* (Mexico City, 1900), 21.

Writing at the high point of Church-state conciliation during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), it was only natural that García avoid overtly political statements. By the time of Mexico's revolution of 1910–40, in contrast, Catholic priests would advance different arguments to explain such a deplorable state of religion: the domination of secular states – first liberal, then revolutionary – which so obstructed the Church's mission of bringing the Mexican people to God that impiety and immorality reigned more than ever. Not only this, but constitutional secularizers tempted weak members of the flock with exotic ideologies – liberalism, nationalism, socialism, Protestantism. As a result, many people were turning away from the faith. God would surely strike.

The association of liberalism and, later, revolutionary social engineering with godlessness and impending doom was a pulpit commonplace. The rise and fall of an intransigent – at first pietistic, then openly sociopolitical – Catholicism rejecting such secular modernity, meanwhile, was arguably the key religious development of the whole eighty-year period under discussion. Indeed, the Catholic revival that curas such as García so desired would, as it flourished in temporal and ideological competition with the revolutionary state, result in a religious conflict as destructive, perhaps, as either the Reform Wars (1858–60) or the war against Maximilian's ill-starred empire (1862–67) that scarred the nineteenth-century Catholic imagination.

The history of religious developments in Mexico to 1945 was fundamentally Catholic, and it must be considered as such. Nonetheless, as a corollary to this picture of militant Catholic renaissance in the context of traumatic state formation, we should note the gradual spread of Protestantism. This was a new development that would, for the first time since the sixteenth-century "spiritual conquest," make the history of Mexican religion other than merely that of the country's many Catholicisms. Nor should we forget that the histories of these Catholicisms were richly dynamic after 1865. Mexico remained "Catholic" to the tune of 96 percent in 1940, a small drop from what must have been near 100 percent in 1865.[2] Such statistics, however, deceive in offering only a glacial sense of change, the "chipping away" at a Catholic monolith. Such a view is implicitly secularizing as well as reductionist: for simplicity's sake, it makes more sense to describe the period as one of dialectical interaction between diverse religious and social actors and processes. As a result, both the sacred (Catholic and otherwise) and the profane were compressed into complex plastic formations. The revolution of 1910–40, especially, was also a golden period for local

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[2] José Miguel Romero de Solís, *El aguijón del espíritu: historia contemporánea de la Iglesia en México (1892–1992)* (Mexico City, 2006), 463.

religion as revolutionary calls for popular participation and social justice
challenged and fused with spiritual concerns.

As this violent trajectory toward revolution implies, it is important to
note, too, that religious developments can rarely, if ever, be separated from
contextual politics, and that the periodization 1865–1945 is not simply
inexact, but misleading, if applied grid-like to Mexico. It is trivially inexact
in that more suggestive parentheses can be found from a political perspec-
tive or the vantage point of the Catholic Church: for example, from 1855
to 1936, or from the liberals' Ayutla Revolution to the demise of revolu-
tionary anticlericalism under president Lázaro Cárdenas; or 1863–1938,
from the beginnings of Catholic revival during the primacy of Pelagio
Antonio de Labastida y Dávalos (1863–91) to the Church-state modus
vivendi established under Luis María Martínez (1937–56). Such divisions
offer only marginally different points of departure/closure. The same is
true if we extend our periodization along a non-Catholic axis, from the
foundation of the first Protestant congregations circa 1870 to the evangel-
ical "boom" of the 1950s. But the periodization is fundamentally wrong,
such that the years after 1865 are unintelligible from any angle, if we do
not first include the changes of the liberal reform (1855–60). These, in
turn, were the culmination – born of conviction and military exigency –
of at least two tendencies: eighteenth-century Bourbon regalism and the
precursory liberalism of postindependence (post-1821) reformers such as
Valentín Gómez Farías and "patriot" priests such as Fray Servando and José
María Luis Mora.

The midcentury reformers' achievements can be summarized as the
suppression of clerical immunities, as legislated by Zapotec lawyer and
future president Benito Juárez (1855); the amortization of Church wealth
by finance minister Miguel Lerdo de Tejada (1856); the tacit introduction
of religious toleration and the extension of state authority into the sphere
of external religious discipline, written into the 1857 Constitution; the
nationalization of Church property beyond what was necessary for the
cult; the suppression of religious orders; and the secularization of rites
of passage through a civil registry (1859). Finally, in 1860 came free-
dom of worship, a radical wartime measure – unthinkable during the
Constituent Congress of 1856 – which provoked soul-searching among
Catholic liberals and satisfaction among only a freethinking minority.
Indeed, the liberals aimed, in part, to render the Church spiritually pure
by stripping away worldly corruptions, as if scraping colonial barnacles
from an ecclesiastical hull beached after the voyage to independence. They
may have assaulted religion, as prelates claimed, but the reasoning was
of a partly pristinizing, rather than a secularizing, kind. Thus there were
experimental religious innovations, like the patriotic schisms proposed by

the Michoacán anticlerical, Melchor Ocampo. At the end, too, the liberals died Catholic; deists such as Ocampo, let alone atheists such as Ignacio Ramírez, were rare.

The reform's impact on Mexican religious developments, like the revolution's, was profound. If nothing else, the laws defined the context in which Mexico's version of a nineteenth-century Catholic revival, and a twentieth-century social apostolate, could occur. In the period to 1945, therefore, religious developments were connected to a politicized realm in which the Church struggled to resist the too-cloistered role that the liberal (revolutionary) state assigned it. If the vision of a Catholic society remained constant, this sociospiritual objective was pursued through evolving methods and never abandoned despite apparent retrenchments circa 1890 and in 1929.[3] The liberalism of Juárez was opposed because its reduction of the clergy as a corps violated canonical authority: from the 1850s, therefore, anathemas rang out, of the kind made by bishop Munguía in Michoacán. Then came the positivistic liberalism of the Díaz dictatorship, or Porfiriato, rightly seen as a period of partial Church-state conciliation; nonetheless, Catholic militants wedded to Leo XIII's "social" doctrines denounced economic inequality as unchristian. The revolution with its agrarianism and "socialist education" was worse than the reform or a scientific dictatorship; hence Catholics devised new weapons (sometimes literally) to resist, including mass movements. These disputes had real devotional dimensions, involving the cults of the Sacred Heart or Cristo Rey, for instance, that were apprehended deeply enough for Catholics to organize and fight around. Throughout, the lines of universal Catholicism, the dictates of local religion and ecclesiastical politics, and the violent utopianism of liberal/revolutionary state building coalesced to reshape the religious life. That Mexico remained so "Catholic" in 1945 was a testament to Catholicism's inner pluralism, its capacity for reinvention, and, perhaps, some benign neglect after 1940. But there was not much that was static or inert about it.

Ideally we should nuance the shifts associated with this dynamic of secularization and sacralization to avoid giving the impression that Mexico's religious history was an epochal standoff between a complex of modern ideas and "antimodern" religiosity. Permanent notions of divine agency were important to Catholics, as also to Protestants. As an institution in society – and never mind the *Syllabus* – the Church made multiple, often ambivalent, engagements with modernity after 1865. Catholics, as they accommodated and resisted official projects, participated in modern Mexico's creation, just as liberals (even revolutionaries like Díaz

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[3] Roberto Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia católica en México* (Mexico City, 1992).

Soto y Gama) clung to notions of religious purity that they struggled to
square with historical readings of Catholicism. Religious as well as secular
actors updated the temporal expressions of their basic values according to
the sociopolitical contexts in which they enacted them. The remainder of
this essay outlines the key religious developments affecting a modernizing
Catholicism until 1945, namely, the institutional and devotional reforms
carried out from circa 1865 through the 1890s; the "social" Catholicism
that climaxed, despite or even because of the revolution, from 1900 to
1929; and the Church's retreat from social militancy after 1929, above all
in the mid-1930s. The closing sections discuss developments in local reli-
gion during the revolution and briefly assess the development of Protestant
dissidences after 1870.

SHADES OF INTRANSIGENCE, 1865–1895

The Church from 1865 desired to recover the social preeminence eroded
by liberalism. Its conservative political options exhausted by Maximilian's
execution (1867), and with no possibility of reaching a concordatory solu-
tion with liberalism, the Church would instead create a parallel Catholic
society independent of the state. This spiritual enclave, or *societas perfectas*,
was intransigent in the sense of creating an impregnable Church account-
able to its own laws, but not yet committed to reconquering the social
sphere or, still less, to provoking another disastrous political conflict with
liberalism. The period from roughly 1865 until the 1890s thus saw a reas-
sertion of the Church in its own sphere in opposition to the liberal state.
The trend was toward devotional renewal and bureaucratic reorganization
in the creation of a disciplined clergy, the enhancement of episcopal author-
ity vis-à-vis the laity and its subordination to Rome, the tightening up of
ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and the fomenting of an associational piety in
which Catholics would worship modern avatars like the Sacred Heart or
avocations of the Virgin given a new, Lourdesian gloss. The overall pattern
was clericalist, Romanizing, and pietistic. While reform-era bishops such
as Munguía pined for the colonial compact of a Church-state, the bishops
now took up the reins without state tutelage and reaffirmed their – hence
Rome's – spiritual sovereignty as sole governors of the Church.

Moralizing the laity and asserting clerical control required administra-
tive reform; hence change began here. In the largest territorial change for
centuries, Pius IX raised the westerly sees of Michoacán and Guadalajara
to provincial status in 1863 and created four suffragan dioceses: León,
Querétaro, and Zamora (Michoacán), plus Zacatecas (Guadalajara). Three
other new sees, Chilapa, Tulancingo, and Veracruz, were suffragan to
Mexico. This reform, typical of others, spread the episcopal writ across the

land while shrinking the power of individual prelates in Rome's favor. It also stimulated a "second religious conquest" in the countryside: nine more dioceses were added by 1899, and there were thirty-one (up from eleven in 1862) when Huejutla and Papantla, both in the eastern Huasteca, were founded in 1921.[4] Thus the Church's basic architecture until the 1960s was in place by 1863 and virtually finished by 1900. Henceforth, this structure would be radicalized more than altered. This redrawing also saw the particular clericalization of the West, a liberal bastion during the reform, and a second wave of expansion toward the southeast, also a liberal stronghold. Hence, the Church was as yet more concerned to stem the anticlerical tide in Mexico's so-called liberal crescent[5] than to shore up its northern border against Protestantism. This centralizing tendency worked best in Jalisco and Michoacán where it accentuated and updated a historic Western bias in Mexican Catholicism's center of gravity. All but one of the five archbishops of Mexico from 1865 to 1945, for example, were sons of Jalisco or Michoacán, as were dozens of bishops scattered across the country.[6]

A second development occurred in the period's conciliarism that stressed the bishops' authority in a command chain leading unerringly to Rome. Mexico's delegation to the Vatican Council, for instance, was numerous (ten bishops) but intellectually modest (one spoke), which already suggested a deferent Church in awe of Rome. Moreover, all the Mexicans adopted ultramontane, authoritarian positions. Ormaechea of Tulancingo, the only Mexican to speak, argued for Rome's temporal sovereignty and urged that only bishops cast votes in synods. In 1896 the Fifth Mexican Provincial Council asserted the finality of episcopal authority over clergy and chapter, and it declared that a lack of ecclesiastical discipline had corrupted the Mexican Church to a point where it succumbed to liberal attack. Then came endless decrees to standardize the liturgy in accordance with the Roman Rite, tighten clerical discipline, and curb popular religiosity. This represented a "radical change," according to canonist Régis Planchet, and a centralizing one. Conciliar article 194, for example, conceived the faithful as "united and subjected to episcopal authority in such a way that [the Church] resembles a single body with one head."[7] Thus bishops were now mini-pontiffs whose authority was near infallible, save before Rome's. When the First Latin American Plenary Council met in Rome three years later, this "Romanizing" attitude – as a corollary of the faith and a buttress

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[4] Alfredo Galindo Mendoza, *Apuntes geográficos y estadísticos de la Iglesia católica en México* (Mexico City, 1945).

[5] David Brading, *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism* (Cambridge, UK, 1985), 96.

[6] The exception was Alarcón, a *mexiquense*.

[7] Planchet, *El derecho canónico*, 5.

against the liberal state – was advanced. In chamber, José Mora y del Río, Mexico's primate from 1908, could only aver weakly, "I, the poor bishop of Tehuantepec, shall not dare to make any observation, and approve [the council decrees] in whole and in part … since [they] emanate from Rome, infallible Teacher of truth." Fifty years after state patronage over the Church ended, an ecclesiastical counterstate – a pyramid of episcopal, converging in papal, absolutism – was in the making.[8]

As this internal consolidation peaked after 1890, however, influential, so-called liberal prelates like Montes de Oca in San Luis Potosí began pursuing Church-state reconciliation. This tendency, a pragmatic response to the regime's religious tolerance, was noted above all in the election of Eulogio Gillow to the see of Oaxaca (1892). Gillow, a personal friend of Díaz, made no protest to the latter's suggestion in a letter congratulating him on his election that Church endorsement of an "entirely civil form of government that [made] an abstraction of religion" be the basis of conciliation. From the early 1890s, an internally secure Church moved toward informal integration with the regime whose authoritarian instincts it shared and whose "liberalism" it had learned, through such personal accommodations, to tolerate. This Church even lent the regime ideological props: the Mexican Council, while ramping up canonical authority, commanded the faithful to respect the powers that be. The regime, meanwhile, let the bishops run the Church unconstitutionally. Díaz made no objection to illegal shows of public piety: the Guadalupe's coronation (1895), widely attended by officialdom, set the standard. Reform-era expropriations of Church assets were also reversed by 30 percent in sees such as Guadalajara, as the clergy was allowed to reacquire property, sometimes using spiritual sanctions to ensure the return of deeds.[9] There was even a clerical boom in Yucatán where foreign priests poured in and an elitist Church grew fat on clerical taxes on henequen. Thus the Church's dominant faction, coalescing around Alarcón, cultivated independence to a point at which it became comfortable, not defensive, and, by barring Catholics from sociopolitical action, opened the door to informal rapprochement with the state. The reform, Montes de Oca crowed in 1901, was a "dead letter."

It was ironic, therefore, that a third development – seminary reform – undermined conciliation. This development can be traced to Rome's Latin American College, a Jesuit-run institution to which the first Mexicans were sent in 1870 by Antonio Plancarte y Labastida, cura of Jacona and Labastida

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[8] Cecilia Adriana Bautista García, "Hacia la romanización de la Iglesia mexicana a fines del siglo XIX," *Historia Mexicana* 60:1 (2005): 99–144.

[9] José Roberto Juárez, *Reclaiming Church Wealth: The Recovery of Church Property after Expropriation in the Diocese of Guadalajara, 1860–1911* (Albuquerque, 2004).

y Dávalos' nephew. This familial duo was critical, perhaps unwitting, in effecting the transition from the spiritual intransigence that predominated until 1890 to a posture of renewed sociopolitical engagement from 1900; indeed, the future *pío latino* bishops – as the Roman alumni were called – that returned to Mexico from the 1880s were steeped not just in ultramontane spirit, but in the "social" Catholicism of the leonine papacy. From 1900, *pío latinos* moved in on the centers of power, overrunning seminaries, then marginal sees like tropical Tehuantepec (1891) and Chiapas (1902). As they advanced, they retrained the clergy and pushed a social apostolate that reversed the quietism of preceding years. Finally they captured dioceses in the country's heart: by 1914, six of eight archbishops were *pío latinos*, including José Mora y del Río (Mexico), Francisco Orozco y Jiménez (Guadalajara), and Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores (Michoacán). This generational and doctrinal renewal drove an intransigent "social" Catholicism into core sees that until 1820 were associated with a regalist, liberal Catholicism.[10] As lay activist Juan Lozano put it in 1893, secularization of the public sphere promoted clericalization in the Church; from 1900, however, the resulting *pío latino* Church went on the offensive. Projecting its intransigent worldview outward with an unusual self-confidence, this Church mobilized the laity on an unprecedented scale in the name of social, not merely pious, re-Christianization.

DEVOTIONAL LIFE, 1865–1910

The renovation of the religious life to 1895 developed in accordance with this clerical vision. Priest-led orthodoxy, the suppression or appropriation of popular devotions, and the regimentation of the laity under clerical supervision were the religious hallmarks of intransigence.[11] No time was wasted. The first bishop of Zamora – soon Mexico's levitical city – was welcomed in 1865 with a carpet of flowers; yet he at once raised the bar of liturgical perfection so high, with censures to match, that his priests complained he must think they were saints in heaven. In nearby Jacona, Father Plancarte developed the model parish after 1867: first he suppressed the rogation dances in which priests participated, then carnival masquerades (hence the sobriquet *el padre Matamáscaras*). In 1886, he changed the name of an old icon called the Virgin of the Root – the image was discovered on

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[10] Laura O'Dogherty, "El ascenso de una jerarquía eclesial intransigente, 1890–1914," in Manuel Ramos Medina, ed., *Memoria del I coloquio historia de la Iglesia en el siglo XIX* (Mexico City, 1998), 179–98.

[11] See Edward Wright-Rios, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887–1934* (Durham, 2009).

a floating tree stump – to the Virgin of Hope, an orthodox avocation since it was coined by Pius IX, Plancarte's patron. At the same time, Plancarte placed a pontifical coronet on the icon's head so that a Marian devotion, once symbolizing Indian integration into Christianity, now augured obedience to Rome and clerical opposition to liberalism. Other icons underwent remodeling, right down to their vestments and grottos. Famously, this occurred in the case of the Guadalupe, which was airbrushed to conform to the same Roman template in 1895. Again, Plancarte intervened. Such resignification, of course, was meant to bring the devout masses into line with the Church's project of pious intransigence. Plancarte was also at work in Mexico City where in 1897 he constructed a church of "national expiation" for San Felipe de Jesús, Mexico's first saint, canonized in 1862. This Byzantine-Gothic fusion cast in stone the concept of national repentance for liberal "sins" that the Church was determined to inculcate.[12]

The reception of this pious culture varied. In places, the new orthodoxy became coterminous with local religion. In San José de Gracia (Michoacán), a rancho of mestizo herders carved from the Cojumatlán estate, a puritanical but emotive Catholicism was built into community life in the 1880s. Here people traveled miles for mass, and sacramental participation was high. San José's cura built the church and was de facto leader; lay piety was dominated by modern sodalities – the Apostolate of Prayer (AO), the Daughters of Mary. This pattern prevailed in much of Jalisco, Guanajuato, and other central-western states which had the highest per capita ratios of priests by 1910. In Oaxaca, in the "Indian" south, there were orthodox clusters near Huajuapan; but most attempts to transform local – communitarian, image based, and festive rather than dominical – piety into a set of clerically run, sacramental practices, were achieved partially. Outside the center-west and urban centers, Catholic reforms were often grafted onto preexisting practices that tacitly contradicted official goals, as with the village confraternities that partially morphed into the modern-style associations described above. In this sense, the Church's campaigns in the late nineteenth century resulted in updated religious syncretisms.

Meanwhile, the Porfiriato saw major efforts to marshal the devout into canonical associations tied to diocesan structures: the AO, Nocturnal Adoration (which held Eucharistic vigils), the Holy Family. On the one hand, these sodalities were part of a clerical initiative to corral the laity; yet they were attractive to lay folk, especially women, as outlets for both social and religious energy. The AO became the strongest association after entering Mexico in the 1870s. This body promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart as the living symbol of Christian charity and had 250,000 members

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[12] Aureliano Tapia Méndez, *José Antonio Plancarte y Labastida, profeta y mártir* (Mexico City, 1973).

by 1901; it was ubiquitous in southern sees like Tabasco, as well as in the West. Yet there was a contradiction: for if AO raised pious standards, then it denied the latent sociopolitical implications of the Sacred Heart cult. Indeed, this was the antisecular devotion par excellence in which, true to its counterrevolutionary French origins, the sins of anticlerical republics were depicted as wounds lacerating Christ's heart. This aspect became fully apparent only once the devotion's reproachful ethos was married to a Catholic sociology and political project in 1914; at that point, the Sacred Heart evolved into a triumphalist devotional rendering, Cristo Rey, that is, the Sacred Heart enthroned as social sovereign. Pious associations like AO would be sidelined, too, by civic unions that sought to actualize Christ's kingdom, not merely pray for it.

Even by 1895, radical devotional stirrings were afoot. The Apostolate of the Cross, founded in 1894 as worldly fruit of the visions of a mystic from San Luis Potosí, Concepción Cabrera, marked an earlier transition from socially conservative Porfirian pietism to the exultant militancy of 1900–1930. Facing hostility from her bishop, Montes de Oca, Cabrera found a protector in Ramón Ibarra of Chilapa (the first pío latino prelate), in spiritual directors such as Ruiz y Flores, and in the French religious, Rougier. Ibarra, especially, linked the bloody, penitential mysticism of Cabrera's visions to emerging Catholic "social" doctrine by transposing her sacrificial theology of the cross into a collective register – national sacrifice leading toward social and spiritual regeneration. In 1913, Ibarra won papal approbation to found an order to promote the Apostolate, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit founded in 1916; by then, the Apostolate had twenty thousand members.[13] This precursory cult was significant in that it showed how leonine social doctrine could fuse with powerfully Mexican forms of spirituality, and how the Church could be reinvigorated by lay energies. For now the synthesis revolved around Concha's motif of the Sacred Heart impaled on a burning cross; later, it would be Cristo Rey. The Church's social project would be no tepid import, therefore, but an impassioned modern Catholicism with Mexican as well as cosmopolitan roots, one that chimed with local tastes as well as sociopolitical imperatives. People listened.

FROM "SOCIAL" TO SOCIOPOLITICAL CATHOLICISM, 1895–1914

From the 1890s, tensions in Catholicism appeared as a result of struggles for ascendancy within the episcopate and, implicitly, lay frustration with the architects of Porfirian conciliation. Within the hierarchy, the rise of

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[13] Javier Sicilia, *Concepción Cabrera de Armida: la amante de Cristo* (Mexico City, 2001); idem., *Félix de Jesús Rougier. La seducción de la Virgen* (Mexico City, 2007).

younger, Rome-educated prelates was key, since these figures were not only suspicious of the state but wanted to extend the ethos of intransigence into the social realm. This accorded with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), in which Leo XIII advocated a Catholic via media to prevent the injustices of liberal capitalism leading to the false (since godless) redemption of socialism. Instead, Leo offered a vision in which different members of the social body moved in organic harmony, rich and poor alike, remembering their Christian duties (charity for the patrón, obligation for the worker) to each other. An episcopal faction that disliked the social aloofness of "liberals" such as Gillow had gained the upper hand from 1900 and was dominant by the time Mora y del Río was named primate in 1908. His appointment irked Díaz who, sensing the end of conciliation, meddled in the election in favor of Tritschler of Yucatán, an Austrian-born aristocrat whose social conservatism (he was close to state boss, Olegario Molina) better fit the regime's self-image.[14]

A second related development was growing lay involvement in the Church's radicalization. If active laity belonged to pious organizations like AO, from 1900 more would take part in socially oriented innovations – Catholic unions and workers' circles – pioneered by vanguard prelates. Within this second-generation intransigence, we should further distinguish "social" from "social-democratic" Catholics, that is, those, such as Trinidad Sánchez Santos, editor of *El País*, who advocated restrained social action, from those – epitomized by the Aguascalientes journalist Eduardo Correa and a Jalisco lawyer, Miguel Palomar y Vizcarra – who heeded Leo's injunction to "leave the sacristy and go to the people" fully. All "social" Catholics grew resentful of prelates who obstructed the development of even a minimalist social option in favor of what Correa, in *Los católicos culpables* (1915), called the practice of "distinguished virtues," that is, apolitical pieties pitched at Mexicans' souls without reference to their overtaxed bodies. Merely "social" Catholics called for charitable paternalism, while politicized "social" Catholics believed the Church should actively recruit peasants and workers. Integration in a corporate society reflecting *Rerum Novarum*'s organicism and the revived Thomism on which it rested should be the next step. The politicals also held that the Church should compete in the political arena to accomplish this goal. Hence, once the Porfiriato was defunct – in May 1911 – they founded a partisan group, the National Catholic Party (PCN), to lead militant Catholicism into power. Rump "social" Catholics disliked the social-democrats' populism; nonetheless, their approach held sway until religious radicalism brought the Church into

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[14] Francisco Javier Meyer Cosío, "Sucesión episcopal en el arzobispado de México en 1908," *Relaciones* 51 (1992): 157–76.

a devastating confrontation with the regime in 1926. The PCN collapsed alongside Madero's democratic experiment, folding amid recriminations in 1914; but the assertive, mass-based corporatism of the social-democratic faction carried over to 1920 and was revived aggressively.

First-wave "social" Catholicism was necessarily circumspect, given Porfirian hypersensitivity to political opposition. El País criticized the side effects of Porfirian economic progress, that is, immiserization, alcoholism, vice. "Social" prelates promoted (often well-to-do) Catholic circles to discuss remedial action. Workers' circles – the first founded in Morelia by Archbishop Silva in 1901 – vocational schools, and rural unions also spread the message. Middling Catholics, including professionals, priests, and small farmers as well as peasants, workers, and artisans, showed interest mainly in what Ceballos Ramírez calls the "geographical axis of Catholic restoration" running west from Puebla and Mexico City through Morelia, Zapotlán, and Guadalajara. It was here, indeed, that an influential cycle of conferences was held in the Porfiriato's last years to address the "social question," that is, disequilibrium in the social body resulting from economic injustices and the absence of Christianized class relations. The Puebla conference (1903) discussed workers' circles and mutualist societies; in Morelia (1904), the themes were alcoholism and hygiene; in Guadalajara (1906), delegates denounced bosses who paid miserable wages. If "liberal" prelates responded to official pressure to keep reform in the Church by billing the last two events as "Marian" and "Eucharistic," the tide was turning. Gillow, who leveled a charge of socialism from the floor in Guadalajara, was embarrassed when his interlocutor, the lawyer Leandro, quoted Leo XIII at him. Gillow's revenge came at Oaxaca in 1909 where he choreographed sterile debates on the "Indian problem" and invited a Porfirian minister's wife to preside. By this time, however, there had been "agricultural congresses" to discuss rural credit at Tulancingo and Zamora (1904–06) and a "social week" at León in 1908.[15]

By 1910, then, some in the Church were talking about dignifying workers and turning laborers into farmers. The first caja Raiffeisen, a rural co-op meant to achieve this goal, was founded in Jalisco a year earlier. "Social" Catholicism was always minoritarian and moderate; yet it appealed to minorities that mattered, the most committed laity and the bishops of the hour, and branched out from there. Indeed, 1909 also saw the foundation of the *operarios guadalupanos*, a lay group under Refugio Galindo that was openly committed to the idea of Christian democracy and served

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[15] Manuel Ceballos Ramírez, *El catolicismo social. Un tercero en discordia: Rerum Novarum, la "cuestión social," y la movilización de los católicos mexicanos (1891–1911)* (Mexico City, 1991).

as a prototype for the PCN. In the restrictive setting of the Porfiriato, groups like the *operarios* were part of a Catholic renewal fusing spiritual fervor and concrete, tending toward political, action. Church reactions to Madero's 1910 revolution should be understood in this context of pent-up political energy; though there were reactionary figures in the episcopate and PCN, the lead-off factions were not "reactionary" in terms of being Porfirian nostalgists. On the contrary, "social" Catholics who struggled to assert themselves before 1910 were freed by Madero of a Porfirian imposture in which political silence was the cost of tolerance. Many Catholics feared democracy as the product of philosophical error, and yet Madero's invitation to participate raised the possibility that a democratic foray could correct Porfirian vices. Hence, the Church's emerging leaders – Mora y del Río, Orozco y Jiménez, Ruiz y Flores – backed the PCN, which by 1913 had 485,000 members and governors in Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, and Jalisco. Homestead laws and labor reforms soon followed; in 1912, the Union of Mexican Catholic Women (UDCM) was founded, as was the Association of Mexican Catholic Youth (ACJM) in 1913.[16] Despite Victoriano Huerta's military coup that February, Mexico's dedication to the Sacred Heart in early 1914 should be seen as the emotive climax to an ongoing Catholic, rather than a Neo-Porfirian, restoration, even if, in revolutionary eyes, the Church was burned by a fatal association with *huertismo* at the moment of consecration.

RELIGION IN REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO, 1910–1945

Whatever else it achieved, the revolution had a major impact on religious developments – especially in the realm of sectarian conflict. The main spikes in what proved to be a generational dispute – 1913–17, 1925–29, 1931–36 – are well known. The first corresponds to the Church's alleged association with Huerta (1913–14), which revived an antique liberal anticlericalism manifested in iconoclasm, church expropriations, and the bishops' deportations from 1914 to 1919. Later came the Constitution of 1917 produced at Querétaro in an assembly dominated by anticlerical firebrands. Among other things, the revolution's Magna Carta denied the Church's legal character, outlawed religious primary schools, and empowered states to place strict numerical limits on ministering clergy. This charter was paradoxical in that an institution stripped of juridical personality was hedged about by legal prescriptions affirming its existence; thus the Church could be persecuted, but never allowed to prosper, as an institution.

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[16] Laura O'Dogherty, *De urnas y sotanas: el Partido Católico Nacional en Jalisco* (Mexico City, 2001).

In sum, the constitution moved the liberal emphasis on Church-state separation back toward harsh regalism. When it was implemented in 1926 by Calles, an arch-anticlericalism from Sonora, Mexico was rent by a religious tragedy: the *cristero* revolt, which united thousands of peasants in a crusade against the regime (1926–29). This convulsion, abetted by the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty (LNDLR), followed an episcopal declaration that public worship would be suspended in protest against the so-called Calles Law, a diktat that introduced harsh penalties for violations of constitutional religious articles.[17] After a three-year conflict, a fragile modus vivendi was achieved in June 1929. Though the Church turned its back on the *cristeros*, a cruel guerrilla war known as *La segunda* scarred the 1930s once the regime revived its anticlericalism, ostensibly in response to illegal public worship conducted during the fourth centennial of the Guadalupan apparition in 1931. Vindictive numerical restrictions were henceforth imposed on the clergy, starting in Mexico City.

The mid-1930s saw renewed clashes over "socialist education," a doctrine that derived from a 1934 constitutional amendment committing public schools to promoting rational-scientific worldviews. A 1935 pastoral, issued by primate Pascual Díaz y Barreto (1929–36), made classroom attendance in public schools mortally sinful; widespread boycotts – even the assault, mutilation, and murder of teachers – followed. The late 1930s saw the appearance of a mass Catholic peasant movement, the National Sinarquista Union (UNS), in the same central-western states that yielded the cristeros. From 1936 to 1937, finally, came a weary retreat from anticlericalism under Cárdenas (1934–40) and the establishment of a real modus vivendi, a development that was encouraged by the rise of moderate prelates such as Martínez in Mexico and José Garibi Rivera in Guadalajara. As the old intransigents died off, nationalism and pragmatism provided the basis for renewed détente. The Church, for instance, publicly endorsed Cárdenas's oil expropriation of 1938 and quit the social field, in exchange for de facto freedom in education. Only after 1940, however, could Mexican presidents – in the style of Manuel Ávila Camacho – declare themselves to be "believers" (and, it was still understood, Catholics). By now, however, momentous changes of a different kind – the spread and Pentecostalization of Protestant congregations – had also begun.[18]

This is a familiar narrative. Yet in truth the 1910–40 period was characterized by myriad conflicts cumulatively denoting a national phenomenon, but one that was most experienced, like the revolution, in localized

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[17] See Jean Meyer, *La cristiada* (Mexico City, 1973–74), a classic study.

[18] Martaelena Negrete, *Relaciones entre la Iglesia y el estado en México, 1930–1940* (Mexico City, 1988).

patterns of resistance and accommodation. In this sense, revolution and the sacred were linked in an uneven dialectic in which sociopolitical transformation was associated with innovative – sometimes unexpected – responses in the religious sphere.[19] Local religious cultures were central to the revolution's reception in shaping the acceptance or rejection of land reforms and schools, for example. On the other hand, religion was energized as part of the revolutionary process. This did not just occur at the institutional level in rarified Church-state clashes, but in the sphere of practice and ideas. After 1910, the spiritual economy opened more widely than before; there was a periodic sense of effervescence that went beyond the *cristeros'* martyrdoms. On the contrary, religious change characterized all three revolutionary decades and touched not only rural but urban Catholicisms; at the same time, the revolution saw the growth of religious dissidence in parts of northern, central, and southern Mexico, and the reconfiguration of orthodox forms elsewhere.

Most obviously, in the social sphere, the generation of "Roman" bishops returned to Mexico in 1919–20 after years in exile. If the project of Catholic restoration was disrupted by the revolution, it was rearticulated in its wake. Indeed, socially militant prelates now had the numbers and authority to develop a massified project with national pretensions, as seen in the creation of putatively nationwide organizations such as the National Catholic Laborers' Confederation (CNCT) in 1922. The CNCT, which in places competed with revolutionary syndicates for hearts and minds, was incorporated in a broad structure directed by the Mexican Social Secretariat (SSM), founded in 1920, where it functioned alongside older groups such as ACJM (Asociacion Catolica de la Juventud Mexicana; Association of Mexican Catholic Youth) and UDCM (Union de Damas Catolicas Mexicanas; Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies), each claiming tens of thousands of members. Peasant militants espoused an agrarian reform that critiqued the statist variety as immoral land grabbing. Over all, the period to 1920–25 saw the diversification and climax of a socially intransigent Catholicism; it was also a tumultuous period for lay Catholics as the clergy mobilized the faithful to reconquer the social base and innoculate it against the Bolshevik "bug." Though pushed aggressively by the bishops, there was something Jesuitical about this effort, given the influence of Jesuits such as Méndez Medina, SSM's director until 1925, and Arnulfo Castro, who provided orientation and a link between the parish clergy and bishops. "Social" Catholicism in the 1920s also had nationalistic overtones, as seen in the consecration of a Cristo Rey monument near Silao, the country's topographical heart, and the holding of the National Eucharistic Congress,

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[19] Matthew Butler, ed., *Faith and Impiety in Revolutionary Mexico* (New York, 2007).

a sacred pageant held in 1924. Thus, if this project obeyed an institutional logic of Catholic restoration, it had the revolution – above all the prevention of socialistic excess through re-Christianization – as a key external referent. It was no longer a question of redressing Porfirian injustice, but of offering a Catholic alternative to the revolutionaries' national project. Church ambitions to exercise hegemony through clerically controlled organizations incorporating sectoral groups (women, labor, peasants, youth) were, if anything, increased by the experience of revolution.[20]

Notwithstanding such nationalism, in practice this project was most successful in the center-west, an arc curving northward round Colima, Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Durango, and Zacatecas, and in cities like Puebla or Monterrey. Here, where "local religion" often meant churchy, clericalized piety, the revolution electrified religious life once the state campaigns of the 1920s and 1930s took aim at the clergy as potential competitors. Callista anticlericalism saw Catholics flock to civic unions such as the LNDLR or, in Jalisco, the Popular Union (UP), both founded in 1925 after the regime sponsored a revolutionary schism among disaffected liberal clergy. Catholics further engaged with modern political modes by borrowing techniques of mass persuasion including petitions, radio broadsides, even exploding air balloons filled with flyers. In Jalisco, the lawyer Anacleto González Flores – Mexico's Gandhi – proclaimed that passive resistance to Calles's anticlerical state was a "martyrs' plebiscite," a mystical democracy for which he shed his own blood in 1927. It was at this moment, indeed, that thousands of militants rebelled against the regime, disregarding or willfully interpreting the hierarchy's equivocal stance on the question of tyrannicide. Theologically licit or not, at the revolt's conclusion in June 1929 thousands of *cristeros* had died, but so had one hundred or so priests, many of them killed by the federal army or the agrarian militias that supported the regime. The episcopate, meanwhile, restored to a protagonistic role that month, signed a truce with the regime as a result of which the churches reopened across Mexico for summer.

This was virtually the autumn of a vibrant lay Catholicism, however. Indeed, after the *cristero* rebellion the Church suspended its social project, not merely because the rebels had been beaten to a stalemate, but because the laity had asserted itself too independently of the episcopate. From 1929, in fact, the Church hierarchy struggled to make the peace hold and to reassert its control over a flock that, for a time, had shown itself to be *plus royaliste que le roi* in terms of defending the Church from aggression. Thus, from 1929 came the demobilization of the organizations

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[20] María Gabriela Aguirre Cristiani, *¿Una historia compartida? Revolución mexicana y catolicismo social, 1913–1924* (Mexico City, 2008).

that orchestrated the rising, notably the LNDLR, which was subsumed in the docile Mexican Catholic Action (ACM) after the latter's foundation that December. If ACM retained the mass structure of the 1920s and even theologized a role for lay apostles, its name was a misnomer, and the organization never acquired the same degree of enthusiastic support, especially among men. On the contrary, ACM promoted a formalistic, cloistered, socially sterile Catholicism that implicitly encouraged the faithful to distinguish between their religious and social beings. To that extent, it did the revolution's work for it. At the very least, the exultant, if less scripted, participation of the 1920s was in the past, and enthusiasm among the laity understandably waned.[21]

The 1929–45 period, which began with a Church-state accord ending the *cristero* rising and ended amid the modus vivendi forged in the 1930s, saw a slow return, in practice, to the ecclesiastical politics of the Porfiriato, minus the emphasis on clerical reform. Rather, disciplining the laity was the exclusive focus. For this reason, these years were marked by a contradiction already noted after 1865: internal clericalism, and the channeling of the flock in merely pious, catechistical initiatives via ACM; and an external realignment as the hard-line episcopate was dismantled, at first through changes in policy emanating from Rome and, slowly, through personnel changes.[22] No matter how uncomfortable matters grew – LNDLR hardliners never forgave Ruiz y Flores and Díaz y Barreto for dealing with the regime in 1929 – the pacifist line was maintained in the 1930s and was reasserted after the publication of *Acerba Animi* (1932), an encyclical that denounced the "criminal" revival of state anticlericalism as well as the doctrine of armed resistance. The 1930s were a rocky road – recall "socialist education" – but, overall, this was a period of involution in which the hierarchy took the lead in defusing the laity, sacrificing all other considerations to, and eventually prevailing on, the question of educational freedom. The mass movement of *sinarquismo* ("without anarchism"), a lay movement prominent in the Bajío countryside from 1937 through the mid-1940s, now looks like a transitional body in that it projected a passive mysticism in addition to an alternative (Hispanicist) nationalism and an agrarian project. In this ascetic sense, at least, UNS bridged the autonomous militancy of 1926–29 and the introspection of the ACM-dominated 1940s, when the emphasis was on internal sanctification of the laity in the Church. *Sinarquismo*, whose corporatist structure converged with that of

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[21] María Luisa Aspe Armella, *La formación social y política de los católicos mexicanos: la Acción Católica Mexicana y la Unión Nacional de Estudiantes Católicos, 1929–1958* (Mexico City, 2008).

[22] Mora y del Río died in 1928, Orozco y Jiménez in 1936, and Ruiz y Flores in 1942.

cardenismo, went into an irreversible decline in the 1940s especially after its radical wing, led by Salvador Abascal, lost its way attempting to found a religious utopia in the Californian desert (1941). While the sun-crazed *sinarquistas* begged for water, the Church endorsed Mexico's entry into the war: the Church's and the revolution's national projects were effectively joined. Devotional semantics after 1930 reflected this, in that the high points were now safely, passively, Marian: the Guadalupan pageant of 1931, followed by that of 1945, commemorated, and in doing so reprised, the 1895 coronation.

LOCAL RELIGION, 1910–1945

Recent research also suggests the importance of properly religious change, at the level of belief and practice, during the revolution. Daily life was affected, for instance, as people learned to look at their religion in new ways, and to experiment with new religious identities. Religion was not simply politicized by revolution; the spiritual landscape itself was changed during and by the drama of 1910–40. Religion relocated to primitive rural spaces as priests were expelled or executed. Religious mobility increased: schoolteacher Salvador Sotelo, a Catholic who flirted with baptism, Freemasonry, and socialism, was a classic changeling. The sacred was also experienced in new ways and by new actors. Lay Catholics had a taste of sacerdotal power, improvising "white" masses or performing riverside baptisms; others rejected priests outright in favor of folk healers, messiahs, and prophets. Many "Catholic" villages were torn apart by parish tumults and anticlerical outrages. The revolution itself incorporated an ambivalent religious impulse (the "cultural missionaries" sent out by Vasconcelos' Public Education Ministry were famously likened to sixteenth-century Spanish friars). At the same time, the revolution radicalized multiple religious elements.

Sometimes this occurred in response to political developments, as with the devolution of priestly faculties during the *cristero* revolt; other times, older religious tendencies associated with specific regions and groups developed unchecked as a by-product of revolutionary permissiveness. Popular theologies of revolution were advanced, for example, to judge from anecdotal evidence. Satan was thought to be at large in the Querétaro sierra, limping about on a cow's hoof and cock's foot, telling the people to murder, rob, and fornicate. In San José de Gracia, people cowered in 1910 lest Halley's comet strike them. That the revolution was associated with near-eschatological anxiety states is, on occasion, palpable in the records. In the archdiocese of Mexico, 250,000 people braved blizzards and bullets in January 1914, some losing their lives in *zapatista* raids, in order to

commend themselves to the Sacred Heart. The calamities that hit Querétaro in 1917 – drought, crop failure, famine, disease, banditry – caused the pessimistic bishop himself to prophesy that the world's end was nigh.

Other religious developments associated with the revolution are easier to quantify than ontological uneasiness. Outright appropriations of the sacred, typically through messianic cults or folk canonizations of local mystics and felons, were a northern phenomenon. Indeed, such cults probably fed off a tradition of border religiosity in relatively unchurched northern marches. The 1891 rebellion at Tomóchic in the Chihuahua sierra, for example, which targeted the abuses of the Porfirian prefectures as well as the clerical puritanism described earlier, provided a powerfully recent precedent. Other saintly happenings were reported after 1910: devotion to the bandit Jesús Malverde, now famed as the spiritual helper of Mexican drug traffickers, developed in postrevolutionary Sinaloa. So, too, did devotion to "Juan Soldado," an army private executed by firing squad in Tijuana after confessing to the murder of a little girl in 1938, and subsequently held up as a martyr to revolutionary injustice. In the mid-1920s, a pubescent folk healer called el Niño Fidencio turned up in Espinazo (Nuevo León) and began treating lepers and cripples in a fetid desert camp called the "City of Pain." Working with demonic energy and, he said, divinely given powers, Fidencio dispensed bizarre cures and illicit sacraments to miracle-seeking droves who gathered from across the country, as if cleansing the spiritual sickness afflicting "godless" Mexico. These cults still attract adepts – a *fidencista* "clergy" presides at Espinazo, just as Juan Soldado receives prayers from Mexican migrants to the United States – which suggests that some contemporary expressions of popular religion have revolutionary roots. If such movements accorded with local tradition, they cropped up with new frequency and vigor after 1910.

At the very least, these colorful developments should make us wary about claims that class or secular identities were supplanting religious ones by 1910. By the same token, it would be an error to suggest that "Catholic" Mexico went into a tailspin during the revolution. Rather, innovations in Catholic practice and identity were important parts of revolutionary history, too, and can be distinguished analytically and even loosely mapped. Such changes involved reconfigurations of local Catholicism, or else, as in the North, accentuations of religious traits that usually were less vibrant. Here it is important to stress that while the revolutionary attack on clerical authority created new spaces for religious participation, it did not necessarily see a simple disaggregation of "official" and "popular" religions, now that the clergy was less able to function. Rather, there tended to be differential series of negotiations within the Church, which were themselves the product of broader interactions between the revolutionary ferment,

Catholic culture, and local fears and expectations. Popular eschatologies, for example, responded to circumstances on the ground and to local tradition, yet they also reflected the predilections of Catholic hierarchs, whose pastorals rehashed a providential view of history in which revolution was punishment for the liberals' rejection of God.

The Mariophanies frequently reported during the revolution, especially in Indian communities in southern Mexico, bear out this idea of a conjunctural realignment within, rather than a popular rupture with, Catholic culture. The devotional history of Jonotla – a village in Puebla – provides one example. Here a Totonac boy heard heavenly music emanating from a mountain in 1922; as he approached, a boulder fell, revealing a carved image of Mary, dubbed the Virgin of the Rock. This apparition prompted villagers to erect a hillside chapel and bring gifts to the virgin. Yet this expression of ethnic Marianism was implicitly a defense of syncretic Catholicism; the rock – *tlaloctepetl* – to which the shrine clung was venerated as the home of Tlaloc, the Nahua rain god. At the same time, it marked a relocation of the sacred away from the parish church, dominated by mestizo farmers and clergy. In the neighboring state of Oaxaca, too, the *cristero* rebellion was associated with devotional clashes in which indigenous Catholics tried to wrest control of their religious lives from the clergy. Near Juquila, for instance, a Chatina girl bore witness to an alleged Marian apparition in 1928, intriguing the cura, who decided that the sightings were not invented but demonic. Yet his clerical interdicts were disputed by another source of local religious authority, the mestiza schoolmistress, who years later went to her grave defending the visions' authenticity. Here, too, we see a struggle to confer or deny the truth of revelation; again, it occurred within the bounds of a contemporary Marianism that was shared by parish and priest. In this case, though, the elements included not merely ethnic and local identity, but gender. In Juquila, as in other southern pueblos, revolution opened the door to liberty in the Church for women, and to the devolution of the sacred to ethnic sites – to forests, mountaintops, and caves.

Near Mexico City, priests and indigenous flocks grappled over the limits and meanings of a modern Christocentric tradition: the Iztapalapa Passion play, which began in the 1880s.[23] Here the struggle centered on preferred modes of aesthetic expression denoting the relative strength or weakness of clerical authority, as opposed to the preservation or elimination of syncretic elements. While the clergy ordered that the Passion be enacted symbolically, with Christ present in the form of a wooden statue, parishioners

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[23] Richard Trexler, *Reliving Golgotha: The Passion Play of Iztapalapa* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

desired a spectacle of bloody theatricality. The 1920 play was led by a Náhuatl-speaking centurion; the wooden Jesus, meanwhile, was placed in the wings and hidden under a cloth while a boy Christ was dragged onstage for crucifixion. In the 1921 version, Iztapalapa's Barabbas insulted Mary, encouraging parishioners to throw oranges and stones; others drank pulque and brawled. In response to this disorder, in 1922 Mora y del Río outlawed Passion theater, a ban that was effective at the cost of decimating church attendance. Back in Oaxaca, in Tlacoxcalco, a cult to the Lord of the Wounds – a Náhuatl-speaking, miraculous effigy – also attracted clerical ire in the 1910s and 1920s.

In the indigenous South and center, then, religious change occurred in different ways. Instead of taking their leave of Church Catholicism, indigenous flocks took greater liberties within it; variance was not new, of course, but the revolution hindered religious discipline, upped the existential stakes, and prized open spaces in which localized forms could take root or flower freely. Either way, North and South went through spiritually exhilarating times as a result of which religious modes assumed innovative forms in line with local preference and revolutionary context. Orthodox piety also changed significantly during these years. This dynamism is most apparent in the *cristero* revolt, when laicization was the central feature. In the absence of clergy from 1926, for example, lay preaching and sacramental performances became everyday occurrences and were explained as such in pastoral letters. Henceforth a religious method obtained in which public ritual passed into lay control while priests officiated underground. Strategic retreat, of course, required discipline; hence this pattern was strongest in the clerical bastions of the towns, central highlands, and West. Thus even Church Catholicism evolved under the secularizing pressures of revolutionary anticlericalism and acquired something of an immunological resistance: religion was entrusted to lay faithful for safekeeping as the hierarchy devolved ritual prerogatives. From 1927, the episcopate was even forced to concede the privilege of self-communion in view of the impossibility of the laity carrying out Easter duty in the presence of a priest. Such innovations, it should be noted, proved effective in sustaining religion, but were not without risk to the authority principle, which is among the reasons why the episcopate sued for terms with the regime in 1929.

In Michoacán, for instance, some priests were secularized by persecution – one was found plowing the fields and living in a shack. And laywomen read out abbreviated liturgies in church or rehearsed sermons from lectionaries. Massing sheets for lay use were also used in Monterrey, the Jalisco highlands, and elsewhere. In Jalpa de Cánovas, in Guanajuato, a layman faced down the military garrison and celebrated non-Eucharistic masses, as well as carrying out marriages, baptisms, and even simplified

absolution rites. On the Islas Marías prison colony off Nayarit's coast, where reciting clandestine prayers could have dire consequences, a Catholic deportee preached on the shore and distributed contraband hosts. In the catacombs, the laity played a greater liturgical role than before, assuming functions that were previously denied them. The episcopate permitted this decentralization only in extremis and was terrified of the consequences. As the churches reopened in 1929, the bishops resolved not to allow such a strong lay movement to continue, no matter how demoralizing for the flock. The conservative apostolate enshrined in ACM, whose statutes spoke of "Christ's royal priesthood," was a betrayal of the faithfulness in 1926–29.

PROTESTANTISMS OLD AND NEW, 1870–1945

The 1865–1945 period was the last time that religious developments in Mexico could be described as almost exclusively "Catholic." Though there were virtually no Protestants in Mexico in 1865 besides colporteurs or foreign nationals, there were 75,000 by 1920; this figure more than doubled by 1940 (178,000), and by 1950, the census counted 330,000. This steady growth, running ahead of demographic trends, occurred in two distinctive phases that are only weakly linked. During this period, Protestantism put down autochthonous roots, shedding its *leyenda negra* of spiritual imperialism. Yet in the process of acquiring a "Mexican" character, it arguably became less "Protestant," at least if by this we refer to the classical Protestantisms – Presbyterianism, Methodism, and Baptism – that arrived in Mexico from the 1860s. At this juncture, Mexican state builders, wearied of contriving national Catholicisms from liberal clergies as a way of imposing state controls over religion, turned from schismatical solutions and encouraged missionary activity. During the 1880s, Protestantism spread slowly, developing in patterns that reflected the weakness of the Catholic Church, the prevalence of a liberal tradition, the presence of certain material variables connected to Porfirian modernization, and resentment at the regime's constitutional hypocrisy.

Thus, Protestantism predominantly took root in peripheral areas characterized by recent agro-industrial modernization, but less so by concentrations of free villages: hence, in south Veracruz, in the textile centers of Puebla and Tlaxcala, and, most significantly, northern Mexico. Likewise, indigenous Protestantisms premised on agrarian concerns developed in parts of central Mexico, as in Chalco (Mexico) and Zitácuaro (Michoacán). Liberal army colonists often founded such rural congregations. In zones on the sharp end of the Porfirian economic miracle, meanwhile, Protestantism developed as a politico-religious network spreading modern solidarities

through schools, newspapers, and voluntary societies. In the absence of meaningful political participation, above all, congregations functioned as forums for dissident political demands including genuine constitutionalism and democratic elections. As Jean-Pierre Bastian shows, liberal Protestantism was devised as an instrument of social regeneration; and, if Protestants became revolutionaries to a greater extent than the revolution became Protestant, some revolutionary factions – the Constitutionalists above all – had Protestant sympathies. In the 1920s, two *callista* ministers as well as minor SEP officials were Protestants. Some Protestants, like the Methodist Gonzalo Báez Camargo, adopted a nationalistic, pro-revolutionary stance from 1929, and turned away from exogenous sources of support.

If anything, this political association with revolutionary state-building marked the expansive limit of first-wave, historical Protestantisms. The established congregations, for example, found it difficult to escape their Porfirian devotional geography, even if they demonstrated a greater desire to evangelize among Indian communities and peasants. What is more, the regime to some extent assisted in this attempt to redraw the religious landscape by its preferment of non-Catholic churches, which were favored on account of their supposed conformity to the revolution's nationalistic laws. Episcopalian clergy received assurances in 1926 that the constitutional ban on foreign religious ministers would not affect them, for instance. Both Jehovah's Witnesses and Old Colony Mennonites came to Mexico in the revolutionary years, the latter to Chihuahua at President Obregón's invitation, the former in the guise of the International Bible Students. Both groups were allowed to achieve accommodations with the regime on grounds that they were philanthropic, not religious, bodies: Mennonites were exempted from military service, for example, while Jehovah's Witness services masquerading as Bible study were tolerated by the authorities. Further south, U.S. Protestants led by Cameron Townsend evangelized Indian villagers on Hidalgo's arid Mezquital plain. Working with revolutionary *indigenistas* who translated Bibles into Otomí, these missionaries formed another revolutionary-religious colony in the 1930s.

It is clear from these cases that attempts to create revolutionary spiritual identities were made. Yet Protestantism's real growth occurred post-1930 and was not found here, but in the informal growth of Protestant-inspired, Pentecostal, popular religions. Such folk Protestantisms followed a geography of urban and, to a lesser extent, rural poverty, and grew to eclipse the historic dissidences by the 1960s. The movements' similarities to classical Protestantism – their biblical literalism above all – were secondary, given their emphasis on curative practices and charismatic leadership. The North was most associated with this development; Mexico's first

Pentecostal religion arrived in 1914 when Romana de Valenzuela returned to Chihuahua from the United States, preaching a credo of possession by the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Two bearded prophets who shared these gifts, "Saul" and "Silas," traveled the North; and by 1944 the movement, dubbed the Apostolic Church of Faith in Christ Jesus, had spread to a dozen states. To the east, in Monterrey, the revolutionary Eusebio González claimed a vision in 1926 in which God baptized him "Aaron" and told him to found the Church of the Light of the World. The Aaronites – rural migrants at first, now urban poor counted in their millions – blended an "Israelite," chosen-people theology with exalted nationalism and Pentecostal fervor. Even if these movements possessed no more than ten thousand members by the 1930s, the first seeds of Mexico's evangelical "boom" were sown in the revolution. Protestantism's supposedly liberalizing impulse was thus lost in a charismatic diffusion that created a particularly Mexican, if structurally authoritarian, popular Protestantism.[24] Protestantism changed Mexico's religious culture, but changed with and was greatly changed by it.

CONCLUSION

In 1865, the Catholic Church was reeling from a disastrous association with conservatism, as a result of which it was punished by the liberals. Its response, climaxing in the early 1890s, was to turn from sociopolitical engagement and to secure its institutional and devotional bases. Something similar occurred after 1929, especially after 1936, with the consolidation of a "true" modus vivendi and the interiorization of the religious impulse via ACM. In between these generational withdrawals from mundane affairs came an intervening cycle of engagements from circa 1900 until 1930 – certainly the Church's apogee for this period – in which Catholicism was energized from the outside by the ferment of revolution, and from within by the maturation of new social doctrines and a body of faithful, priests as well as people, with the wherewithal to enact them. There was a religious epic from 1926 to 1929 in which the extent of that invigoration revealed itself through tragedy and a contest of wills and bodies. Ordinary faithful navigated, when they did not shape, these lines of development, and they lived out their religion in ever-evolving ways. Mainstream piety changed in dialogue with Church, politics, and society. Local variants of religion constituted a permanent subtext, arguably one of increasing complexity.

[24] Jean-Pierre Bastian, *Los disidentes: sociedades protestantes y revolución social en México, 1872–1911* (Mexico City, 1988); idem., *Protestantismos y modernidad latinoamericana. Historia de unas minorías activas en América Latina* (Mexico City, 1994).

The revolution underscored the historic diversity of Mexico's Catholic cultures and stimulated diversification and change in the religious field. As in other fields, underrepresented groups came more to the fore; other times, people experimented with new forms of spirituality. To conclude, a Mexican in 1865 was invariably Catholic, and he or she was very likely so in 1945. Across these eighty years, however, the meaning – or at least the manner – of being Catholic changed almost as much as that of being Mexican. By 1945, the indissolubility of Mexicanness (*mexicanidad*) and Catholicism was itself contradicted by the presence of over a quarter of a million Protestants (and counting). Growing pluralisms within and without Mexico's tradition of still hegemonic Catholicism were two trends that accelerated after 1945.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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CARIBBEAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY, 1865–1945

STEPHEN D. GLAZIER

The Caribbean is a wide and diverse geographical region. Sometimes, the region is expanded to include islands – like Bermuda and the Bahamas – that are not technically located in the Caribbean Sea. In addition, nations like Venezuela, Colombia, and Guyana are sometimes included, although technically these nations are located on the South American mainland. As an area, the Caribbean is united by a common history of colonialism, ethnic and cultural diversity, and strong cultural and religious connections to both Europe and Africa.

This essay covers the period from 1865 to 1945 including the transition from large-scale plantation economies to economies dependent on small-scale farming and tourism, the turn of a new century, World War I, a worldwide depression, and World War II.

Caribbean cultures have often been seen in terms of "creolization." The term "creole" refers to the first generation of Europeans born in the Americas. The term also refers to institutions and ideas that first developed in the New World. In his essay "On the Miracle of Creolization," Richard Price makes the point that the people of the Americas have always borrowed religious and cultural expressions from outside the region and modified them to make them "their own."[1] This is inevitable in a region where almost everyone is from someplace else and people with diverse backgrounds coexist in close proximity one to another. Proximity has fostered the creation of new meanings from older ideas.

Perhaps, as Derek Walcott observed, creolization is not so much a miracle as a dominant motif in Caribbean life. It is linked to processes of juxtaposition, reappropriation, and "new naming." In *What the Twilight Says*, Walcott, borrowing Nietzsche's assertion in *Twilight of the Idols* that power rests in renaming one's circumstances, posited, "No race is converted

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[1] Richard Price, "On the Miracle of Creolization," in Kevin Yelvington, ed., *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues* (Santa Fe, 2006), 113–45.

against its will. The slave converted himself, he changed weapons, spiritual weapons, and he adapted his master's religion, he also adapted his language, and it is here that our poetic tradition begins. Now began the 'new naming' of things."[2] Some "new naming" occurred on seventeenth-century plantations, while other "new naming" occurred in the years before and immediately following emancipation.[3]

Caribbean peoples converted themselves. In examining nineteenth-century Jamaican conversion accounts, it is apparent that conversion to Christianity was accomplished by Jamaican-born leaders, Jamaican-born deacons, and Jamaican-born catechists – not European missionaries. Similar patterns are noted in nineteenth-century Trinidad, where the growth of Presbyterianism depended on the work of native East Indian catechists like Charles Clarence Soodeen (1849–1926) and Babu Lal Behari (1850–1915), not just the efforts of foreign (Canadian-born) missionaries.[4]

In religious terms, "new naming" gained its fullest expression between 1865 and 1945 with the establishment of African-derived religions like Santeria, Vodou, the Spiritual Baptists, and Rastafarianism. These new religions were products of a coming together and/or juxtaposition of African beliefs and practices and Christianity. They bear little resemblance to "slave religions" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were *and are* their "own thing."

By 1865, African-derived religions were central to Caribbean life. Of course, the memory of "Africa" and what nineteenth-century Caribbean peoples meant by the term "African" is what actually defines African American religions – not their putative African origins or lack thereof.[5]

Some African groups exerted a far greater impact on Caribbean religions than did others; for example, the Yoruba had an impact out of all proportion to their relative demographic weight.[6] This was also true for other African groups. On some islands, the first generation of slaves had a disproportionate influence on religions, while on islands like Cuba and Trinidad the last generations of African arrivals exerted the greatest influence. Even today, Haitian Vodou disproportionately represents the beliefs and

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[2] Derek Walcott, *What the Twilight Says* (New York, 1998), 48.

[3] Shirley Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory* (Kingston, 1998), 4; Robert Stewart, *Religion and Society in Post-Emancipation Jamaica* (Knoxville, TN, 1999), 7.

[4] Brinsley Samaroo, ed., *Pioneer Presbyterians: Origins of Presbyterian Work in Trinidad* (St. Augustine, FL, 1996), 2.

[5] Stephan Palmie, ed., *Africas of the Americas: Beyond the Search for Origins in the Study of Afro-Atlantic Religions* (Leiden, 2008); Stephen Glazier, "New World African Ritual: Genuine and Spurious," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996): 421–32.

[6] David Eltis and G. Ugo Nwokeji, eds., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge, UK, 1999); Toyin Falola and Matt Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington, 2004), xi.

practices of the early generations of African slaves (primarily Fon), while Cuban Santeria and Trinidadian Orisa mostly represented the religious ideas of Yoruba who arrived in the Caribbean in the mid-nineteenth century. The roots of Cuban Santeria and Trinidad Orisa are essentially urban, not rural.

Religious life in the Caribbean was characterized by intense interactions between African-derived traditions and Christianity, and despite (or perhaps because of) the strong presence of the Roman Catholic Church in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, these interactions produced highly syncretistic religions like Haitian Vodou, Kardecismo in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and Santeria in Cuba. The 1860s mark the birth of revivalist movements in Jamaica, St. Vincent, Grenada, Barbados, and Trinidad. The spread of revivalism from the United States to the Caribbean was linked to migrations of seasonal laborers, the growth of oil-based economies, and the tourist industry. But revivalism can best be understood as an indigenous Caribbean movement. While some Caribbean revivals may be related to "camp meetings" in the United States, Caribbean revivalism has always been a two-way street.[7]

Since 1492, the Caribbean was identified as a fertile field for missionary work. In the mid-nineteenth century, established European denominations had a tremendous religious impact in the region, but by 1910 North America had overtaken Europe as the main source of foreign missionaries. Foreign missionaries to the Caribbean operated according to their own logics, their own goals, and their own bureaucratic structures. Initially, European denominations sought to establish a presence on as many Caribbean islands as possible. Nineteenth-century missions typically consisted of a husband-and-wife team spending as little as a year on a particular island. A majority of foreign missions were underfunded and produced relatively few converts.

Three themes emerged. First, throughout the eighteenth century, the established churches – with the possible exception of Methodists and Quakers – had been staunch supporters of the plantation system. In subsequent years, this raised barriers with respect to the religious conversion of ex-slaves. Second, Caribbean churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, played pivotal roles in public education on the islands. The Catholic Church became deeply embroiled in a struggle with the colonial authorities for control of the Curacao educational system, and similar struggles for control of educational institutions ensued in Jamaica and Trinidad.[8] Third, women played important roles in establishing churches

[7] Dianne Stewart, *Three Eyes for the Journey* (New York, 2005), 116–17.
[8] Arthur Dayfoot, *The Shaping of the West Indian Church, 1492–1962* (Gainesville, FL, 1999), 178–9; John Harricharan, *Church and Society in Trinidad 1864–1900* (Bloomington, 2008).

and educational and welfare institutions, but their contributions were not fully recognized or appreciated.

With respect to the relationship between established churches and slavery, German Moravian and Roman Catholic missionaries to Surinam and Curacao supported the status quo and worked assiduously to postpone emancipation. As a result, emancipation in the Dutch colonies did not occur until 1863, and vestiges of the slave system remained in force well into the twentieth century. Consequently, Moravians and Roman Catholics had difficulty attracting black converts for much of the nineteenth century.[9] Jamaican patterns were similar. The Roman Catholic Church had functioned uninterruptedly on Jamaica since 1792, but even after 178 years, only about 8 percent of the Jamaican population were Roman Catholics.[10]

ESTABLISHMENT AND DISESTABLISHMENT

The nineteenth century is also marked by the disestablishment, and, in the case of Haiti, reestablishment, of Catholicism on some islands, and the establishment and disestablishment of Anglicanism on others. In 1860, the Catholic Church was reestablished in Haiti after an absence of fifty years. This is perhaps one of the most important religious events of the nineteenth century, and both disestablishment and reestablishment had a profound effect on the development of Haitian Vodou.

The Church of England experienced both disestablishment and disendowment beginning in 1869. Disendowment was the greatest challenge. On Jamaica, for example, the "Clergy Act" stated that existing clergy would continue to be paid, but future clerics would be denied access to public funds. A synod was commenced in June 1870 to address the problem. Enos Nuttall, a former Methodist minister familiar with issues facing a self-supporting church, proposed ways to make the Jamaican Catholic Church financially viable. Many of his ideas were accepted. Nuttall became primate of the West Indies (1893–97) and served as archbishop until his death in 1916. Nuttall was comparatively enlightened, but saw himself first and foremost as an agent of colonialism. While most Anglican leadership in the Caribbean – like Nuttall – had come from England, three native West Indians were ordained as bishops: W. W. Jackson, C. J. Branch, and P. W. Gibson.

Church governance was a major area of concern. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church had well-defined hierarchies. Catholics

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[9] Armando Lampe, *Mission or Submission? Moravian and Catholic Missionaries in the Dutch Caribbean during the Nineteenth Century* (Gottingen, 2001).

[10] Francis Osborne, *History of the Catholic Church in Jamaica* (Chicago, 1988), 252.

and Anglicans saw the growth of Protestantism in the region as a source of needless disarray and religious fragmentation. Protestantism was also seen as a threat to the colonial order. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Anglican Church in the West Indies still saw itself as an agent of the British empire.[11]

By the mid-nineteenth century, Jamaican Methodists (e.g., Henry Bleby) and Jamaican Baptists (e.g., William Knibb) began challenging taxpayer support for the Anglican Church. The disestablishment and disendowment of Anglicanism in 1869 were accepted on most islands, but were never enacted on Barbados where the Church of England remained the established church until 1969. For much of the nineteenth century, Bajan Methodists experienced difficulties with the Anglican Church.[12] Even following emancipation, the Anglican Church in Barbados was controlled by the former planter class who worked to maintain an ideal of Barbados as a "Little England."

After Trinidad was ceded to Great Britain in 1797, there were numerous attempts to replace the established Roman Catholic Church with Anglicanism. For much of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in Trinidad depended heavily on Ireland for its leadership. The Catholic Church's major response to disestablishment was to bring in new religious orders from Europe and South America to manage their educational institutions and social programs. Prominent among these new orders were French Dominican sisters, French Dominican elder priests, enclosed nuns from Venezuela, and the sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.

MISSIONS, MISSIONARIES, AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

As noted, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw intense missionary activity first from Europe and later from North America. Some denominations, like the Salvation Army, sent missionaries from both Europe and the United States.[13] The Salvation Army established itself on Jamaica in 1887, on Barbados in 1898, and on Trinidad in 1901.

The early years of the twentieth century ushered in a period of dynamic growth for Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Pentecostals, and Adventists. Seventh-day Adventists established their first church in Georgetown, Guyana, in 1874. By 1897, Adventist churches

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[11] Kortright Davis, *Cross and Crown in Barbados: Caribbean Political Religion in the Late 19th Century* (New York, 1982); Francis Osborne and Geoffrey Johnston, *Coast Lands and Islands* (Kingston, 1972), 199; Alfred Caldecott, *The Church in the West Indies* (London, 1898).

[12] Noel Titus, *The Development of Methodism in Barbados, 1823–1883* (New York, 1994).

[13] Doreen Hobbs, *Jewels of the Caribbean* (London, 1986).

were established on Jamaica and Trinidad. The African Methodist Episcopal Church began missionary work in Barbados at the end of the nineteenth century. The denomination experienced slow growth due to inadequate funding, and African Methodist Episcopal ministers on Barbados were often forced to seek outside employment.

Missionaries attempted to establish independent, self-supporting churches, but things did not always go as planned. In the nineteenth century, some formerly independent Caribbean churches ended up becoming dependents of foreign missions. The British Methodist Episcopal Church established self-sustaining churches on Bermuda, St. Thomas, Trinidad, and British Guyana, but in the early twentieth century these churches were put under care of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. In 1890, the Lutheran Church in British Guyana gave up their independent status to become a "mission" of the Evangelical Synod of East Pennsylvania (USA).

Perhaps the most significant religious development in the twentieth-century Caribbean was the dramatic growth of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism inspired the formation of distinctive religious traditions, many of which combined African styles of worship and evangelical Christianity. The "Africanness" of Pentecostal groups was evident in their styles of worship that included antiphonal call-and-response singing in rhythmical patterns often accompanied by drumming.

There was much competition between Pentecostal groups. The most prominent Pentecostal groups in the Caribbean were the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) which began work in Trinidad and Jamaica in the early twentieth century; the Church of the Nazarene introduced to Barbados and Trinidad in 1926; the Pilgrim Holiness Church which became active in Guyana, Barbados, St. Kitts, and Antigua in the 1930s; and the New Testament Church of God (Cleveland, Ohio), which began sending missionaries to the Bahamas and Jamaica in 1910. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada began work in Trinidad in 1924, and Assemblies of God (based in the United States) began work in Jamaica in 1927.

The Fundamentalist movement traces its roots to southern California between 1908 and 1912. Fundamentalism has had a limited impact on Caribbean religions. Numerous branches of the Foursquare Gospel Church can be found on the English-speaking islands, but most congregations are very small and have had a minimal impact. Over time many Fundamentalist Caribbean congregations, like their counterparts in Latin America, became less Bible-based and more Pentecostal in outlook.[14]

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[14] Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago, 1994), 187.

Judaism in the Caribbean has deep roots. In 1694, Willemstad, Curacao, became the site of the first synagogue. Jewish plantations in the Dutch colonies prospered, and by 1864 British Jews arrived in Willemstad to establish what was to become the first Liberal Jewish Congregation in the New World. Jewish congregations in Curacao provided financial aid to Jewish congregations elsewhere including New York City, Philadelphia, and Newport, Rhode Island. After Cuba became independent in 1902, a number of prominent Jewish families moved to Havana. During World War II, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic were among the few nations in the Americas to accept Jewish immigrants. Anti-Semitism existed throughout the Caribbean during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; for example, a Haitian musical form known as *rara* included a yearly *rara* performance called *bwile Jwif* ("burn the Jew," in Haitian *Kreyol*) in which Jews were publicly denigrated as "killers of Christ."[15]

PROTESTANT GROWTH

On the historically Catholic islands of the Spanish and French Caribbean, the spread of Protestantism was restricted until the late eighteenth century. Even well into the nineteenth century, Protestant missions to Catholic areas were sharply curtailed. The number of converts to Protestantism was limited; for example, in Puerto Rico and Cuba, Protestantism did not gain a firm foothold until the late nineteenth century with the arrival of Protestant missionaries from the United States.

By the late nineteenth century, foreign missionaries represented a mix of Americans and Europeans. In the 1930s and 1940s, American Protestants sponsoring missions included Methodists, Presbyterians, Friends (Quakers), Congregationalists, and Disciples of Christ. Congregationalists from the United States conducted missionary work in Guyana under auspices of the London Missionary Society (LMS). The Disciples of Christ first came to Jamaica in 1841. American Quakers started a mission in Jamaica at the end of the nineteenth century focusing, like Canadian Presbyterians in Trinidad, on indentured workers from India. In the 1870s, the African Methodist Episcopal Church sent missionaries from the United States and Canada to work in St. Thomas, Bermuda, Trinidad, Guyana, and Barbados.[16]

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[15] Elizabeth McAlister, *Rara! Vodou Power and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (Berkeley, 2002), 122–3.

[16] Uklyn Hendricks, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Barbados, 1892–1980* (Christ Church, Barbados, 1982).

For most Protestant denominations, the nineteenth century was a period of sustained growth. The growth of Protestantism does not appear to have been directly related to prevailing economic conditions; for example, the American Civil War caused shortages of trade goods and agricultural products in the Caribbean, but appears to have had little impact (positive or negative) on patterns of church growth. Protestant growth in Jamaica correlated strongly with an increase in the number of small-scale farmers (i.e., more small-scale farmers led to increases in church memberships).

The nineteenth century was a period of overall demographic increase on most Caribbean islands, but the periods of greatest church growth were the years just prior to and immediately following emancipation. This growth spurt was followed by periods of relative stability and, in 1865, by sharp declines in memberships for Anglicans, Moravians, and Presbyterians. But by the 1890s, memberships picked up. In Jamaica, the Anglican Church claimed 19,000 members in 1871. By 1890, Anglican membership was over 40,000. Moravian membership grew from 4,400 in 1873 to 6,700 in 1903. On Jamaica, Presbyterians grew from 5,124 members in 1865 to 12,547 members in 1910. There was intense interaction among Protestant churches within the Caribbean as churches from bigger islands sponsored missionaries to smaller, poorer islands such as Anguilla and St. Vincent.[17]

The Roman Catholic Church experienced similar patterns of growth and decline. In 1866, there were only four thousand Catholics in Jamaica, but by 1921 the Catholic Church had increased to thirty thousand members. Comparatively, Methodists did not increase their membership as fast as other Jamaican denominations. They grew from fourteen thousand in 1866 to eighteen thusand in 1882. A problem with all of these figures is that they are taken from denominational records and represent only those years in which there was a church census. Moreover, denominational records and government records seldom agree; for example, Methodist records indicate two thousand Methodists in 1871, while government records indicate fourteen thousand Methodists during that same year. Denominational records may have included those only Methodists considered to be in "good standing." Records kept by Jehovah's Witnesses also distinguished between "members" and "active members."

PROTESTANT MISSIONS TO CUBA AND PUERTO RICO

Between 1880 and 1945, over fifty different Protestant denominations established a presence in Cuba. In 1880, Cuban-born missionaries who had been active in churches in the United States established Protestant

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[17] Wilbert Forker, ed., *Born in Slavery* (Edinburgh, 2003).

congregations in Havana and Matanzas. Following the American intervention of 1898, Cuba was opened to full-scale Protestant missionary activity, and Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ, and Quakers divided the island into spheres of influence. Other American denominations sent missionaries to Cuba in the twentieth century, most notably, Seventh-day Adventists (1905), Gideon's Band (1924), and "The New Pines" (1936). The Salvation Army arrived in 1925, Evangelical Lutherans in 1940, and the Missouri-Synod Lutherans in 1946. The Nazarene Church began a mission to Cuba in 1946. American-based denominations maintained close ties with sponsoring churches in the United States.

Puerto Rico, like Cuba, had been a historically Catholic island. After 1898, American denominations began to exert tremendous influence on Puerto Rican legal, social, political, educational, and health organizations. American denominations also influenced media and social programs. Some Puerto Ricans saw this as a form of "religious imperialism."[18] As in Cuba, American denominations divided Puerto Rico into exclusive "mission fields." American Baptists took responsibility for the area between San Juan and Ponce, the far west belonged to the Texas Presbyterians, Methodists dominated Arecibo and Utuado, and the far east was the responsibility of New England Congregationalists. Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses established congregations throughout the island.

In the twentieth century Cuban Jews migrated to San Juan and Ponce, and by 1920 there were two active synagogues and over two thousand Jews on Puerto Rico. Other non-Christian groups who migrated to Puerto Rico included Palestinian Muslims, Arabs, Hindus, and Mahayana Buddhists. As noted, American denominations greatly influenced education and health care; for example, Interamerican University was founded in 1912 by John Harris, a Texas Presbyterian, and American Presbyterians established two hospitals on the island. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church remained the dominant religion.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SANTERIA

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also marked a period of growth for African-derived religious expressions like Santeria, a Cuban-based religion that traces its origins to the Yoruba peoples of West Africa. Santeria (the "way of the saints") represents a unique blending of African religions and Roman Catholicism. Santeria and Vodou share many traits,

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[18] Donald Moore, *American Religious Influence in Puerto Rico in the Twentieth Century* (San German, Puerto Rico, 1998).

but due to the unique history of slavery in Cuba, Santeria is not exactly like any other African-derived religion.

Two events at the end of the eighteenth century resulted in large numbers of Yoruba coming directly to Cuba from Africa. The first was the Haitian Revolution. Second, the West African empire centered in the Yoruba city of Oyo collapsed following a series of challenges from both within and without, that is, Fulani from the north, Dahomeans from the west, and rival Yoruba city-states. More than one million Yoruba were sold into slavery, and many were transported to Cuba. Slavery continued in Cuba long after it had been abolished on the islands of the British West Indies.

Slavery had a tremendous demographic impact on nineteenth-century Cuba. For example, between 1790 and 1822, 240,000 African slaves were brought to Cuba, and by 1810, recent arrivals from Africa outnumbered the Creole (Cuban-born) population by a ratio of 96 to 4. Between 1850 and 1870, a majority of slaves imported to Cuba were of Lucumi (Yoruba) origin, and Lucumi religion thus became the basis for Cuban Santeria. Many Lucumi were of Yoruba descent, and the vocabulary of Santeria prayers, chants, and songs was predominantly Yoruba. But nineteenth-century Santeria was not exclusively Yoruba and was also influenced by religions from Dahomey, Benin, Hausa, and Nupe. Santeria traditions were transmitted along family lines, and religious knowledge was largely the domain of nameless older Yoruba men who had been born in Africa. These "old heads" became the founders of Santeria.[19]

Cuban Santeria does not trace its origins to rural plantations. It began in urban centers like Havana and Matanzas. In fact, Santeria could not have developed without the organizational support of the Catholic Church in Havana and Matanzas. The Catholic Church was one of the few nineteenth-century institutions to which both blacks and whites had access. During the mid-1800s, the bishop of Havana, Pedro Agustin Morel de Santa Cruz, attempted to popularize Catholic teachings in Afro-Cuban bars and clubs and by introducing the institution of *cabildos*, religious brotherhoods. Nineteenth-century cabildos were primarily service organizations like those the Catholic Church had established earlier in Mexico City. Cabildos sponsored dances, encouraged celebration of saints' feast days, promoted Catholic teachings, and, most importantly, created a venue for the intermingling and juxtaposition of Christianity and African customs. In urban areas, both enslaved and free Lucumi joined together for recreation and mutual benefit. Cabildos assisted the infirm, buried the dead, and gathered to venerate the Yoruba deities. Equally important, Lucumi cabildos set up

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[19] George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington, 1993), 74.

lines of initiation that sanctioned the Santeria priesthood. One nineteenth-century cabildo, whose patron saint was Santa Barbara, actually referred to itself as "El Cabildo Africano Lucami."[20] Between 1870 and 1940, Santeria persisted despite inconsistent responses to the religion ranging from social acceptance and benign tolerance to outright repression. The religion survived despite changing economic conditions and the arrival of new migrants from the Yucatan, China, the British West Indies, and Haiti.

Also in the twentieth century, Cuban Santeria was influenced by a variant of French Spiritualism founded by Hippolyte Ravail (1804–69) who published his teachings under the name Allan Kardec. Kardec's teachings have had a profound influence on the Caribbean islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Martinique, and an even greater impact on religions of the South American mainland. During the 1920s, the eminent Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz himself played a key role in the development of Santeria as founder of a movement of writers, painters, and musicians known as "Afro-Cubanism." The Afro-Cuban movement first brought Santeria to the attention of educated white Cubans who by the 1940s had begun to occupy prominent positions within the faith. By 1945, many of the best-known *santeras* and *santeros* were white, urban intellectuals.

The Lucumi tradition recognized two main categories of priesthood: priests of Orula, the Orisa of divination; and priests of individual spirits called Orisas. The priests of Orula are known as *babalaos*, "fathers of the mystery," and they conduct divination by means of an ancient oracle named *Ifa*. A *babalao* is one who interprets the destiny of individuals. The other major category of priests was known as *iyalocha*, "mother of the Orisa," or *babalocha*, "father of the Orisa." Each *iyalocha* or *babalocha* established a spiritual house (*ilé*) and conducted ceremonies independently as well as cooperatively with other *baba* and *iya*.

Santeria houses in the twentieth century continued many of the activities associated with nineteenth-century Lucumi cabildos. Devotees gathered for mutual aid and recreation, but a principal function became a cycle of ceremonies honoring the Orisas. Most Orisas were associated with particular Catholic saints, and Santeria devotees celebrated Orisa feast days on the same days as Catholic saints. Each Orisa possessed a personal history – stories that celebrated their exploits, extolled their powers, and suggested ways they should be approached. Each Orisa was associated with particular herbs, beads, colors, foods, rhythms, and songs.

By the 1940s, Santeria was primarily devoted to healing. Individuals and Orisa established a bond in which the priest acted as a medium for the Orisa, losing his or her own personal identity. Orisas admonished their

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[20] Fernando Ortiz, "Los cabildos afro-cubana," *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 26 (1921): 5–26.

followers, prophesied, and healed. Their pronouncements provided the dramatic highpoints of Santeria services.

PROTESTANTISM IN HAITI

When the Catholic Church withdrew from Haiti, it opened the way for Protestant missionaries. In 1820, there were only 150 Haitian Protestants in the entire country, but by 1920, there were over 14,000. In 1861, Bishop Jacques Holly established the first Episcopal parish in Haiti. Protestant missions continued after the Catholic Church was reestablished. In 1905, Michael Nord Isaac founded the Union of Seventh-Day Adventists in Haiti. Independent Wesleyans and Free Methodists began missionary work in Haiti between 1916 and 1928. Independent Baptists and American Baptists arrived in the 1880s, and by 1945 Baptists constituted over half of all Haitian Protestants. Haitian Baptist churches united under the auspices of the Baptist Home Missionary Society and founded a number of prominent Haitian institutions including the Baptist Theological Seminary and Good Samaritan Hospital.

Schisms within Baptist organizations gave rise to the Eben Ezer Baptist Mission in 1936 and the Haitian Baptist Mission in 1941. After 1935, thousands of Haitians returned from Cuba. Many returning Haitians joined the Baptist Evangelical Mission of South Haiti under the leadership of Lisaire Bernard. The Union of Baptist Churches founded the Seminary of Evangelical Theology in Port-au-Prince in 1943. Twentieth-century Pentecostal and Holiness movements also profoundly influenced Haitian Protestantism.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY VODOU

Just as Santeria is unique to Cuba, Vodou is unique to Haiti. Its theology has multiple influences, but its roots are located on the plantations of eighteenth-century St. Dominique. Little is known concerning slave religion in Haiti, but it is evident that slaves spent much time and effort recreating and preserving selected aspects of African religious traditions. Because African religions were illegal on the plantations, slaves conducted their rituals in secret. They often introduced Catholic symbols to hide their African practices. An eyewitness to Vodou ceremonies during the eighteenth century reported that makeshift altars and votive candles were used to conceal what he interpreted as the "Africanness" of Vodou.[21] Planters

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[21] Mederic Louis-Elie Moreau de Saint-Mery, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique* (Paris, 1958), 55.

universally feared Vodou and saw the religion as a threat to social and political stability.

The word "Vodou" derives from the words *vodu* and *vodun* in the Fon language which mean "deity" or "spirit." Vodou relates the life of its devotees to thousands of spirits called *lwa* who govern every aspect of existence. Lwa reveal themselves through the bodies of their devotees during public ritual. Ceremonial spirit possession is the major focus of Vodou.

The history of Vodou is closely linked to the history and politics of Haiti.[22] Religious beliefs and practices reflected the ethnic composition of Africans originally brought to the island as slaves in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ironically, Vodou has often been presented as the most "African" of all New World religions, but for much of the nineteenth century Haiti was totally cut off from Africa. During this same period, other Caribbean islands, including the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Cuba, received thousands of African indentures and slaves directly from the continent. Many theological developments in nineteenth-century Vodou represented independent inventions, including, for example, the pantheon of Petro lwa.

The Roman Catholic Church withdrew all priests from Haiti between 1805 and 1860, and as a consequence Haitian Vodou developed independently of Roman Catholicism. Between 1805 and 1860, Haitian Presidents Christophe, Petion, Boyer, and Soulouque worked tirelessly to reinstitute Catholicism as the official "state religion." But the Vatican consistently refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new Haitian regime. Between 1804 and 1844, three out of four Haitian presidents actively opposed Vodou and tried to suppress it. President Soulouque – the notable exception – did not actively suppress Vodou; he simply tried to ignore it as best he could. As in the eighteenth century, all nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Haitian political leaders feared Vodou for its revolutionary potential.

On 28 March 1860, President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard successfully negotiated a "Concordat" with the Vatican. According to the terms of this agreement, Port-au-Prince was to be the sole seat of ecclesiastical authority in Haiti with an archbishop to be named by the president of the republic, Catholicism was to be the official religion of Haiti and was to be supported by state funds, the Catholic Church was given sole authority to establish dioceses and appoint bishops and local pastors, and a seminary was to be founded for the training of local priests. In exchange, the Haitian state agreed to undertake extensive restoration of church properties that had fallen into disrepair.

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[22] Leslie Desmangles, *Faces of the Gods* (Chapel Hill, 1992); Michel Laguerre, *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti* (New York, 1989).

In 1865, most Haitians claimed to be Catholic, but also claimed loyalty to the lwa. Between 1865 and 1890, Roman Catholicism and Vodou developed into two separate religious hierarchies – parallel systems of leadership that became juxtaposed one to the other. Over time, Vodou became more important in the daily lives of Haitians.

The Concordat of 1860 was followed by periods of intense economic and political unrest. Between 1860 and 1915, there were over twenty Haitian presidents, most of whom either were assassinated or resigned from office to avoid assassination. A critical event in Haitian religious history was when the U.S. military landed in Port-au-Prince in 1915. Some Haitians welcomed the Americans who provided needed social services. During the American occupation, roads were built, water systems were improved, and the world's first fully automatic phone system was installed in Port-au-Prince. While many Haitian elites favored the changes brought by Americans, Haitian peasants resented American incursions.

Despite terms clearly stipulated in the Concordat, the Roman Catholic Church in Haiti retained European leadership. In 1930, there were 205 priests in Haiti, but only 8 were Haitian natives. As elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Catholic Church played a significant role in education. By 1875, 90 percent of primary, elementary, and secondary schools were controlled by the Catholic Church.

Vodou-Catholic interactions were inconsistent. Between 1865 and 1945, the church often expressed degrees of tolerance toward Vodou, but on numerous occasions pressured government authorities to "clamp down," most notably during "Anti-Superstitious Campaigns" conducted in 1896, 1913, and 1941. During the 1941 campaign, euphemistically called "Operation Cleanup," many *ounfos* (Vodou ceremonial centers) were destroyed along with their ritual paraphernalia. Church leaders, most notably Fathers Jean-Marie Salgado, Carl Peters, and Andre Solasge, attempted to "sweep away" all ancestral African traditions from the nation. Anti-Superstition Campaigns fermented political turmoil and within Vodou popularized the newly created Petro lwas. In 1942, President Elie Lescot officially ended government sponsorship of Anti-Superstitious activities. Nevertheless, these activities continued at the local level.

NEW MIGRANTS FROM ASIA

The arrival of Asians (East Indians and Chinese) had a tremendous impact on Caribbean religious life in the late nineteenth century. Following emancipation in the British West Indies, natives from the Indian subcontinent were brought to the Caribbean as indentures. Most indentures were Hindus, and a small percentage were Muslims. In Trinidad, the growing

influence of Hinduism and Islam was everywhere apparent as Asians became the majority group in some areas. In Central Trinidad around Naparima, the Shi'ite festival *Hosay* became a major focus of religious identity in the twentieth century.

Although Hindu communities were located throughout the Caribbean, the largest concentrations were in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname. The British also imported laborers from China, various parts of Africa, and Ireland. But the overwhelming majority came from India. After a period as an indentured laborer, migrants could choose either to return to their homeland or to remain in the Caribbean. Over 70 percent chose to remain in the Caribbean. Between 1838 and 1916, more than 143,000 East Indians came to Trinidad, and additional East Indians migrated to Suriname, Guyana, Martinique, and Guadeloupe.

East Indians in the Caribbean represented various castes. Nearly 15 percent were Brahmins who in the 1890s formed the East Indian Association, which was devoted to maintaining Indian cultural traditions and addressing social and economic issues relating to the East Indian community. Hinduism in the Caribbean differed from Hinduism as practiced in India. Because Trinidad had the largest East Indian settlements, it was also the place where the most "new naming" occurred. East Indians in Trinidad created new myths, new rituals, and new festivals (such as the annual *Holi Pagwa*) that bore little resemblance to nineteenth-century Asian beliefs and practices.

Many East Indians converted to Catholicism, while others joined Protestant denominations. Perhaps the most successful nineteenth-century Protestant missionary campaign was the Canadian-sponsored Presbyterian mission to East Indians in Trinidad. In 1864, Reverend John Morton of Nova Scotia visited Trinidad where he immediately recognized the need for missionary work among the recently arrived Indian population. First, Morton appealed to the local presbytery to recruit locals as missionaries. The Trinidad body declined. Next, Morton sought funding from the United Presbyterian Church in the United States. They, too, declined. Ultimately, Morton received funding from the Board of Missions of his own Canadian church, which sent him back to Port of Spain in 1868 to take charge of the mission. Morton and his wife settled in Iere Village, and in 1870 another missionary couple, Reverend and Mrs. Kenneth Grant, began work among the East Indians in San Fernando. Both couples remained in Trinidad for the rest of their careers. Morton was successful largely due to his use of native East Indian catechists and his efforts to learn Hindi. Education was always his first priority, and he started the first Presbyterian school shortly after arriving in 1868.

After the indenture system ended in 1917, the use of Hindi faded. But Presbyterian church buildings in Trinidad continued to be given Hindi

names. In addition, the singing *bhajans*, Hindi-Christian hymns that orig-
inated in India, continued as a noticeable expression of East Indian culture
in Trinidad and Guyana.[23]

THE SPIRITUAL BAPTISTS

The Spiritual Baptist movement in Trinidad started in the late nineteenth
century, but many Baptists claim that their roots go back to the Wesleyan
movement on St. Vincent a century earlier. Baptists disagree concerning
their origins.[24] Those who sponsor Orisa rites claim that the faith is an out-
growth of various forms of African religions like Rada that were practiced
in Trinidad during the mid-nineteenth century. Spiritual Baptists from
St. Vincent claim the religion was brought to Trinidad from St. Vincent
in the late nineteenth century. Other accounts credit the so-called Merken
Baptists, American Baptists from the Sea Islands who were given land
grants to settle in Trinidad after the War of 1812, with bringing the faith to
Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth century.[25] It is clear that by 1890 Spiritual
Baptists had established congregations on St. Vincent, Trinidad, Tobago,
Grenada, and Guyana. In addition, there were a number of similar religions
on other Caribbean islands whose rituals are similar, including the Tie Heads
of Barbados, the Jordanites of Guyana, and the Spirit Baptists of Jamaica.

Trinidad is notable as the only Caribbean island where African-derived
worship is centered in Protestant churches rather than the Roman Catholic
Church. Over the century, Spiritual Baptists and other Protestant groups
struggled to conceptualize their relations with African gods, Kabala spirits,
and an array of Hindu deities. Relations with African-derived gods were
worked out mostly in the 1880s, while relations with Kabala spirits and
Hindu gods were worked out in the 1920s and 1930s.

The most complex aspect of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spiritual
Baptist organization pertains to relations between the Baptists and African
gods. Nineteenth-century Baptists were often confused with followers
of the African-derived Orisa. Government officials seem to have treated
Baptists and followers of the Orisa as if these two religions were the same.
Members of the two faiths, however, did not share this confusion. A per-
centage of Spiritual Baptists actively opposed Orisa.

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[23] Archibald Chauharjasingh, *"Bhajans" of the Early Presbyterian Church* (Trinidad, 1991).
[24] Stephen Glazier, *Marchin' the Pilgrims Home* (Salem, WI, 1991); Eudora Thomas,
A History of the Shouter Baptists in Trinidad and Tobago (Tacariqua, Trinidad, 1987); C. M.
Jacobs, *Joy Comes in the Morning* (Port of Spain, Trinidad, 1996).
[25] John O. Stewart, "Mission and Leadership among the 'Meriken Baptists of Trinidad,'"
Contributions to the Latin American Anthropology Group 1 (1976): 17–25.

By the 1920s, a growing number of Spiritual Baptist leaders also became involved with Kabala, a form of Spiritualism. Trinidad Kabala is similar to Latin American Spiritualism and Kardecismo, which became identified with Cuban Santeria at about the same time. A major difference is that during Kabalistic séances, spirits from the other side communicate via a series of alternating short and long taps, which are simultaneously transcribed and/or translated by a medium. Kabalistic rites are usually performed separately from Spiritual Baptist worship, most often in private homes. Sometimes, however, Kabala tappings are embedded within regular Baptist worship. Séances were conducted so unobtrusively that only the initiated recognized what was taking place. To the uninitiated, the tapping of a shepherd's crook on an earthen floor (like pounding pews, ringing bells, and clapping hands) is simply seen as an aspect of Spiritual Baptist musical expression. This is exactly the intention of Kabala operators and one reason that Spiritual Baptist services provided a good cover for Kabala.

Orisa rites, many of which were conducted outdoors in crowded residential areas, are not as secretive. Drumming and possession, which are the major components of Orisa rites, are highly visible. In examining the relationships between nineteenth-century Spiritual Baptist churches and Orisa centers, four distinct types of organizations can be discerned. First, there were Spiritual Baptist churches with Orisa connections. Second, there were Spiritual Baptist churches without Orisa connections. Third, there were Orisa centers with Spiritual Baptist connections. Fourth, there were Orisa centers without Spiritual Baptist connections. These distinctions reflected the ways in which believers in these religions thought of themselves. Were they, for example, Spiritual Baptists who also did Orisa work, or followers of the Orisa who also did Spiritual Baptist work? In the twentieth century, members of all four types of organizations began to sponsor Kabala, but there were, and are, many Kabalists in Trinidad who did not participate in either Spiritual Baptist or Orisa ceremonies.

Spiritual Baptists as well as devotees of Orisa combined beliefs and practices from a variety of religious traditions. A major difference between Baptists and Orisa is that Spiritual Baptist rituals were directed to their version of the Holy Trinity, while Orisa rites were directed toward and incorporated African-derived deities. All Spiritual Baptists professed that they are Protestant Christians. Spiritual Baptists and Orisa devotees are interrelated on a number of levels. Their memberships overlap, and perhaps 80 to 90 percent of all Orisa devotees in Trinidad also participated in Spiritual Baptist services; perhaps 40 percent of all Spiritual Baptists also participated in African-derived religions.

The relationship between Orisa devotees and Spiritual Baptist churches could be described as symbiotic. Spiritual Baptists maintained permanent

buildings, whereas most Orisa devotees did not. Spiritual Baptists met twice a week, whereas Orisa feasts were held only once or twice a year. Thus, Spiritual Baptist churches provide a convenient location for Orisa devotees to organize feasts and plan their activities and also serve as a setting for opening prayers of Orisa ceremonies.

For Spiritual Baptists, the most central ritual is known as "mourning." Mourning ceremonies, they claim, make their religion distinct from all other religions in the world. The Spiritual Baptist concept of mourning does not relate directly to physical death and bereavement, but it is an elaborate ceremony involving fasting, lying on a dirt floor, and other deprivations. The ritual's central role has always been to remind mourners of human frailty and imperfection amid life. Baptists participate in mourning ceremonies for a variety of reasons – to cure cancer, to see the future, or to communicate with the deceased. Mourning is a vision quest, an attempt to discover the "true" self in relation to God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. A major goal of mourners, however, is to discover one's true rank within a twenty-two-step church hierarchy. From the religion's inception, every Baptist was expected to mourn often, and every Baptist desired to advance within the church hierarchy.

In 1917, a Shouter Prohibition Ordinance was introduced in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago banning shouting, bell ringing, and other components of Spiritual Baptist worship. The ban was in effect for thirty-six years – from 1917 to 1953. Similar ordinances were introduced on other West Indian islands, most notably, Jamaica, Grenada, St. Kitts, and St. Vincent.[26] The ban was sporadically enforced, and it did little to slow the spread of the Spiritual Baptist faith.

JAMAICAN REVIVAL

There is a long tradition of redemptive religious movements in the Caribbean. George Liele is considered the first Jamaican revivalist. In 1783, Liele, an American-born ex-slave who was also known as George Sharp, started one of the first Baptist churches in Jamaica, evangelizing around Kingston and Spanish Town. A major significance of Liele's church was its name, "the Ethiopian Baptist Church." Liele's reference to Ethiopia had symbolic value derived from biblical passages in which the word "Ethiopian" was used interchangeably with "Nubian" and "Cushite." The term *Cushitei* is taken from the Hebrew word *cush* meaning "black or burned skin." *Cush* translates into the Greek *ethiop*; and, for Rastafarians, *Ethiopia* became "the land of the burned-skin people." Many biblical passages depict

[26] Diana Paton, "Obeah Acts," *Small Axe* 13 (2009): 1–18.

the Cushites as valiant warriors, an exiled people who became a metaphor of protest and resistance.

The idea of Ethiopia as a holy place was widely promoted between 1860 and 1920. This period corresponded to the rise of religious movements such as Convince and the Kumina (or Pukkumina), revivalism, and various healing cults known as "Myalism."[27] All these movements stressed ancestor worship and spirit possession and, like revivalism in the United States, shared a millenarian outlook. A distinguishing feature of millenarianism is the idea that the current world will soon be destroyed by a series of cataclysmic events. A new world order will arise in which the mighty will be destroyed and the oppressed will inherit the earth.

One such movement was the Native Baptist Church (or Bedwardism) that became prominent in the early twentieth century. The Native Baptist Church was founded by Alexander Bedward around 1891. Bedward was born in 1859. His parents had been slaves on the Mona estate. As a young man, Bedward experienced a profound spiritual vision and received the gift of healing. He preached that the end of the world would occur soon, that he would ascend into heaven, and that he would take his followers to heaven with him.

In many respects, Bedward's teachings were similar to the teachings of early Rastafarians. Both Native Baptists and Rastafari emphasized the spiritual efficacy of fasting. Both also stressed the regenerative power of the sun, which was seen as a sign of strength and fertility. Both called upon God to crush the whites, whom they identified with the Pharisees and Sadducees of the New Testament. Both groups professed that white civilization would eventually be destroyed.

FROM GARVEYISM TO RASTAFARIANISM

Of all Caribbean religions, Rastafari is the religion that most closely embodies the "new naming" of things. It is an indigenous creation, not African derived. No nineteenth-century African religion remotely resembled Rastafarianism, and when Emperor Haile Selassie visited Jamaica in 1966, he was greatly disturbed by his reception. As titular head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, he was uncomfortable being hailed as a god. Rastafarians rejected the major component of many African-derived religions, namely, they denied the possibility of possession by African spirits.

Native Baptists persisted into the 1920s and played an important role in the emergence of Garveyism. Marcus Garvey was born on 28 August 1887,

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[27] William Wedenoja, "The Origins of Revival," in George R. Saunders, ed., *Culture and Christianity: The Dialectics of Transformation* (Westport, 1988), 91–116.

in the Parish of St. Ann, Jamaica. His father traced his ancestry to early maroons who had battled the British in Jamaica for over a century. As a child, Marcus heard stories of great maroon leaders like Cudjoe and Quaco, and those stories profoundly affected him.

Marcus Garvey was acutely aware of the problems of inequality, poverty, and social injustice in Jamaican society. After emancipation, three rigid social classes emerged in Jamaica. A majority of blacks were uneducated and had little chance to improve their lots. Between 1910 and 1914, Garvey attempted to educate Jamaican authorities concerning the plight of poor blacks. He founded the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914. In 1916, he moved the UNIA's headquarters to New York City where, he believed, his message would be better received. Garvey worked with black Protestant ministers in New York City, preaching Sunday sermons about the UNIA and its goals. His speeches resonated with the religious overtones of Jamaican revivalism. He declared that blacks were the chosen people of God and that they had been forced to live in the Americas against their wills. For more than three hundred years, blacks had been subjected to white racism, social oppression, poverty, and exploitation. Blacks in America, Garvey contended, should repatriate to Africa where they would be liberated from their oppression. If the Kingdom of God were to occur on earth, Garvey taught, it would necessitate the repatriation of all blacks to Africa. This pronouncement helped set the stage for Rastafarian theology.[28]

Rastafarianism emerged in Jamaica around 1930, the same year that Haile Selassie became emperor of Ethiopia. The movement was acephalous, but major progenitors included Robert Hinds, Leonard Howell, and Ferdinand Ricketts.[29] Haile Selassie's coronation received considerable attention in the international press, not only because of its opulence, but also due to the new monarch's commanding title, "Ras Tafari, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah." Selassie laid claim as the 225th descendant in an unbroken succession originating with King David and the Queen of Sheba. For Rastafarians, the term "Ethiopia" became the promised land, and Haile Selassie was believed to be its Messiah.

Rastafarians professed that blacks in the Americas were reincarnations of the Ancient Israelites. As *Jah*'s (God's) chosen people, Rastafarians should

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[28] Noel Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley* (Gainesville, FL, 2005).
[29] Joseph Owens, *Dread* (London, 1976); Richard Salter, "Sources and Chronology in Rastafari Origins," *Nova Religio* 9 (2005): 5–31; Nathaniel Murrell, William Spencer, and Adrian McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon* (Philadelphia, 1998).

separate themselves from whites. Early Rastas – like Hinds and Ricketts – preached that God is black, Adam and Eve were black, Christ was black, and all the prophets of the Old Testament were black.

Early Rastafarians referred to white civilization as Babylon. Like the ancient city of Babylon, the world of whites would soon be destroyed. Blacks would repatriate to Africa where a new world order would be established and – some Rastafarians believed – whites would become the servants of blacks. Not all Rastafarians agreed with all tenets of this theology, and early Rastafarianism, like Rastafari today, was an incredibly heterogeneous movement. There was considerable debate, for example, concerning the alleged divinity of Haile Selassie and use and prominence of *ganja* (*cannabis sativa*) within the movement.[30]

CONCLUSION

As noted, the Caribbean is a wide and diverse geographical region united by a common history of colonialism, ethnic and cultural diversity, and strong cultural and religious ties to both Europe and Africa. This essay addressed a broad swatch of Caribbean history (1865–1945), covering the collapse of large-scale sugar plantations and the advent of economies based on small-scale farming and tourism.

Caribbean societies have been often understood in terms of creolization, a term referring to being born in the Americas. Peoples of the Caribbean have always borrowed religious and cultural expressions from outside the region and modified them to make them "their own." This was inevitable in an area where people with diverse backgrounds coexist in close proximity one to another. Creolization is a dominant theme in Caribbean religious life and is linked to processes of juxtaposition, reappropriation, and what Derek Walcott termed a "new naming" of things. Some new naming occurred on seventeenth-century plantations, while other new naming occurred during the years immediately before and following emancipation. But in religious terms, new naming gained its fullest expression between 1865 and 1945 with the establishment of new African-derived religions like Santeria, Vodou, the Spiritual Baptists, and Rastafarianism. These new religions were products of a coming together of African beliefs and practices and Christianity. These religions did not resemble "slave religions" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were *and are* their own things.

[30] Ansley Hamid, *The Ganja Complex* (Lanham, MD, 2002).

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Section VI

RELIGION AND DIVERSE AREAS

RELIGION AND LITERATURE, 1790–1945

ROGER LUNDIN

In the early 1960s a young man from a self-described "Yiddishist-left-wing" Canadian family arrived in the United States to begin doctoral studies in literature at the Claremont Graduate School. Named in honor of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Massachusetts anarchists whose execution had caused an international uproar in 1927, that student, Sacvan Bercovitch, would go on to become a distinguished scholar of American literature and religion.

What astonished this young Canadian when he landed in the United States was the degree to which late-twentieth-century American culture kept casting its experience in a seventeenth-century framework. A debate "full of rage and faith" was going on about the nation's destiny, Bercovitch recalls, with conservatives busy ferreting out un-American attitudes and radicals righteously recalling a wayward nation "to its sacred mission." In that era of the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement, the plea of the ancient Psalmist met the promise of the New World: "When is our errand to be fulfilled? How long, O Lord, how long?" The Christian cries coming from all sides of the political debate made Bercovitch feel like he was "Sancho Panza in a land of Don Quixotes." The American dream was a "patent fiction," but nevertheless it involved "an entire hermeneutic system." Unlike any other modern nation, "America was a venture in exegesis. You were supposed to discover it as a believer unveils scripture."[1]

LITERATURE AND RELIGION IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

This American "venture in exegesis" had its beginnings almost two centuries before George Washington became the nation's first president in 1789; and as Bercovitch discovered, it was still a thriving enterprise long

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[1] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, 1993), 29.

after the end of the Second World War. How was it that a particular brand of Calvinist orthodoxy could give birth to a cultural practice that would continue to exert a clear and distinct influence on American culture long after its generative theology had lost its hold upon that same culture?

An analogy offered by literary theorist Kenneth Burke provides a helpful way of answering that question. Burke defines history as "a 'dramatic' process, involving dialectical oppositions," and in this process "every document bequeathed us by history must be treated as a strategy for encompassing a situation." In turn, the drama acquires its materials "from the 'unending conversation' that is going on at the point in history when we are born." Burke asks his reader to imagine he or she has entered a room where "a heated discussion" is under way. Everyone is too busy to explain to the newcomer what the conversation is about, and not one of them had been there when it started. Nevertheless, "you listen for a while," catch the tenor of the argument, and then "put in your oar." Someone challenges what you say, you respond, and others pick up your comments and run with them in new conversational directions. The discussion never ends, and as "the hour grows late, you must depart," with the conversation "still vigorously in progress."[2]

In the American context, one could argue that the conversation began with a sermon John Winthrop preached to the English Puritans setting out with him from England in 1629. "Enshrined as a kind of Ur-text of American literature," this discourse on "Christian charity" has been the subject of voluminous commentary, and its images still echo throughout the conversations of American public life.[3] With its vision of a glorious future secured by a covenantal God, Winthrop's address foresees the New England colony as "a City upon a Hill, with the eyes of all people upon" it. With "the God of Israel" among them, he assured his fellow settlers, no evil could overcome them, no power of darkness prevail against them, as long as they remained faithful to the covenant God had drawn up with them.[4] In the words of Robert Bellah and his coauthors, Winthrop and his cohort bequeathed to the culture of the United States a dynamic vision of transformation and "gave the American experiment as a whole a utopian touch that it has never lost, in spite of all our failings."[5]

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[2] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form,* 3rd ed. (Berkeley, 1973), 109–11.

[3] Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), 72.

[4] John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649,* abr. ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 10.

[5] Robert N. Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York, 1985), 29.

Even by 1790, that utopian cast had begun to acquire distinctly secular and nationalistic shadings, as Calvin's steely God yielded to the nurturing "Great Alma Mater" of the land itself. St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) offers a window into that transformation in the late colonial period. In the most famous of those letters, "What is an American?," Crèvecoeur envisions a culture in which religion becomes almost exclusively an individual affair. Religion may be driven by zeal, he argues, but that presents no problem in America, because here zealots are free to worship in private "the Divinity agreeably to their own peculiar ideas." No one disturbs them, for if they contribute peacefully and industriously to the common good, it matters not how strange their private ideas may be. To Crèvecoeur, the real God is "our great parent," America itself, and she promises ease and independence to each earnest individual who lands on her shores.[6]

When Crèvecoeur's letters appeared, the American colonies stood on the brink of nationhood, and a period of revolutionary cultural change was about to begin. From 1790 to 1830, the literature of the United States registered both the productive power and the disruptive force of those changes, but it rarely delved deeply into the religious dynamics at play within the culture. Joel Barlow's epic poem, "The Columbiad" (1807), pays homage to a distant, deistic God while singing the praises of Thomas Jefferson's Republican ideals; Charles Brockden Brown's novel, *Arthur Mervyn* (1799), explores the tensions created by the clash between weakening social institutions and an emerging ideal of restless self-formation and acquisition; and in a series of short stories, including "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), Washington Irving takes the measure of new practical realities that cast literature and religion in the shadows as the drama of nationhood plays itself out in the broad daylight of the American experience.

Simultaneously enchanted by the vanishing past and drawn to the dynamic future, Irving explores in "Rip Van Winkle" the shift from mythical to secular time that the founding of the United States had ushered in. The story opens in a drowsy colonial village, where each day Rip and other "idle personages" gather to gossip in front of the local inn, which is graced by a portrait of King George III. Here they tell "endless sleepy stories about nothing," and if an outdated newspaper falls into their hands, they happily while away the hours discussing public events that took place months before. This is a land of myth, an era before time began.[7]

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[6] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York, 1957), 44.
[7] Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," in James W. Tuttleton, ed. *History, Tales and Sketches* (New York, 1983), 772.

When Rip slinks back into the village after his twenty-year slumber, everything has changed beyond recognition. The hotel has become a ramshackle place, and a different George Washington stares down from its sign. More important, "the very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling disputatious tone about it," and instead of reading "an ancient newspaper," the residents of the village were now listening to a "lean bilious looking fellow" who was "haranguing" them about the *news* of the day, "about rights of citizens – elections – members of Congress – liberty – Bunker's hill – heroes of seventy six – and other words which were a perfect babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle."[8]

What seemed like "babylonish jargon" to the mourners of dying traditions quickly became the vernacular of a new cadre of entrepreneurs, religious and otherwise, who were fanning out across the continent in the early 1800s. "As the Republic became democratized, it became evangelized," Gordon Wood notes, and the central challenge of the Puritan tradition – the communal transmission of covenantal faith from one generation to the next – gave way to a market-oriented approach that called for individual conversion and repentance.[9]

In the early decades of the republic, a strong strain of egalitarianism led to the abolition of many of the distinctions between the learned few and the unwashed many; and both new media (particularly newspapers) and new methods (especially camp meeting revivals) captured the hearts and souls of many across the nation. In the words of one contemporary observer, the deferential Old World religion of the Federalists stood little chance against the whirling dervish of Republican zeal. It was a matter of "flat tranquility against passion; dry leaves against the whirlwind; the weight of gunpowder against its kindled force."[10]

Even though the frontier preachers and backwoods evangelists did not have an immediate impact upon the literature of the United States, a stereotype of them was to take root in popular lore and highbrow culture alike. Just as the image of the Puritans eventually solidified as that of a group of frigid legalists, so did the democratic enthusiasts of the early nineteenth century come to be known over time as a host of the gullible many being led by a cabal of the manipulative few. Such images of the evangelistic enterprise would surface in Mark Twain's accounts of the river country in *Huckleberry Finn*, just as they were to generate Sinclair Lewis' well-known portrait of Elmer Gantry.

[8] *Ibid.*, 779.
[9] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (New York, 2009), 594.
[10] Fisher Ames, *Works of Fisher Ames* (Boston, 1854), 2: 113.

ROMANTICISM AND RESISTANCE: THE
ANTEBELLUM YEARS

Although the practices of backcountry life and the passions of evangelical religion received scant attention in antebellum American literature, a good deal of their creative zeal did work its way into that literature through other channels. For even as the Baptist and Methodist entrepreneurs were revolutionizing Protestant theology and ecclesiology on the frontiers, back in the heart of New England another group of writers was setting out to reinvigorate and transform their own dying tradition.

For Ralph Waldo Emerson and his colleagues in the emerging Transcendentalist movement, however, the goal was not merely to rethink certain doctrines or refine particular practices from their Puritan past. Instead, these New Englanders sought in the 1830s and 1840s to sever the connections, root and branch, that had long bound the literary culture of the United States to the Christian faith in general and the Calvinist heritage in particular.

In two lectures delivered a year apart at Harvard – "The American Scholar" (1837) and "The Divinity School Address" (1838) – Emerson labored to clear from the American cultural path centuries of European debris. "The American Scholar" opens with a ringing call for cultural independence, as Emerson challenges the nation's artists to live up to the culture's "city upon a hill" calling. Looking forward to the day "when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids," he declares, "our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close."[11] The argument is simple. Having enjoyed and exercised political liberties for decades, Americans now needed to secure similar freedoms for the life of the mind and spirit.

Emerson had cut his ties to the Christian church in the early 1830s when he had resigned his Boston pastorate rather than continue serving the Lord's Supper. Now, near the end of the decade, he turns his criticism of historic Christianity into a call for a post-Christian spirituality. "Historical Christianity" has fallen into a terrible error, he tells the divinity students in 1838, for it has come to dwell "with noxious exaggeration" about the "person of Jesus," and it has wedded itself to dead religious forms and dubious historical claims. As a result, the "true Christianity, – a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of man, – is lost." Emerson's solution is for Christian pastors to save the church by jettisoning the little that remained of Christian theology in the Unitarian tradition. He implores his audience to "dare

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[11] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in Joel Porte ed., *Essays and Lectures,* (New York, 1983), 53.

to love God without mediator or veil," and if they do, he promises, they will discover "that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."[12]

There is ample irony, of course, in the fact that Emerson sought to replenish the Puritan vision of American exceptionalism by severing its connections to the very faith that had first fed and nurtured it. In the words of one observer, his "calm insistence upon the primacy of individual judgment is the end point of Protestant Christianity, the point at which even the historical Jesus can be discarded as an impediment to the spirit of the religion he founded."[13] Emerson's vision of a post-Christian Protestantism quickly established in American literature a practice of distilling out of the Christian tradition the brackish elements of its theological claims until nothing but a pure poetic essence remained. In Emerson's lifetime, such exceptional writers as Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman followed his lead, making use of the Christian tradition's resources and banking on its cultural authority even as they disregarded its theological assertions.

For Thoreau in *Walden* (1854), this approach involved making frequent ironic use of scriptural images and confessional phrases. The goal was to trade upon the authority of the Bible while resisting and subverting its overt claims. In Whitman's poetry, the use of the scriptural materials tended more to the grand and oracular than the ironic, but like Emerson he too refused to grant authority to anything beyond the evocative power of biblical language. He drew freely upon the Old Testament prophetic tradition and wisdom literature, and although he never seemed to blush when cloaking himself in the mantle of the crucified and risen Christ, he had no interest in Christian theology or in the life of the Christian church.

In the period between Emerson's *Nature* (1836) and the outbreak of the Civil War (1861), scriptural borrowing in the Emersonian line was frequently earnest and uninflected by the allusive irony that would mark later usage. In particular, this earnestness came to the fore in the struggle against slavery that brought together evangelicals and radical Protestants alike, as they deployed the resources of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the book of Revelation in a crusade against an evil institution.

Liberal and radical Protestants proved to be the primary leaders among white abolitionists, but within the African American community itself a broadly evangelical Christianity held sway. In the eighteenth century, African Americans, slave and free alike, had been largely resistant to the evangelistic efforts of the more formal Anglicans and Presbyterians. They proved to be decidedly more amenable, however, to the antiformalist

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[12] Emerson, "Divinity School," in *Essays and Lectures,* 81, 88, 89, 92.
[13] Barbara L. Packer, *The Transcendentalists* (Athens, GA, 2007), 39.

approaches of the Baptists and Methodists in the nineteenth century. To be certain, for slaves conversion was intertwined with the struggle for emotional and spiritual survival. In the century leading up to emancipation, Donald Mathews observes, African Americans "found in Christian commitment and communal identity shelter from the slave system, an institutional framework to confound the logic of their social condition, an ideology of self-esteem and an earnest of deliverance and ultimate victory."[14]

The central genre of nineteenth-century African American literature was the slave narrative, and its most acclaimed practitioner was Frederick Douglass. To him religion provided a decidedly mixed blessing for slaves. As a young man, he converted to Christianity and at least for a time found solace and grounds for hope in its promises. In *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), one of his multiple accounts of life under slavery, Douglass tells of a Methodist camp meeting he attended at the age of fifteen. As a relatively new convert himself, Frederick longed to have his master, Thomas Auld, come to faith as well. Outside the tents, "huge fires were burning, in all directions, where roasting, and boiling, and frying, were going on," while under them ministers were pleading with sinners "to come into the pen" and claim Jesus as their own. When Auld came forward, Frederick was overjoyed. "If he has got religion," he thought, "he will emancipate his slaves; and if he should not do so much as this, he will, at any rate, behave toward us more kindly, and feed us more generously than he has heretofore done."[15]

But Thomas Auld did not change, and Douglass' suspicions about religion grew only stronger over the years. By the time he came to write his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), he had come to believe "most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes." It was used to justify barbarity, to sanctify hate and fraud, and to provide a shelter for the foul and shameful deeds of slaveholders. And if he were ever to be thrown back into the "chains of slavery," Douglass concluded, he would consider having a religious master to be "the greatest calamity that could befall me."[16]

To Frederick Douglass, the existence of slavery made a mockery of America's claim to be a "city upon a hill." In "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?," an oration delivered in Rochester, New York, on 5 July 1852, he excoriated the nation for having fallen so far short of its vaunted ideals. "You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad," and

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[14] Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago, 1979), 208.
[15] Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ed., *Autobiographies,* (New York, 1994), 250.
[16] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, in *Autobiographies*, 68.

you cheer, honor, and protect them; but under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, "the fugitives from your own land, you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill." There is a startling audacity to your national pride and confidence, Douglass tells his listeners, for even though "you declare, before the world . . . that you *'hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal,'*" you nevertheless hold in bondage "*a seventh part* of the inhabitants of your country." He issues a warning intended to call the nation back to its exceptional ideals: "Oh! be warned! be warned! a horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; *for the love of God, tear away*, and fling from you the hideous monster, and *let the weight of twenty millions, crush and destroy it forever!*"[17]

As the tragic drama of slavery, abolition, and Christianity unfolded on the center stage of American life, new religious traditions began to practice their parts and play their roles in the cultural wings. A number of these developments involved the initial entry of the religions of Asia into the life of America. Here again, the New England Transcendentalists led the way. In the decades before the Civil War, Emerson was the American "who most fully realized the philosophical significance of Asian thought," and both he and Thoreau mined the Hindu scriptures and scoured Buddhist sources in search of answers to religious dilemmas their Protestant heritage no longer seemed capable of resolving.[18] Not until the twentieth century would the religions of Asia exercise a considerable shaping influence in American literature, but Emerson, Thoreau, and a handful of others had already begun to tap their potential a century earlier.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Protestant cultural tradition in America proved capable of absorbing post-Christian spirituality, of engaging vigorously in the battle against slavery, and of assimilating key strands of Eastern religious thought and practice. Yet there remained one reality that Protestantism could not accept, and that was the burgeoning presence of Roman Catholicism in the culture of the United States. From the earliest colonial beginnings, in the American context genuine religion had meant the Protestant faith. Roman Catholicism might be tolerated on the periphery, but few considered it a dynamic system of belief destined to play a central role in American life.

Although in 1790 there had been few Catholic churches in the United States, on the eve of the Civil War those churches numbered in the

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[17] Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" in William L. Andrews ed., *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader* (New York, 1996), 126–7.

[18] Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth-Century Explorations* (Westport, CT, 1981), 57.

thousands; and as the social influence of Catholicism grew, so did the Protestant animus against it. Prejudice could be found at every level of the culture, as evidenced by an exchange of letters between Emerson, the American man of letters Charles Eliot Norton, and the English poet Arthur Hugh Clough. They wrote to one another about the conversion to Catholicism in 1858 of Anna Barker Ward, the wife of one of Emerson's literary associates. In their letters, they fretted over her "Babylonish Captivity" and "grieved" that she had allied herself with a faith that "makes such carnage of social relations." For the disease of this dogmatic faith, Emerson prescribed the "electuary" – the sweet, healing paste – of "house, children, & husband." He assured Anna's husband that she would eventually be cured of her spiritual disease, construing her conversion and the Catholic faith itself as a form of sickness from which one could only hope to recover.[19]

The illness metaphor Emerson used was in keeping with many antebellum Romantic characterizations of Catholicism. To these cultural Protestants, in particular, Catholicism was a remnant of the precritical history of humanity. Like an embarrassing adolescence, it was something to be blushed at and outgrown. This, for example, was how Thoreau saw the character of Alek Therien, a French Canadian neighbor at Walden Pond. Therien's critical faculties "were slumbering as in an infant," Thoreau claimed, for he had been taught in that "innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines." When those priests train a student, "the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child."[20]

The literary historian Jenny Franchot has argued that nineteenth-century anti-Catholicism can be traced to the Puritan narrative of providential history, in which two monumental events, the Reformation and the settling of America, stood out. According to Franchot, for the antebellum Protestant writers, that America was an agent of divine purpose and moral reform along Protestant lines was taken to be a given of human destiny. In such a context, a Catholic resurgence could only represent a reversal of history, a return to bondage, and a loss of the freedom of Protestant individualism.[21]

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[19] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph Rusk (New York, 1939), 5: 169.

[20] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden,* in Robert F. Sayre, ed., *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers; Walden; or, Life in the Woods; The Maine Woods; Cape Cod* (New York, 1985), 439.

[21] Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley, 1994).

The growth of Catholicism troubled the culture's elites and also gener-
ated a backlash in popular culture. From 1830 to 1860, what had been a
trickle of anti-Catholic literature swelled into a torrent, as diatribes cas-
caded from Protestant pulpits and flowed from popular tracts and novels.
Especially popular were fictional "memoirs" of people who claimed to have
escaped from Catholicism. The most famous of these narratives was Maria
Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836). This fiction
parading as fact told of a prostitute who sought sanctuary in a convent,
only to discover within its walls terror and sadism worse than anything
she had known on the streets. Monk's narrative was filled with stories of
brutal nuns and rapacious priests in the convent-turned-brothel, where
supposedly celibate men of God had their way with defenseless nuns and
murdered the children born of the rapacious unions.

FROM PROVIDENCE TO LUCK: THE CIVIL WAR AND BEYOND

In literature as in all other facets of American life, the Civil War serves as
a dividing line. In less than a decade, the romantic optimism, apocalyptic
anxiety, and political uncertainty of antebellum culture seemed to dissi-
pate. From 1865 on, the United States proved to be a nation dramatically
different from that union of states that had gone to war in 1861. In the
first half of the nineteenth century, America had been an agrarian society
in which evangelical Protestantism played a dominant role; after the war it
rapidly became an urban, industrial society in which diverse ethnic groups
and religious systems vied for space and clamored to be heard.

Powerful intellectual changes were underway as well. Charles Darwin
had published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, and its image of life as
a prolific, violent struggle for survival dovetailed eerily with the brutal
realities of the Civil War and the harsh conditions of the new industrial
economy. In many different spheres and on many varied fronts, a culture
of paternalistic benevolence appeared to be giving way to one of systemic
indifference. So it was, in the words of literary historian Andrew Delbanco,
that "before the war, Americans spoke of providence. After it, they spoke
of luck."[22]

These vast changes in America's spiritual landscape quickly registered
themselves in the work of the nation's fiction writers and poets. Two major
writers whose careers began before the Civil War – Herman Melville and

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[22] Andrew Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York, 1995), 138.

Emily Dickinson – continued writing well into the 1880s, and their work testifies to the dynamic transformation of religion in the literature of that day. These two drew from many of the same cultural and religious sources that had fed the likes of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, but they drew markedly different lessons from the experience. Whereas the Romantic writers were willing to jettison the creedal history of the church, Melville, Dickinson, and others persisted in restless quests to find beliefs they might cling to.

Nathaniel Hawthorne captured the volatility of this situation in a perceptive description of his friend Melville. When they met for the final time in 1856, the two talked of "Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken," Hawthorne reported, and "I think [Melville] will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. . . . He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other."[23] The search for a definite belief appeared to prompt many of Melville's fictional experiments, as he struggled to develop new forms to embody the daunting religious uncertainties of his life and his age.

Melville's Captain Ahab lets us hear of those uncertainties in a soliloquy from *Moby Dick* (1851). The anguished captain speaks longingly of those "grassy glades" and "ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul" in which "men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover; and for some fleeting moments, feel the cool dew of the life immortal on them." Yet these brief moments flee, and "we do not advance through fixed gradations" to reach a final destination in life's quest. Instead, we move through "infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence's doubt (the common doom)" into skepticism and unbelief, "resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally." The wearisome pointlessness of the quest raises anxious questions about an absent God: "Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it."[24]

Like Melville, Emily Dickinson for decades explored the contrast between the perennial human desire to believe and the faltering modern capacity to do so. In a poem written late in her life, she depicted the loss of

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[23] Nathaniel Hawthorne, quoted in Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, vol. 2, *1851–1891* (Baltimore, 2002), 300.

[24] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 2nd ed., ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (New York, 2002), 373.

belief as a gruesome maiming that disenchants the world. "Those – dying then, / Knew where they went –" begins the poem:

> They went to God's Right Hand –
> That Hand is amputated now
> And God cannot be found –
>
> The abdication of Belief
> Makes the Behavior small –
> Better an ignis fatuus
> Than no illume at all –[25]

In rendering this amputation in the passive voice and in speaking of an "abdication of belief," Dickinson leaves it unclear whether God has vanished of his own accord or, Nietzsche-like, fallen prey to human hands. On this kind of religious matter, the poet simply could not reach a final decision. In a letter written in the same year as this poem (1882), she spoke of her invigorating struggles on this front. "On subjects of which we know nothing, or should I say Beings – . . . we both believe, and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps Believing nimble."[26]

Emily Dickinson died in 1886, Herman Melville in 1891, and their deaths came during the very period when philosophical naturalism was securing its hold on the American literary imagination. This mixture of Darwinian science and deterministic theory met the interpretive needs of an emerging subculture of unbelief, and its narrative of material explanation presented a clear, comprehensive alternative to theistic accounts of the arc of human life.

For many writers at the century's end, the narrative represented an unavoidable religious dead end. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), for example, a physician tries to comfort a disconsolate woman, Edna Pontellier. Having just witnessed a friend give birth, Edna is filled with "a vague dread" by the thought of "the great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go." When she confides in Dr. Mandelet about her fears, he tells her, "[Y]outh is given up to illusions," which are nature's "decoy to secure mothers for the race." The poignant truth is that "[n]ature takes no account of moral consequences" or of any of the ethical or spiritual ends we humans fabricate to comfort ourselves.[27]

If Emerson and his generation represented a definitive break between the literary culture of the United States and its explicitly Christian

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[25] Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, reading ed., ed. R. W. Franklin (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 582.

[26] Emily Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 3: 728.

[27] Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, in Sandra M. Gilbert, ed., *Complete Novels and Stories,* (New York, 2002), 648, 650.

commitments, then naturalism served to cut the ties between the nation's literature and the romanticized spiritual quest that had driven Emerson and his associates. With naturalism in the ascendancy, writers no longer felt pressure to reconcile new insights with established beliefs, nor did they feel compelled to sustain the spirit of the Christian tradition in the absence of its substance. Instead, they considered themselves free to move ahead boldly without concern for orthodox creeds or Romantic assurances. In a study of the American reception of Darwin, historian Jon Roberts locates "a host of factors in the cultural milieu of the United States" that led in the late nineteenth century to a "growing tendency among literate Americans to ignore the categories of Christian theology in interpreting their experience." Having conceded so much ground to scientific determinism, Protestants "found themselves defending a very attenuated view of God's role in the universe," and the wan God of liberalism was unable to mount anything more than a weak defense against the broad assault of naturalism.[28]

In this intellectual climate, on matters of religious belief, literature often seemed to assume a valedictory air, as poets, novelists, and essayists found themselves bidding adieu to a no-longer-forbidding deity. Some American writers of this period, such as Edith Wharton and Stephen Crane, took the loss in stride; throughout most of her adulthood, Wharton took "late nineteenth-century scientific rationalism" to be her guide, while Crane found what shelter he could under the cover of cosmic irony.[29] At the same time, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, and other full-fledged naturalists embraced the liberating power of materialism; in a deterministic world, sin became a vacuous concept and guilt a largely useless cipher.

There were some, however, at the end of the nineteenth century, Henry Adams and Mark Twain among them, who remained torn between their disdain for traditional Christianity and their dismay over the heartlessness of a Godless world. While Adams wrote in sorrow, Twain masked his pain with sarcasm; and to both of them the loss of God seemed tied to the failure of the American experiment. "*Nothing* exists; all is a dream. God – man – the world – the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars: a dream, all a dream – they have no existence," Twain wrote in *The Mysterious Stranger*. "*Nothing exists save empty space and you!*"[30] Consciousness and the empty void made for a lonely, mismatched pair, and Twain came to believe that death alone made life bearable. "Whoever has lived long enough to find out what

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[28] Jon H. Roberts, *Darwinism and the Divine in America: Protestant Intellectuals and Organic Evolution, 1859–1900* (Notre Dame, 2001), 238.

[29] R. W. B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York, 1975), 510.

[30] Mark Twain, quoted in Alfred Kazin, *God and the American Writer* (New York, 1997), 192.

life is, knows how deep a debt of gratitude we owe to Adam, the first great benefactor of our race. He brought death into the world."[31]

RENUNCIATION AND RENEWAL: RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN THE MODERNIST ERA

Twain's plaintive desperation proved to be the exception rather than the rule for a number of authors in the early twentieth century. Following the lead of Gustave Flaubert and Charles Baudelaire, a small but significant band of early-twentieth-century American writers turned away from a forbidding naturalism and toward a sheltering aestheticism. In some cases the embrace of modernist aesthetics went hand-in-hand with a rejection of U.S. culture, as American writers moved temporarily or permanently to England or the Continent. Writers as varied as Edith Wharton, Ezra Pound, Henry James, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway decamped to the Old World and left behind in the new one any Christian interests they might have had. The legacy of belief was to them little more than a residue on the ruins of a spent tradition. The events and symbols of that tradition were just fragments that the speaker in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) says he has "shored against my ruins." Bucking the trend among his expatriate peers, Eliot would eventually make a public return to the Christian faith; yet he was to do so not in his native America, but on English soil and on Anglican terms.

Across the Atlantic in the 1920s, American culture appeared too preoccupied with the acquisition of wealth and the pursuit of pleasure to be concerned about rummaging in the Christian past. In the words of Fitzgerald, "America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it."[32] Malcolm Cowley, who was both a keen participant in that gaudy spree and a noted chronicler of it, described the turmoil of the post–World War I generation as "a moral revolt," and he was convinced that "beneath the revolt were social transformations." The "young men and women" of that era "had a sense of reckless confidence not only about money but about life in general." They were determined to break with the beliefs and values of their parents' generation, and in this time of rapid change, "puritanism was under attack, with the Protestant churches losing their dominant position" in the culture at large.[33]

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[31] Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, in Guy Cardwell, ed., *Mississippi Writings*, (New York, 1982), 929.

[32] F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Malcolm Cowley, *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation* (New York, 1980), 25.

[33] Cowley, *Second Flowering*, 25–6.

In the literature and life of early-twentieth-century America, other forms of religious expression gradually came to fill the void created by the Protestant decline, as numerous versions of eclectic spirituality worked their way into the nation's poetry and prose. A strong foretaste of things to come had been offered at the March 1892 funeral of Walt Whitman in Camden, New Jersey. This event was attended by thousands and was marked by "the atmosphere of an old-time tent meeting," but the speakers under this "tent" were hardly Protestant evangelists. Instead, advocates of every brand of spirituality imaginable came forward to speak. The famed agnostic Robert Ingersoll gave a main address, and there were readings from Confucius and Buddha, Plato and the Koran, the New Testament and *Leaves of Grass* itself. Walt Whitman's "views of religion have been misunderstood," a friend complained, as he addressed the serious mourners and curious onlookers packed on the cemetery hillside. Whitman "recognized the good in all religious systems. His philosophy was without the limitation of creed, and included the best thought of every age and clime."[34] This ersatz spirituality became a staple of American culture in the twentieth century, although its literary influence would not be felt fully until after the Second World War.

Another strong voice entered into the literary and religious mainstream in the early twentieth century, and it was powered by the emigration of several million Eastern European Jews to the United States between 1880 and 1920. Like many other first-generation immigrants, Jewish writers tended to speak and write in their native tongue – in this case Yiddish – and they also established a thriving network of journals and theatrical productions that eventually turned into serious literary endeavors. In the decades between the two world wars, writers who shifted from Yiddish to English – including Gertrude Stein, Henry Roth, Charles Reznikoff, Clifford Odets, and Delmore Schwartz – began to make their distinctive marks as fiction writers, poets, and playwrights. In literary and cultural criticism, such Jewish critics as Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Lionel Trilling began to move into the center of New York's intellectual life. Given the diversity among Jewish-American writers, it is not surprising that the treatment of religion varied dramatically in the literature they produced. It ranged from the theologically complex and intense investigations of Sholem Asch to the Marxist critiques of Philip Rahv and the Deweyan pragmatism of Sidney Hook.

In the black community, the defining event for twentieth-century literature was the Great Migration that brought two million African Americans

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[34] *At the Graveside of Walt Whitman: Harleigh, Camden, New Jersey, March 30th* (Philadelphia, 1892), 10.

from the farms of the South to the industrial cities of the North between 1910 and 1930. This transformation shifted the focus of black literature from the specific realities of slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction to larger questions of race, economics, and the American future. African American churches in the North grew dramatically; and in major cities, particularly on Chicago's South Side and in Manhattan's Harlem, that growth brought wealth and considerable cultural influence.

The relationship between black churches and black writers was a tenuous and complex one in the first half of the twentieth century. Some, like poet Countee Cullen, retained their commitment to Christian belief even when that faith stood in tension with their literary instincts and interests. Others who had been raised in the church either rejected Christian belief outright or held it at arm's length throughout their lives. Richard Wright, the author of *Native Son*, told an interviewer in 1946 that although millions of black men and women were "Baptists and Methodists," their churches were "social organizations rather than bands of faithful believers. The Negro ... is by nature not a Christian." The motivation for the African American believer, Wright claimed, came "not from religious faith, but from the shared feeling of victimization," and the "altruism and benevolence ... he may exhibit are the results of need, a part of the imposed technique of survival."[35] In like manner, fiction writer Zora Neale Hurston concluded, "A careful study of Negro churches, as conducted by Negroes, will show, I think that the Negro is not a Christian, but a pagan still.... The formalized prayers, sermons, show ... his concept of God as pre-Christian."[36]

The critical ambivalence of Wright and Hurston is of a piece with the critique of Christianity to be found across the modernist movement that flourished between the wars. Before he returned to the church, Eliot, the preeminent poet among those modernists, at first found little to comfort or guide him in traditional religion. In a prominent 1923 review of *Ulysses*, he praised James Joyce for his use of classical myth. Of Joyce's method of "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity," Eliot wrote, "it is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."[37] Eliot's modernist assumption is that the order or art cannot be considered to imitate an order in nature or history, for none is to be found there. All literature can hope to do is

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[35] Richard Wright, *Conversations with Richard Wright*, ed. Keneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre (Jackson, 1993), 108.

[36] Zora Neale Hurston, quoted in Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana, 1977), 92–3.

[37] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London, 1975), 177.

to impart to our experience a form and a meaning that can no longer be secured by a departing God.

William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) captures perfectly the ambivalence marking the early-twentieth-century relationship between religion and literature. In this novel, which borrows its title from a speech in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, each of the first three sections is narrated by one of the brothers in the once-distinguished Compson family. In tortuous internal monologues, each brother unblinkingly puts the disintegrating spiritual power of modernity on display.

Only in the fourth and final section of the novel do we come upon clarity, order, and a glimmer of hope. This section is told by a third-person narrator, and its main character is Dilsey, the African American woman who has served the Compson family for decades. Dilsey's section unfolds on Easter Sunday, 1928, and at its heart is a black church service at which the famed Reverend Shegog preaches about the "blastin, blindin sight" of Calvary, the "widowed God," the "whelmin flood," and the "darkness en de death everlastin." But Shegog also glimpses "de doom crack en de golden horns shoutin down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb!"[38]

To Dilsey, who is saddled with the care of the decaying Compson clan, this Easter sermon provides the vision of hope that she needs to endure and eventually triumph over her circumstances. On her way home from church, Dilsey begins to cry. When her daughter tells her to stop, because "we be passin white folks soon," the mother replies, "I've seed de first en de last. Never you mind me.... I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin."[39]

On matters religious, the literature of the United States began as a work of testimony, but by the twentieth century it had become a labor of observation. What Faulkner can attest to with certainty is the intensity of human need and the desperation of modern experience as the Compsons embody and render it. The hope proclaimed by Reverend Shegog and professed by Dilsey is something he can imagine, even admire, but only from a critical distance.

One could argue plausibly that no American writer has ever produced a greater number of classic, enduring works than Faulkner did in the period that stretched from *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929 to the publication of *Go Down, Moses* in 1942. In that latter year, one of the darkest in modern history, appeared *On Native Grounds*, the bold and brash first book by twenty-seven-year-old Alfred Kazin. This sweeping study charted the development

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[38] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York, 1990), 296–7.
[39] *Ibid.*, 297.

of American prose from 1890 to 1940, but at its deepest level it was a cry of the heart for cultural renewal in the "city upon a hill."

At the close of the book's final chapter, titled "America! America!" Kazin promises that "literature will live fully again," but only "when the world is able to live fully again." After decades of decadence and destitution, from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression, the neglected "primary virtues" of literature will "come back," but "only when men are bound up again in the invisible moral life of humanity." If those virtues return to American lives and American culture, he explains, it will be because "men have kept their responsibility to literature and to themselves. Literature lives by faith and *works*."[40]

Yet that literature lives and struggles to survive, Kazin writes in the summer of 1942, "[o]n the narrow margin of security that the democratic West, fighting for its life, can afford." To this agnostic son of immigrant Jews, for those who live on that narrow margin, the most secure source of hope is the vision their distant Puritan ancestors had bequeathed to them. Like a seventeenth-century Boston preacher bewailing the decline of the millennial mission, Kazin charts the cost of American waywardness in a war-torn world. But at the same time, just as that Puritan pastor had held out the shimmering hope of a faithful God renewing his covenantal promises, so too does the New York critic spy the prospects of a world-transforming cultural renewal. Speaking directly to his fellow Americans and particularly to the nation's writers, Kazin says, "[N]ever was it so imperative as it is now not to sacrifice any of the values that give our life meaning," and never had it been so imperative for American men and women to prove "to be equal to the evil that faces them and not submissive to its terror." The reason we need American faithfulness is clear: "The world seems to be waiting for its new order; everything we do, everything we believe in this moment, can help to shape the future toward which men are moving in such agony today."[41]

John Winthrop could not have said it better. And with the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner, and Alfred Kazin continuing to follow his lead hundreds of years later, why would he have needed to try?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Buell, Lawrence. *New England Literary Culture from Revolution through Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA, 1986.

Delbanco, Andrew. *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil*. New York, 1995.

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[40] Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (Garden City, NY, 1956), 405.
[41] *Ibid.*

Franchot, Jenny. *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism.* Berkeley, 1994.

Kenner, Hugh. *A Homemade World: The American Modernist Writers.* New York, 1974.

Lundin, Roger, ed. *Invisible Conversations: Religion in the Literature of America.* Waco, TX, 2009.

Miller, Perry. *Nature's Nation.* Cambridge, MA, 1967.

Packer, Barbara L. *The Transcendentalists.* Athens, GA, 2007.

Sundquist, Eric. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature.* Cambridge, MA, 1993.

Section VI

RELIGION AND DIVERSE AREAS

RELIGION AND LITERATURE, 1790–1945

ROGER LUNDIN

In the early 1960s a young man from a self-described "Yiddishist-left-wing" Canadian family arrived in the United States to begin doctoral studies in literature at the Claremont Graduate School. Named in honor of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Massachusetts anarchists whose execution had caused an international uproar in 1927, that student, Sacvan Bercovitch, would go on to become a distinguished scholar of American literature and religion.

What astonished this young Canadian when he landed in the United States was the degree to which late-twentieth-century American culture kept casting its experience in a seventeenth-century framework. A debate "full of rage and faith" was going on about the nation's destiny, Bercovitch recalls, with conservatives busy ferreting out un-American attitudes and radicals righteously recalling a wayward nation "to its sacred mission." In that era of the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement, the plea of the ancient Psalmist met the promise of the New World: "When is our errand to be fulfilled? How long, O Lord, how long?" The Christian cries coming from all sides of the political debate made Bercovitch feel like he was "Sancho Panza in a land of Don Quixotes." The American dream was a "patent fiction," but nevertheless it involved "an entire hermeneutic system." Unlike any other modern nation, "America was a venture in exegesis. You were supposed to discover it as a believer unveils scripture."[1]

LITERATURE AND RELIGION IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

This American "venture in exegesis" had its beginnings almost two centuries before George Washington became the nation's first president in 1789; and as Bercovitch discovered, it was still a thriving enterprise long

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[1] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, 1993), 29.

after the end of the Second World War. How was it that a particular brand of Calvinist orthodoxy could give birth to a cultural practice that would continue to exert a clear and distinct influence on American culture long after its generative theology had lost its hold upon that same culture?

An analogy offered by literary theorist Kenneth Burke provides a helpful way of answering that question. Burke defines history as "a 'dramatic' process, involving dialectical oppositions," and in this process "every document bequeathed us by history must be treated as a strategy for encompassing a situation." In turn, the drama acquires its materials "from the 'unending conversation' that is going on at the point in history when we are born." Burke asks his reader to imagine he or she has entered a room where "a heated discussion" is under way. Everyone is too busy to explain to the newcomer what the conversation is about, and not one of them had been there when it started. Nevertheless, "you listen for a while," catch the tenor of the argument, and then "put in your oar." Someone challenges what you say, you respond, and others pick up your comments and run with them in new conversational directions. The discussion never ends, and as "the hour grows late, you must depart," with the conversation "still vigorously in progress."[2]

In the American context, one could argue that the conversation began with a sermon John Winthrop preached to the English Puritans setting out with him from England in 1629. "Enshrined as a kind of Ur-text of American literature," this discourse on "Christian charity" has been the subject of voluminous commentary, and its images still echo throughout the conversations of American public life.[3] With its vision of a glorious future secured by a covenantal God, Winthrop's address foresees the New England colony as "a City upon a Hill, with the eyes of all people upon" it. With "the God of Israel" among them, he assured his fellow settlers, no evil could overcome them, no power of darkness prevail against them, as long as they remained faithful to the covenant God had drawn up with them.[4] In the words of Robert Bellah and his coauthors, Winthrop and his cohort bequeathed to the culture of the United States a dynamic vision of transformation and "gave the American experiment as a whole a utopian touch that it has never lost, in spite of all our failings."[5]

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[2] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form,* 3rd ed. (Berkeley, 1973), 109–11.

[3] Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), 72.

[4] John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649,* abr. ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 10.

[5] Robert N. Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York, 1985), 29.

Even by 1790, that utopian cast had begun to acquire distinctly secular and nationalistic shadings, as Calvin's steely God yielded to the nurturing "Great Alma Mater" of the land itself. St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) offers a window into that transformation in the late colonial period. In the most famous of those letters, "What is an American?," Crèvecoeur envisions a culture in which religion becomes almost exclusively an individual affair. Religion may be driven by zeal, he argues, but that presents no problem in America, because here zealots are free to worship in private "the Divinity agreeably to their own peculiar ideas." No one disturbs them, for if they contribute peacefully and industriously to the common good, it matters not how strange their private ideas may be. To Crèvecoeur, the real God is "our great parent," America itself, and she promises ease and independence to each earnest individual who lands on her shores.[6]

When Crèvecoeur's letters appeared, the American colonies stood on the brink of nationhood, and a period of revolutionary cultural change was about to begin. From 1790 to 1830, the literature of the United States registered both the productive power and the disruptive force of those changes, but it rarely delved deeply into the religious dynamics at play within the culture. Joel Barlow's epic poem, "The Columbiad" (1807), pays homage to a distant, deistic God while singing the praises of Thomas Jefferson's Republican ideals; Charles Brockden Brown's novel, *Arthur Mervyn* (1799), explores the tensions created by the clash between weakening social institutions and an emerging ideal of restless self-formation and acquisition; and in a series of short stories, including "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), Washington Irving takes the measure of new practical realities that cast literature and religion in the shadows as the drama of nationhood plays itself out in the broad daylight of the American experience.

Simultaneously enchanted by the vanishing past and drawn to the dynamic future, Irving explores in "Rip Van Winkle" the shift from mythical to secular time that the founding of the United States had ushered in. The story opens in a drowsy colonial village, where each day Rip and other "idle personages" gather to gossip in front of the local inn, which is graced by a portrait of King George III. Here they tell "endless sleepy stories about nothing," and if an outdated newspaper falls into their hands, they happily while away the hours discussing public events that took place months before. This is a land of myth, an era before time began.[7]

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[6] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York, 1957), 44.
[7] Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," in James W. Tuttleton, ed. *History, Tales and Sketches* (New York, 1983), 772.

When Rip slinks back into the village after his twenty-year slumber, everything has changed beyond recognition. The hotel has become a ramshackle place, and a different George Washington stares down from its sign. More important, "the very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling disputatious tone about it," and instead of reading "an ancient newspaper," the residents of the village were now listening to a "lean bilious looking fellow" who was "haranguing" them about the *news* of the day, "about rights of citizens – elections – members of Congress – liberty – Bunker's hill – heroes of seventy six – and other words which were a perfect babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle."[8]

What seemed like "babylonish jargon" to the mourners of dying traditions quickly became the vernacular of a new cadre of entrepreneurs, religious and otherwise, who were fanning out across the continent in the early 1800s. "As the Republic became democratized, it became evangelized," Gordon Wood notes, and the central challenge of the Puritan tradition – the communal transmission of covenantal faith from one generation to the next – gave way to a market-oriented approach that called for individual conversion and repentance.[9]

In the early decades of the republic, a strong strain of egalitarianism led to the abolition of many of the distinctions between the learned few and the unwashed many; and both new media (particularly newspapers) and new methods (especially camp meeting revivals) captured the hearts and souls of many across the nation. In the words of one contemporary observer, the deferential Old World religion of the Federalists stood little chance against the whirling dervish of Republican zeal. It was a matter of "flat tranquility against passion; dry leaves against the whirlwind; the weight of gunpowder against its kindled force."[10]

Even though the frontier preachers and backwoods evangelists did not have an immediate impact upon the literature of the United States, a stereotype of them was to take root in popular lore and highbrow culture alike. Just as the image of the Puritans eventually solidified as that of a group of frigid legalists, so did the democratic enthusiasts of the early nineteenth century come to be known over time as a host of the gullible many being led by a cabal of the manipulative few. Such images of the evangelistic enterprise would surface in Mark Twain's accounts of the river country in *Huckleberry Finn*, just as they were to generate Sinclair Lewis' well-known portrait of Elmer Gantry.

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[8] *Ibid.*, 779.
[9] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (New York, 2009), 594.
[10] Fisher Ames, *Works of Fisher Ames* (Boston, 1854), 2: 113.

ROMANTICISM AND RESISTANCE: THE
ANTEBELLUM YEARS

Although the practices of backcountry life and the passions of evangelical religion received scant attention in antebellum American literature, a good deal of their creative zeal did work its way into that literature through other channels. For even as the Baptist and Methodist entrepreneurs were revolutionizing Protestant theology and ecclesiology on the frontiers, back in the heart of New England another group of writers was setting out to reinvigorate and transform their own dying tradition.

For Ralph Waldo Emerson and his colleagues in the emerging Transcendentalist movement, however, the goal was not merely to rethink certain doctrines or refine particular practices from their Puritan past. Instead, these New Englanders sought in the 1830s and 1840s to sever the connections, root and branch, that had long bound the literary culture of the United States to the Christian faith in general and the Calvinist heritage in particular.

In two lectures delivered a year apart at Harvard – "The American Scholar" (1837) and "The Divinity School Address" (1838) – Emerson labored to clear from the American cultural path centuries of European debris. "The American Scholar" opens with a ringing call for cultural independence, as Emerson challenges the nation's artists to live up to the culture's "city upon a hill" calling. Looking forward to the day "when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids," he declares, "our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close."[11] The argument is simple. Having enjoyed and exercised political liberties for decades, Americans now needed to secure similar freedoms for the life of the mind and spirit.

Emerson had cut his ties to the Christian church in the early 1830s when he had resigned his Boston pastorate rather than continue serving the Lord's Supper. Now, near the end of the decade, he turns his criticism of historic Christianity into a call for a post-Christian spirituality. "Historical Christianity" has fallen into a terrible error, he tells the divinity students in 1838, for it has come to dwell "with noxious exaggeration" about the "person of Jesus," and it has wedded itself to dead religious forms and dubious historical claims. As a result, the "true Christianity, – a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of man, – is lost." Emerson's solution is for Christian pastors to save the church by jettisoning the little that remained of Christian theology in the Unitarian tradition. He implores his audience to "dare

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[11] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in Joel Porte ed., *Essays and Lectures,* (New York, 1983), 53.

to love God without mediator or veil," and if they do, he promises, they will discover "that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy."[12]

There is ample irony, of course, in the fact that Emerson sought to replenish the Puritan vision of American exceptionalism by severing its connections to the very faith that had first fed and nurtured it. In the words of one observer, his "calm insistence upon the primacy of individual judgment is the end point of Protestant Christianity, the point at which even the historical Jesus can be discarded as an impediment to the spirit of the religion he founded."[13] Emerson's vision of a post-Christian Protestantism quickly established in American literature a practice of distilling out of the Christian tradition the brackish elements of its theological claims until nothing but a pure poetic essence remained. In Emerson's lifetime, such exceptional writers as Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman followed his lead, making use of the Christian tradition's resources and banking on its cultural authority even as they disregarded its theological assertions.

For Thoreau in *Walden* (1854), this approach involved making frequent ironic use of scriptural images and confessional phrases. The goal was to trade upon the authority of the Bible while resisting and subverting its overt claims. In Whitman's poetry, the use of the scriptural materials tended more to the grand and oracular than the ironic, but like Emerson he too refused to grant authority to anything beyond the evocative power of biblical language. He drew freely upon the Old Testament prophetic tradition and wisdom literature, and although he never seemed to blush when cloaking himself in the mantle of the crucified and risen Christ, he had no interest in Christian theology or in the life of the Christian church.

In the period between Emerson's *Nature* (1836) and the outbreak of the Civil War (1861), scriptural borrowing in the Emersonian line was frequently earnest and uninflected by the allusive irony that would mark later usage. In particular, this earnestness came to the fore in the struggle against slavery that brought together evangelicals and radical Protestants alike, as they deployed the resources of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the book of Revelation in a crusade against an evil institution.

Liberal and radical Protestants proved to be the primary leaders among white abolitionists, but within the African American community itself a broadly evangelical Christianity held sway. In the eighteenth century, African Americans, slave and free alike, had been largely resistant to the evangelistic efforts of the more formal Anglicans and Presbyterians. They proved to be decidedly more amenable, however, to the antiformalist

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[12] Emerson, "Divinity School," in *Essays and Lectures,* 81, 88, 89, 92.
[13] Barbara L. Packer, *The Transcendentalists* (Athens, GA, 2007), 39.

approaches of the Baptists and Methodists in the nineteenth century. To be certain, for slaves conversion was intertwined with the struggle for emotional and spiritual survival. In the century leading up to emancipation, Donald Mathews observes, African Americans "found in Christian commitment and communal identity shelter from the slave system, an institutional framework to confound the logic of their social condition, an ideology of self-esteem and an earnest of deliverance and ultimate victory."[14]

The central genre of nineteenth-century African American literature was the slave narrative, and its most acclaimed practitioner was Frederick Douglass. To him religion provided a decidedly mixed blessing for slaves. As a young man, he converted to Christianity and at least for a time found solace and grounds for hope in its promises. In *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), one of his multiple accounts of life under slavery, Douglass tells of a Methodist camp meeting he attended at the age of fifteen. As a relatively new convert himself, Frederick longed to have his master, Thomas Auld, come to faith as well. Outside the tents, "huge fires were burning, in all directions, where roasting, and boiling, and frying, were going on," while under them ministers were pleading with sinners "to come into the pen" and claim Jesus as their own. When Auld came forward, Frederick was overjoyed. "If he has got religion," he thought, "he will emancipate his slaves; and if he should not do so much as this, he will, at any rate, behave toward us more kindly, and feed us more generously than he has heretofore done."[15]

But Thomas Auld did not change, and Douglass' suspicions about religion grew only stronger over the years. By the time he came to write his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), he had come to believe "most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes." It was used to justify barbarity, to sanctify hate and fraud, and to provide a shelter for the foul and shameful deeds of slaveholders. And if he were ever to be thrown back into the "chains of slavery," Douglass concluded, he would consider having a religious master to be "the greatest calamity that could befall me."[16]

To Frederick Douglass, the existence of slavery made a mockery of America's claim to be a "city upon a hill." In "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?," an oration delivered in Rochester, New York, on 5 July 1852, he excoriated the nation for having fallen so far short of its vaunted ideals. "You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad," and

[14] Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago, 1979), 208.

[15] Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ed., *Autobiographies,* (New York, 1994), 250.

[16] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, in *Autobiographies*, 68.

you cheer, honor, and protect them; but under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, "the fugitives from your own land, you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill." There is a startling audacity to your national pride and confidence, Douglass tells his listeners, for even though "you declare, before the world . . . that you *'hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal,'*" you nevertheless hold in bondage "*a seventh part* of the inhabitants of your country." He issues a warning intended to call the nation back to its exceptional ideals: "Oh! be warned! be warned! a horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; *for the love of God, tear away*, and fling from you the hideous monster, and *let the weight of twenty millions, crush and destroy it forever!*"[17]

As the tragic drama of slavery, abolition, and Christianity unfolded on the center stage of American life, new religious traditions began to practice their parts and play their roles in the cultural wings. A number of these developments involved the initial entry of the religions of Asia into the life of America. Here again, the New England Transcendentalists led the way. In the decades before the Civil War, Emerson was the American "who most fully realized the philosophical significance of Asian thought," and both he and Thoreau mined the Hindu scriptures and scoured Buddhist sources in search of answers to religious dilemmas their Protestant heritage no longer seemed capable of resolving.[18] Not until the twentieth century would the religions of Asia exercise a considerable shaping influence in American literature, but Emerson, Thoreau, and a handful of others had already begun to tap their potential a century earlier.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Protestant cultural tradition in America proved capable of absorbing post-Christian spirituality, of engaging vigorously in the battle against slavery, and of assimilating key strands of Eastern religious thought and practice. Yet there remained one reality that Protestantism could not accept, and that was the burgeoning presence of Roman Catholicism in the culture of the United States. From the earliest colonial beginnings, in the American context genuine religion had meant the Protestant faith. Roman Catholicism might be tolerated on the periphery, but few considered it a dynamic system of belief destined to play a central role in American life.

Although in 1790 there had been few Catholic churches in the United States, on the eve of the Civil War those churches numbered in the

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[17] Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" in William L. Andrews ed., *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader* (New York, 1996), 126–7.

[18] Carl T. Jackson, *The Oriental Religions and American Thought: Nineteenth-Century Explorations* (Westport, CT, 1981), 57.

thousands; and as the social influence of Catholicism grew, so did the Protestant animus against it. Prejudice could be found at every level of the culture, as evidenced by an exchange of letters between Emerson, the American man of letters Charles Eliot Norton, and the English poet Arthur Hugh Clough. They wrote to one another about the conversion to Catholicism in 1858 of Anna Barker Ward, the wife of one of Emerson's literary associates. In their letters, they fretted over her "Babylonish Captivity" and "grieved" that she had allied herself with a faith that "makes such carnage of social relations." For the disease of this dogmatic faith, Emerson prescribed the "electuary" – the sweet, healing paste – of "house, children, & husband." He assured Anna's husband that she would eventually be cured of her spiritual disease, construing her conversion and the Catholic faith itself as a form of sickness from which one could only hope to recover.[19]

The illness metaphor Emerson used was in keeping with many antebellum Romantic characterizations of Catholicism. To these cultural Protestants, in particular, Catholicism was a remnant of the precritical history of humanity. Like an embarrassing adolescence, it was something to be blushed at and outgrown. This, for example, was how Thoreau saw the character of Alek Therien, a French Canadian neighbor at Walden Pond. Therien's critical faculties "were slumbering as in an infant," Thoreau claimed, for he had been taught in that "innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines." When those priests train a student, "the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child."[20]

The literary historian Jenny Franchot has argued that nineteenth-century anti-Catholicism can be traced to the Puritan narrative of providential history, in which two monumental events, the Reformation and the settling of America, stood out. According to Franchot, for the antebellum Protestant writers, that America was an agent of divine purpose and moral reform along Protestant lines was taken to be a given of human destiny. In such a context, a Catholic resurgence could only represent a reversal of history, a return to bondage, and a loss of the freedom of Protestant individualism.[21]

[19] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph Rusk (New York, 1939), 5: 169.
[20] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden,* in Robert F. Sayre, ed., *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers; Walden; or, Life in the Woods; The Maine Woods; Cape Cod* (New York, 1985), 439.
[21] Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley, 1994).

The growth of Catholicism troubled the culture's elites and also generated a backlash in popular culture. From 1830 to 1860, what had been a trickle of anti-Catholic literature swelled into a torrent, as diatribes cascaded from Protestant pulpits and flowed from popular tracts and novels. Especially popular were fictional "memoirs" of people who claimed to have escaped from Catholicism. The most famous of these narratives was Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836). This fiction parading as fact told of a prostitute who sought sanctuary in a convent, only to discover within its walls terror and sadism worse than anything she had known on the streets. Monk's narrative was filled with stories of brutal nuns and rapacious priests in the convent-turned-brothel, where supposedly celibate men of God had their way with defenseless nuns and murdered the children born of the rapacious unions.

FROM PROVIDENCE TO LUCK: THE CIVIL WAR AND BEYOND

In literature as in all other facets of American life, the Civil War serves as a dividing line. In less than a decade, the romantic optimism, apocalyptic anxiety, and political uncertainty of antebellum culture seemed to dissipate. From 1865 on, the United States proved to be a nation dramatically different from that union of states that had gone to war in 1861. In the first half of the nineteenth century, America had been an agrarian society in which evangelical Protestantism played a dominant role; after the war it rapidly became an urban, industrial society in which diverse ethnic groups and religious systems vied for space and clamored to be heard.

Powerful intellectual changes were underway as well. Charles Darwin had published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, and its image of life as a prolific, violent struggle for survival dovetailed eerily with the brutal realities of the Civil War and the harsh conditions of the new industrial economy. In many different spheres and on many varied fronts, a culture of paternalistic benevolence appeared to be giving way to one of systemic indifference. So it was, in the words of literary historian Andrew Delbanco, that "before the war, Americans spoke of providence. After it, they spoke of luck."[22]

These vast changes in America's spiritual landscape quickly registered themselves in the work of the nation's fiction writers and poets. Two major writers whose careers began before the Civil War – Herman Melville and

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[22] Andrew Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York, 1995), 138.

Emily Dickinson – continued writing well into the 1880s, and their work testifies to the dynamic transformation of religion in the literature of that day. These two drew from many of the same cultural and religious sources that had fed the likes of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, but they drew markedly different lessons from the experience. Whereas the Romantic writers were willing to jettison the creedal history of the church, Melville, Dickinson, and others persisted in restless quests to find beliefs they might cling to.

Nathaniel Hawthorne captured the volatility of this situation in a perceptive description of his friend Melville. When they met for the final time in 1856, the two talked of "Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken," Hawthorne reported, and "I think [Melville] will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. . . . He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other."[23] The search for a definite belief appeared to prompt many of Melville's fictional experiments, as he struggled to develop new forms to embody the daunting religious uncertainties of his life and his age.

Melville's Captain Ahab lets us hear of those uncertainties in a soliloquy from *Moby Dick* (1851). The anguished captain speaks longingly of those "grassy glades" and "ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul" in which "men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover; and for some fleeting moments, feel the cool dew of the life immortal on them." Yet these brief moments flee, and "we do not advance through fixed gradations" to reach a final destination in life's quest. Instead, we move through "infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence's doubt (the common doom)" into skepticism and unbelief, "resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally." The wearisome pointlessness of the quest raises anxious questions about an absent God: "Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it."[24]

Like Melville, Emily Dickinson for decades explored the contrast between the perennial human desire to believe and the faltering modern capacity to do so. In a poem written late in her life, she depicted the loss of

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[23] Nathaniel Hawthorne, quoted in Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, vol. 2, *1851–1891* (Baltimore, 2002), 300.

[24] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 2nd ed., ed. Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (New York, 2002), 373.

belief as a gruesome maiming that disenchants the world. "Those – dying then, / Knew where they went –" begins the poem:

> They went to God's Right Hand –
> That Hand is amputated now
> And God cannot be found –
>
> The abdication of Belief
> Makes the Behavior small –
> Better an ignis fatuus
> Than no illume at all –[25]

In rendering this amputation in the passive voice and in speaking of an "abdication of belief," Dickinson leaves it unclear whether God has vanished of his own accord or, Nietzsche-like, fallen prey to human hands. On this kind of religious matter, the poet simply could not reach a final decision. In a letter written in the same year as this poem (1882), she spoke of her invigorating struggles on this front. "On subjects of which we know nothing, or should I say Beings – . . . we both believe, and disbelieve a hundred times an Hour, which keeps Believing nimble."[26]

Emily Dickinson died in 1886, Herman Melville in 1891, and their deaths came during the very period when philosophical naturalism was securing its hold on the American literary imagination. This mixture of Darwinian science and deterministic theory met the interpretive needs of an emerging subculture of unbelief, and its narrative of material explanation presented a clear, comprehensive alternative to theistic accounts of the arc of human life.

For many writers at the century's end, the narrative represented an unavoidable religious dead end. In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), for example, a physician tries to comfort a disconsolate woman, Edna Pontellier. Having just witnessed a friend give birth, Edna is filled with "a vague dread" by the thought of "the great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go." When she confides in Dr. Mandelet about her fears, he tells her, "[Y]outh is given up to illusions," which are nature's "decoy to secure mothers for the race." The poignant truth is that "[n]ature takes no account of moral consequences" or of any of the ethical or spiritual ends we humans fabricate to comfort ourselves.[27]

If Emerson and his generation represented a definitive break between the literary culture of the United States and its explicitly Christian

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[25] Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, reading ed., ed. R. W. Franklin (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 582.

[26] Emily Dickinson, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 3: 728.

[27] Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, in Sandra M. Gilbert, ed., *Complete Novels and Stories,* (New York, 2002), 648, 650.

commitments, then naturalism served to cut the ties between the nation's literature and the romanticized spiritual quest that had driven Emerson and his associates. With naturalism in the ascendancy, writers no longer felt pressure to reconcile new insights with established beliefs, nor did they feel compelled to sustain the spirit of the Christian tradition in the absence of its substance. Instead, they considered themselves free to move ahead boldly without concern for orthodox creeds or Romantic assurances. In a study of the American reception of Darwin, historian Jon Roberts locates "a host of factors in the cultural milieu of the United States" that led in the late nineteenth century to a "growing tendency among literate Americans to ignore the categories of Christian theology in interpreting their experience." Having conceded so much ground to scientific determinism, Protestants "found themselves defending a very attenuated view of God's role in the universe," and the wan God of liberalism was unable to mount anything more than a weak defense against the broad assault of naturalism.[28]

In this intellectual climate, on matters of religious belief, literature often seemed to assume a valedictory air, as poets, novelists, and essayists found themselves bidding adieu to a no-longer-forbidding deity. Some American writers of this period, such as Edith Wharton and Stephen Crane, took the loss in stride; throughout most of her adulthood, Wharton took "late nineteenth-century scientific rationalism" to be her guide, while Crane found what shelter he could under the cover of cosmic irony.[29] At the same time, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, and other full-fledged naturalists embraced the liberating power of materialism; in a deterministic world, sin became a vacuous concept and guilt a largely useless cipher.

There were some, however, at the end of the nineteenth century, Henry Adams and Mark Twain among them, who remained torn between their disdain for traditional Christianity and their dismay over the heartlessness of a Godless world. While Adams wrote in sorrow, Twain masked his pain with sarcasm; and to both of them the loss of God seemed tied to the failure of the American experiment. "*Nothing* exists; all is a dream. God – man – the world – the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars: a dream, all a dream – they have no existence," Twain wrote in *The Mysterious Stranger*. "*Nothing exists save empty space and you!*"[30] Consciousness and the empty void made for a lonely, mismatched pair, and Twain came to believe that death alone made life bearable. "Whoever has lived long enough to find out what

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[28] Jon H. Roberts, *Darwinism and the Divine in America: Protestant Intellectuals and Organic Evolution, 1859–1900* (Notre Dame, 2001), 238.

[29] R. W. B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York, 1975), 510.

[30] Mark Twain, quoted in Alfred Kazin, *God and the American Writer* (New York, 1997), 192.

life is, knows how deep a debt of gratitude we owe to Adam, the first great benefactor of our race. He brought death into the world."[31]

RENUNCIATION AND RENEWAL: RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN THE MODERNIST ERA

Twain's plaintive desperation proved to be the exception rather than the rule for a number of authors in the early twentieth century. Following the lead of Gustave Flaubert and Charles Baudelaire, a small but significant band of early-twentieth-century American writers turned away from a forbidding naturalism and toward a sheltering aestheticism. In some cases the embrace of modernist aesthetics went hand-in-hand with a rejection of U.S. culture, as American writers moved temporarily or permanently to England or the Continent. Writers as varied as Edith Wharton, Ezra Pound, Henry James, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway decamped to the Old World and left behind in the new one any Christian interests they might have had. The legacy of belief was to them little more than a residue on the ruins of a spent tradition. The events and symbols of that tradition were just fragments that the speaker in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) says he has "shored against my ruins." Bucking the trend among his expatriate peers, Eliot would eventually make a public return to the Christian faith; yet he was to do so not in his native America, but on English soil and on Anglican terms.

Across the Atlantic in the 1920s, American culture appeared too preoccupied with the acquisition of wealth and the pursuit of pleasure to be concerned about rummaging in the Christian past. In the words of Fitzgerald, "America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it."[32] Malcolm Cowley, who was both a keen participant in that gaudy spree and a noted chronicler of it, described the turmoil of the post–World War I generation as "a moral revolt," and he was convinced that "beneath the revolt were social transformations." The "young men and women" of that era "had a sense of reckless confidence not only about money but about life in general." They were determined to break with the beliefs and values of their parents' generation, and in this time of rapid change, "puritanism was under attack, with the Protestant churches losing their dominant position" in the culture at large.[33]

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[31] Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, in Guy Cardwell, ed., *Mississippi Writings*, (New York, 1982), 929.

[32] F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Malcolm Cowley, *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation* (New York, 1980), 25.

[33] Cowley, *Second Flowering*, 25–6.

In the literature and life of early-twentieth-century America, other forms of religious expression gradually came to fill the void created by the Protestant decline, as numerous versions of eclectic spirituality worked their way into the nation's poetry and prose. A strong foretaste of things to come had been offered at the March 1892 funeral of Walt Whitman in Camden, New Jersey. This event was attended by thousands and was marked by "the atmosphere of an old-time tent meeting," but the speakers under this "tent" were hardly Protestant evangelists. Instead, advocates of every brand of spirituality imaginable came forward to speak. The famed agnostic Robert Ingersoll gave a main address, and there were readings from Confucius and Buddha, Plato and the Koran, the New Testament and *Leaves of Grass* itself. Walt Whitman's "views of religion have been misunderstood," a friend complained, as he addressed the serious mourners and curious onlookers packed on the cemetery hillside. Whitman "recognized the good in all religious systems. His philosophy was without the limitation of creed, and included the best thought of every age and clime."[34] This ersatz spirituality became a staple of American culture in the twentieth century, although its literary influence would not be felt fully until after the Second World War.

Another strong voice entered into the literary and religious mainstream in the early twentieth century, and it was powered by the emigration of several million Eastern European Jews to the United States between 1880 and 1920. Like many other first-generation immigrants, Jewish writers tended to speak and write in their native tongue – in this case Yiddish – and they also established a thriving network of journals and theatrical productions that eventually turned into serious literary endeavors. In the decades between the two world wars, writers who shifted from Yiddish to English – including Gertrude Stein, Henry Roth, Charles Reznikoff, Clifford Odets, and Delmore Schwartz – began to make their distinctive marks as fiction writers, poets, and playwrights. In literary and cultural criticism, such Jewish critics as Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Lionel Trilling began to move into the center of New York's intellectual life. Given the diversity among Jewish-American writers, it is not surprising that the treatment of religion varied dramatically in the literature they produced. It ranged from the theologically complex and intense investigations of Sholem Asch to the Marxist critiques of Philip Rahv and the Deweyan pragmatism of Sidney Hook.

In the black community, the defining event for twentieth-century literature was the Great Migration that brought two million African Americans

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[34] *At the Graveside of Walt Whitman: Harleigh, Camden, New Jersey, March 30th* (Philadelphia, 1892), 10.

from the farms of the South to the industrial cities of the North between 1910 and 1930. This transformation shifted the focus of black literature from the specific realities of slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction to larger questions of race, economics, and the American future. African American churches in the North grew dramatically; and in major cities, particularly on Chicago's South Side and in Manhattan's Harlem, that growth brought wealth and considerable cultural influence.

The relationship between black churches and black writers was a tenuous and complex one in the first half of the twentieth century. Some, like poet Countee Cullen, retained their commitment to Christian belief even when that faith stood in tension with their literary instincts and interests. Others who had been raised in the church either rejected Christian belief outright or held it at arm's length throughout their lives. Richard Wright, the author of *Native Son*, told an interviewer in 1946 that although millions of black men and women were "Baptists and Methodists," their churches were "social organizations rather than bands of faithful believers. The Negro . . . is by nature not a Christian." The motivation for the African American believer, Wright claimed, came "not from religious faith, but from the shared feeling of victimization," and the "altruism and benevolence . . . he may exhibit are the results of need, a part of the imposed technique of survival."[35] In like manner, fiction writer Zora Neale Hurston concluded, "A careful study of Negro churches, as conducted by Negroes, will show, I think that the Negro is not a Christian, but a pagan still. . . . The formalized prayers, sermons, show . . . his concept of God as pre-Christian."[36]

The critical ambivalence of Wright and Hurston is of a piece with the critique of Christianity to be found across the modernist movement that flourished between the wars. Before he returned to the church, Eliot, the preeminent poet among those modernists, at first found little to comfort or guide him in traditional religion. In a prominent 1923 review of *Ulysses*, he praised James Joyce for his use of classical myth. Of Joyce's method of "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity," Eliot wrote, "it is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."[37] Eliot's modernist assumption is that the order or art cannot be considered to imitate an order in nature or history, for none is to be found there. All literature can hope to do is

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[35] Richard Wright, *Conversations with Richard Wright*, ed. Keneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre (Jackson, 1993), 108.

[36] Zora Neale Hurston, quoted in Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana, 1977), 92–3.

[37] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London, 1975), 177.

to impart to our experience a form and a meaning that can no longer be secured by a departing God.

William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) captures perfectly the ambivalence marking the early-twentieth-century relationship between religion and literature. In this novel, which borrows its title from a speech in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, each of the first three sections is narrated by one of the brothers in the once-distinguished Compson family. In tortuous internal monologues, each brother unblinkingly puts the disintegrating spiritual power of modernity on display.

Only in the fourth and final section of the novel do we come upon clarity, order, and a glimmer of hope. This section is told by a third-person narrator, and its main character is Dilsey, the African American woman who has served the Compson family for decades. Dilsey's section unfolds on Easter Sunday, 1928, and at its heart is a black church service at which the famed Reverend Shegog preaches about the "blastin, blindin sight" of Calvary, the "widowed God," the "whelmin flood," and the "darkness en de death everlastin." But Shegog also glimpses "de doom crack en de golden horns shoutin down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb!"[38]

To Dilsey, who is saddled with the care of the decaying Compson clan, this Easter sermon provides the vision of hope that she needs to endure and eventually triumph over her circumstances. On her way home from church, Dilsey begins to cry. When her daughter tells her to stop, because "we be passin white folks soon," the mother replies, "I've seed de first en de last. Never you mind me.... I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin."[39]

On matters religious, the literature of the United States began as a work of testimony, but by the twentieth century it had become a labor of observation. What Faulkner can attest to with certainty is the intensity of human need and the desperation of modern experience as the Compsons embody and render it. The hope proclaimed by Reverend Shegog and professed by Dilsey is something he can imagine, even admire, but only from a critical distance.

One could argue plausibly that no American writer has ever produced a greater number of classic, enduring works than Faulkner did in the period that stretched from *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929 to the publication of *Go Down, Moses* in 1942. In that latter year, one of the darkest in modern history, appeared *On Native Grounds*, the bold and brash first book by twenty-seven-year-old Alfred Kazin. This sweeping study charted the development

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[38] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (New York, 1990), 296–7.
[39] *Ibid.*, 297.

of American prose from 1890 to 1940, but at its deepest level it was a cry of the heart for cultural renewal in the "city upon a hill."

At the close of the book's final chapter, titled "America! America!" Kazin promises that "literature will live fully again," but only "when the world is able to live fully again." After decades of decadence and destitution, from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression, the neglected "primary virtues" of literature will "come back," but "only when men are bound up again in the invisible moral life of humanity." If those virtues return to American lives and American culture, he explains, it will be because "men have kept their responsibility to literature and to themselves. Literature lives by faith and *works*."[40]

Yet that literature lives and struggles to survive, Kazin writes in the summer of 1942, "[o]n the narrow margin of security that the democratic West, fighting for its life, can afford." To this agnostic son of immigrant Jews, for those who live on that narrow margin, the most secure source of hope is the vision their distant Puritan ancestors had bequeathed to them. Like a seventeenth-century Boston preacher bewailing the decline of the millennial mission, Kazin charts the cost of American waywardness in a war-torn world. But at the same time, just as that Puritan pastor had held out the shimmering hope of a faithful God renewing his covenantal promises, so too does the New York critic spy the prospects of a world-transforming cultural renewal. Speaking directly to his fellow Americans and particularly to the nation's writers, Kazin says, "[N]ever was it so imperative as it is now not to sacrifice any of the values that give our life meaning," and never had it been so imperative for American men and women to prove "to be equal to the evil that faces them and not submissive to its terror." The reason we need American faithfulness is clear: "The world seems to be waiting for its new order; everything we do, everything we believe in this moment, can help to shape the future toward which men are moving in such agony today."[41]

John Winthrop could not have said it better. And with the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner, and Alfred Kazin continuing to follow his lead hundreds of years later, why would he have needed to try?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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[40] Alfred Kazin, *On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature* (Garden City, NY, 1956), 405.

[41] *Ibid.*

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RELIGIOUS MUSIC: A MIRROR AND SHAPER OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

EDITH L. BLUMHOFER

Music offers an often-neglected lens on the beliefs and practices of American religion. The popular religious music of a majority of Americans for most of American history was Christian hymns. They are the most widely shared ritual texts, and their lyrics express formal and popular theology more effectively than any other body of literature. Rich in all biblical metaphors, Protestant hymns popularized the phraseology of the Authorized (King James) Version. They have influenced both the texts and musical style of American secular music, and some (like "Amazing Grace") have found a place in popular culture. Hymn singing helps immigrants preserve identity, but also eases adaptation to new surroundings. The slave experience gave a particular character to African American religious music. Participants in homegrown American religions like Shakers, Latter-day Saints, or Christian Scientists, meanwhile, produced hymnals that set their own convictions and aspirations to music that mirrored the style of established Christian hymnody. Catholics brought vernacular hymns and the rich musical content associated with the Latin Mass. Jews carried along their own accumulated musical traditions to the United States. American-lived religion features religious music, and disagreements about what to sing and how to sing it have historically provoked some of religious communities' most bitter controversies.

Colonists came prepared for worship with the lyrics and tunes they already knew, but almost immediately they also began to create their own texts and tunes. Distance from bishops and a new setting replete with new experiences encouraged innovations. From the colonial period forward, religious music has been a vehicle for preserving ethnic traditions, a way to mark identity within the larger society, and a means for identifying with a new culture in a new homeland.

COLONIAL PRACTICES

Christian hymnody relies heavily on biblical language, and the Psalter was the hymnal of choice for the first American Protestants. Anglicans,

Puritans, and Dutch Reformed settlers believed with John Calvin that the Psalms best filled the need to have spiritual songs "not only honest, but also holy, which will be like spurs to incite us to pray to and praise God, and to meditate upon his works in order to love, fear, honor and glorify him."[1] English colonists had several Psalter versions handy: settlers in Plymouth Colony preferred Henry Ainsworth's *The Book of Psalmes: Englished in Both Prose and Metre*, a collection published in Holland by English Separatists in 1612. Leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, on the other hand, produced a new collection. They prioritized fidelity to the Hebrew text over literary excellence and commissioned thirty "pious and learned ministers" from the colony to prepare a metrical version that rendered the Hebrew originals as faithfully as possible. Just ten years after the first settlers came, Stephen Daye, the first printer in the Bay Colony, published *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* (1640). In their Preface, the editors admitted and excused the literary awkwardness that followed closely following the Hebrew psalms: "If the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that God's altar needs not our polishing."[2] This "close-fitting" translation, commonly known as the *Bay Psalm Book*, remained in use for a century until the Great Awakening promoted in New England new American songs, and transatlantic revivals expanded the available repertoire.

In the seventeenth-century colonies, then, different Psalters were in use, but psalm singing provided the people's religious music in meeting houses in Plymouth Colony, in early Virginia (as among Anglicans generally), and among the Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam. Anglicans also brought to the colonies a 1696 publication, *A New Version of the Psalms of David, Fitted to the Tunes Used in Churches*. The authors, Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, were influenced by changing English usage and skillfully crafted stanzas in the contemporary rhetorical style. The most enduring stanzas from Tate and Brady appeared first in a 1700 supplement to their *New Version* – the Christmas carol, "While shepherds watched their flocks by night." The existence of a "new version" implied an "old version," and this was the widely used 1562 Psalter by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes, Collected into Englysh Metre*. Metrical Psalters often included metrical renderings of passages of scripture outside the Psalms, like the Lord's Prayer, the Magnificat, or Isaiah 12. Psalters

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[1] Preface to the Geneva Psalter, http://www.ccel.org/cceh/archives/eee/calvinps.htm.

[2] Preface to the *Bay Psalm Book*, http://books.google.com/books?id=Fn48yVYkqvAC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Bay+Psalm+book&hl=en&ei=LEg7TJXwD5TgnAejtbDhAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

anticipated English hymns: some editors took more liberty than others with fidelity to the original. The bellicose language woven through the Psalms alongside assurances of God's blessing on the just proved admirably suited to political tensions. Literary critic J. R. Watson points out that Psalters "helped establish a temper of mind that was to have a profound significance for political events in the seventeenth century" and beyond.[3]

Later in the seventeenth century, hymn-singing Lutherans and Pietists brought their rich musical repertoire to the middle and southern colonies. In contrast to English- and Dutch-speaking Protestants who followed John Calvin's view that God-inspired Psalms excelled all other music for congregational use, German-speaking colonists opted for texts and tunes inspired by the continental Reformation which they sang alongside the Psalms. Martin Luther wrote thirty hymns and edited several hymnals that featured songs of testimony, instruction, comfort, and longing. His most famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is our God," however, was a rendering of Psalm 46. It demonstrated how freely Psalms could be rendered and used for specific purposes: a comparison with the "close-fitting" metrical version of Psalm 46 in the *Bay Psalm Book*, for example, illustrates the broad possibilities of psalmody.

Early Lutheran hymns clarified doctrinal boundaries, summoned the faithful to stand for truth, explained the errors of outsiders, and echoed Luther's doctrines. While English-language Psalters required few tunes because they relied typically on short, long, and common meter, the varied meters of Lutheran hymns demanded many tunes. Sung in harmony and accompanied by musical instruments, their performance offered a sharp contrast to the noninstrumental unison singing preferred by Protestants in the Reformed tradition. Lutheran colonists treasured these hymns in the mother tongue; translating them for use by the next generation marked an important early step in embracing a new identity while maintaining connections with the homeland.

Whatever their tradition of origin, American Christians found the command to sing in the New Testament and acknowledged that they participated in a long history of vocal and instrumental music dedicated to the praise of God. Lutherans freely used hymns of Catholic origin translated into German. Like Calvin, Luther taught Protestants the importance of "singing with understanding" – the immediate meaning was that no Latin chants, polyphony, or elaborate instrumentation should obscure voices raised in unity in praise of God. Like Augustine, Protestants regarded music as a God-given gift for recreation, profit, and worship with power for good or evil. It could incite passions or honor God, and the Reformers

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[3] J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn* (Oxford, 1997), 53.

urged their followers to use it everywhere "to serve all honest things."[4] Words published separately from tunes made sacred texts useful for devotional reading as well as choral worship, and prefaces to hymnals or Psalters commended the texts for any time, place, and day in or outside sanctuaries. Parishioners typically owned their Psalters and hymnals, and colonial Protestants encouraged singing in family devotions or on social occasions as well as in congregations. Instructions for family worship included singing, and Protestants did not quarrel about the appropriateness of instrumental accompaniment outside their meetinghouses. Religious songs suited leisure moments, and harmonies added interest and beauty that leaders hoped would appeal to young people.

In some colonial traditions, singing customs kept religious history alive – not only the shared biblical past or a general anti-Catholic bias, but more recent troubles as well. The nonmetrical unison unaccompanied hymns of the Amish and other Anabaptist groups in the Middle Colonies recalled the persecution of their forebears and the particular baptismal and community practices at the heart of their identity. Hymns were an important component of collective memory then, but also a barometer for the present. They captured the temper of the times: during the Enlightenment, for example, the language of liberty, the beauties of creation, the dignity of humankind, and the responsibility of free choice found expression in sacred as well as secular texts.

At the end of the seventeenth century, developments in Europe vastly expanded Western Protestant hymn options. For one thing, the achievements of the English Congregationalist Isaac Watts fundamentally altered English-language Protestant song. Watts prepared new versions of the Psalms and wove doctrine and personal experience together to fashion English hymnody. As a Nonconformist, Watts at first had a limited public at home, but his work found a ready audience in the American colonies. Watts provided fresh versions of the Psalms, and he found their ancient words filled with references to New Testament realities: in his words, he gave "an evangelic turn to the Hebrew sense."[5] His rendering of Psalm 98 became the famous Christmas text, "Joy to the World." The psalms ancient pilgrims sang along the road to the temple in Jerusalem inspired the well-known "Come, We That Love the Lord." Dozens of Watts' texts remain staples of contemporary American hymnals, and African Americans developed their own powerful renderings of Watts, using his name to designate

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[4] John Calvin, "Preface to the Genevan Psalter, 1565," http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/calvinps.htm.

[5] Isaac Watts, "Preface," in *The Psalms of David Imitated* http://www.ccel.org/cceh/archives/eee/wattspre.htm.

singing in the call-and-response style. Isaac Watts did not publish a complete Psalter, but he frequently provided multiple renderings of the same Psalm in different meters; and his texts became foundational to American (and English) Psalm singing. His most important hymnals were *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1707), a collection he intended as an aid to public and private worship, and *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament and Applied to the Christian State and Worship* (1719), a book of hymns for worship. Watts' best-known hymn, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," combined the objective and the personal with such power that it became a definitive text for English-language hymnody. His *Divine Songs, Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* (1715), the first hymnal intended for children, went through at least one hundred editions before nineteenth-century children's hymn writers replaced its stern Calvinism with a milder gospel.

In the same years, the Pietist movement arose within continental Protestantism as an expression of a yearning for "true Christianity." Pietists insisted on an experience of "new birth" and promoted lay familiarity with the biblical text. Concern for experience promoted testimonies that affirmed and inspired, and the Pietist focus on human need mobilized laypeople to undertake Christian service. A surge of new hymns followed, articulating personal faith and Christian mission. Pietists prioritized congregational singing, family devotions, and small group meetings for Bible study; and they embraced the power of sung testimony to touch the emotions. Devotional poetry nurtured their assurance of salvation and commitment to work for the common good; hymn reading as well as hymn singing wove the language of piety into the fabric of their common identity. Their commitment to the spiritual practices that nurtured piety found expression in hymns about prayer and service. Missionary hymns cultivated interest in the Pietist witness abroad, a movement that launched modern Protestant missions. Moravian Pietists incorporated the *Singstunde* into their tradition: sacred songs old and new were a feature of daily life in the Moravian home-base community at Herrnhut. The texts of Moravian hymns filled with Christian assurance inspired John and Charles Wesley, who, in turn, exploited in England and beyond the possibilities of religious music for instruction, warning, emotional release, and testimony.

John Wesley translated thirty-three German hymns, some by Pietists and some by beloved German hymn writers like Paul Gerhardt, but it was Charles Wesley whose thousands of hymns, edited by his brother, were the hallmarks of the eighteenth-century Methodist revival. Charles Wesley began writing hymns the same week in May 1738 that he testified to assurance of his salvation. The thousands of hymn texts that followed before his death in 1788 articulated the rich varieties of religious experience

available to the Christian soul. He warned, cajoled, invited, assured, testi-
fied, and challenged in words that quickly crossed institutional boundaries
and took their place in the hymnals of most American Christian denomi-
nations. John Wesley edited Charles Wesley's text for publication, and
his choices shaped the way generations of American Methodists under-
stood and practiced Christian faith. John Wesley published the definitive
Methodist hymnal in 1780 as *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People
Called Methodist*.

American Methodists adopted lyrics Charles Wesley wrote in 1739
to mark the first anniversary of his assurance of salvation as an unofficial
theme song, much like Luther's "A Mighty Fortress" served Lutherans:
"O, for a thousand tongues to sing / My great Redeemer's praise." The text
provides a good example of John Wesley's editing: he found the hymn in
its standard form six stanzas into Charles Wesley's nineteen-stanza poem.
American Methodists have generally given "O for a Thousand Tongues"
pride of place as the first hymn in denominational hymnals.

In eighteenth-century America as in Northern Europe, hymn singing
accompanied revivals, and Americans who insisted on Psalms in the sanc-
tuary often embraced a newer musical idiom in family devotions and social
meetings. George Whitefield, the best-known itinerant preacher of the
Great Awakening, produced a *Collection of Hymns for Social Worship* (1758)
that set sacred texts to popular accessible tunes. Jonathan Edwards com-
mended Isaac Watts' hymnals.[6] Colonial American hymnody consistently
illustrated the transatlantic character of Protestant religion, at the same
time that the American setting also influenced the tradition.

AMERICAN ADAPTATIONS

Americans experimented with homegrown tunes for the new European
hymns and provided as well their own texts and tunes for choral singing. In
time, the tunes Americans commonly used for British hymns often differed
from British choices. Hymns were a popular medium; not only did the
available corpus grow exponentially in the eighteenth century, but so also
did the number of altered versions of existing lyrics and the variety of
tunes to which they might be set. The democratic and adaptive character of
American religious music at the end of the colonial era is aptly illustrated
in the career of William Billings (1746–1800), a tanner by trade, who was
also a self-taught musician and composer of tunes and lyrics suited to a dis-
tinct American style of four-part harmony a cappella singing. Billings' *New*

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[6] http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/131christians/theologians/edwards.html; George
Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, 2004), 156.

England Psalm Singer (1770), a collection of his own choral pieces, was the first published book to feature music composed entirely by an American. Billings' fugue tunes offered lively rhythmical options to the solemn Psalm tunes in common use in New England congregations.

Billings and his many imitators helped establish the tradition of singing schools. Intended to promote better congregational singing, these schools became winter social events in small towns. Shape notes evolved as a teaching tool: music was printed using shapes (either four or seven, depending on the system) that corresponded to the solfege syllables to which notes of the scale are sung (fa sol la mi). The first shape note tune book, the *Easy Instructor*, was published in 1801. Shape note singing took root especially in the South where *Kentucky Harmony* (1816) was the first shape note tune book and one of the most influential ever published. Contemporary hymnals still draw on *Kentucky Harmony* as a tune source. Billings' compositions became staples of singing school instructions and remain mainstays of contemporary shape note community "singings."

The singing school movement and the style it popularized influenced both religious and popular music, and drew as well on popular folk tunes. Since psalms had no set tunes, singing generally relied on the transmission of oral tradition. In many congregations, the church clerk selected a tune and "lined it out" by singing words and tune with the congregation repeating the performance. Singing schools were intended in part to teach the principles of choral music and improve disorderly congregational singing, which tended to be painfully slow and drawn out. Singing schools varied widely in quality. Despite the lack of standards, however, some of the most influential figures in nineteenth-century American religious music started their careers as itinerant singing masters or pupils in rural schools.

In far-off California, meanwhile, Franciscan missionaries brought Spanish traditions to the Indian missions they established along the coast. Like Protestants, they used hymns as teaching tools. At San Jose, Father Narciso Duran wrote fresh hymns to apply the faith to the lives of his converts. A leader among California Franciscans between 1820 and 1845, Father Duran taught Native Americans to play instruments and organized a thirty-piece orchestra for his mission. His Indian choir chanted and sang for masses.

MUSIC, RELIGION, AND THE SHAPING
OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Independence and religious liberty ensured that the religious mix already evident in colonial America would persist and expand, increasing competition and the cross-fertilization of traditions. The Great Awakening of

the 1740s helped erode denominational boundaries by elevating experience over polity and spawning sectarian groups in which heartfelt piety found expression in new hymns and sacred songs. In the new nation as earlier, denominations functioned side by side, and longstanding habits governed their interactions. In order to survive and grow without state support, however, congregations needed to persuade people to attend, and musical styles potentially influenced choices. Union services, competing revivals, or the absence of a particular denomination, meanwhile, drew people into new affiliations and widened their exposure to religious teachings and sacred music. On the frontier, the absence of hymnals and the prominence of protracted meetings influenced the emergence of a new style of song. The nation's religious music expressed the ethos of the nation itself. Individualism, democracy, entrepreneurship, and Manifest Destiny influenced the lyrics, tunes, and performance styles of sacred songs.

In 1784, American Methodists met in Baltimore to organize themselves as a denomination. Under the guidance of John Wesley's chosen deputies, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, they set out to preach the gospel in cities and in the remotest parts of the frontier with spectacular results. Circuit riders made hymns a hallmark of Methodism in the United States as in Britain. Members in this rapidly growing movement learned theology, imagined Christian experience, and defined their Christian hope in the words they sang. They sang about every conceivable aspect of Christian faith, and their hymnals generally carried instructions from John Wesley on how they should sing: do not bellow; do not race ahead or lag behind; sing with spirit; sing the words as printed; blend voices. John Wesley's definitive 1780 hymnal incorporated hymns by non-Methodists, while some of Charles Wesley's songs became so pervasive in the American mix that non-Methodists soon added Wesleyan favorites to their hymnals.

The first Catholic hymnal published in the United States appeared in Philadelphia in 1787 from the press of John Aitken, one of the first American music publishers. Its comprehensive title summarizes the contents of its 136 pages: *A Compilation of the Litanies and Vespers Hymns and Anthems as They Are Sung in the Catholic Church, Adapted to Voice and Organ*. A new edition in 1814 changed the title slightly: *A Collection of Litanies, Vespers, Chants, Hymns, and Anthems, as Used in the Catholic Churches in the United States*. Both editions revealed a strong Protestant influence, but they carried endorsements from John Carroll and others. A new Catholic hymnal in 1843, *A Compilation of Hymns, Anthems, Psalms, etc. With Appropriate Airs and Devotional Exercises for the Ordinary Occasions of Catholic Piety and Worship,* retained fewer than a dozen hymns from the earlier compilation. Protestant influences – like the hymns of Isaac Watts – dropped away. No single collection, though, served American Catholics who planted their

Old World liturgical cultures in their new homeland. Vernacular hymns expressed the devotion of Italian, Irish, German, Polish, and Spanish- and French-speaking American Catholics.

As it had in earlier revivals, religious music played a central role in the revivals of the Second Great Awakening that waxed and waned during the first decades of the nineteenth century. As citizens of a newly independent nation, American Protestants edited Isaac Watts' imperial phrases. Connecticut Congregationalists commissioned Yale President Timothy Dwight to complete Watts' Psalter. Watts' resolve to make the psalmist "speak the common sense and Language of a Christian"[7] paid large dividends in the new nation. Revivals presented opportunities to popularize new hymns, and eighteenth-century English poets had provided a rich available mix. The rapid growth of Methodism spread Wesleyan hymnody; Congregationalists sang Watts and those who carried forward his tradition. Asahel Nettleton's famous *Village Hymns for Social Worship*, meanwhile, was a large, influential nondenominational collection with the whole world in view. Its substantial section on foreign missions reflected a growing American sense of destiny at home and abroad. The reader/singer could use hymn lyrics to visualize the early missionary movement in texts composed for shipboard farewells, first sights of foreign shores, motivations for missionary service, missionary funerals, and musing on the Christianization of the world. Still others were intended for use in the monthly "concerts of prayer" for missions that became features of Protestant congregations. Within a few years, a handful of hymns by missionaries' converts appeared in a few American hymnals.

Among the Americans with a compelling vision for music as a means to an enlightened citizenry was Lowell Mason, a young New Englander who moved to Savannah, Georgia, to begin his career. A product of singing schools and church choirs, Mason had energy and ideas; and Savannah's Independent Presbyterian Church provided space to test them. In Savannah he studied music theory and composition with a German immigrant musician and became convinced that Americans needed to take seriously the "scientific" music of the European classical tradition. In other words, in order to take their place among Western peoples, Americans must relinquish shape note singing and learn to read notes and sing in harmony. In Savannah, Mason formed a church children's choir to demonstrate the uplifting power of "serious" music, and he developed a program to improve congregational singing. He reharmonized Psalm tunes and melodies from Beethoven, Handel, and Mozart for trios and quartets and published his

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[7] Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (1719), quoted in Watson, *English Hymn*, 154.

book in Boston as *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music* (1829). Within two decades, the book ran through thirty-five editions and was the standard text in New England singing schools. Prominent Boston preachers noticed Mason's innovations and invited him to lecture about church music in Boston. They pressed on him the advantages of Boston as the place to further his musical ambitions. In 1826 he acquiesced and presented his ideas about congregational singing to a gathering of orthodox Boston pastors. They responded enthusiastically, and in 1827 Mason moved to Boston to begin in earnest his crusade for change. His most influential partnership was with Lyman Beecher at Hanover Street Church. Beecher was at the height of his fame; and under Mason's leadership, the church gained a reputation for music as well as for preaching. Americans had long quibbled about what to sing: Mason focused as well on how they sang and demonstrated that sacred song went with enhanced vital evangelical religion.

A cohort of eager young musicians gathered around Mason, and his indefatigable crusade for the benefits of music for civic as well as religious life brought him into the local network of people, orthodox and Unitarian, working to perfect American institutions. Mason promoted new talent and recommended his students to churches in need of musicians. Unaccompanied singing was beginning to yield to singing accompanied by stringed instruments or organs, and Mason mentored the next generation of lyricists, composers, hymn writers, and organists. These people followed Mason's preference for the "scientific standards" of European choral music and rejected popular American traditions like "lining out" or shape note singing. Mason taught them that church music should be characterized by simplicity, correctness, and adaptation to singers' abilities. "Let there be simple, easy, and solemn tunes selected for use in public worship," he urged.[8] While good tunes were essential, text also mattered: words were not "mere accommodation" to music. Rather, text and tune should "fit," and congregational singing ought to be encouraged and supported with "judicious" instrumental accompaniment. To improve congregational singing, Mason urged that reading notes belonged alongside reading words in the elementary school curriculum. The goal was moral and intellectual improvement: good music made better citizens, and the discipline of learning music translated readily into the disciplines necessary for leading productive lives. With Horace Mann's encouragement, Mason began music education in Boston public schools and summer institutes around the country to prepare teachers to teach choral music. Many of the most prolific hymn text and tune writers of the next generation participated in these summer events.

[8] Lowell Mason, "Address on Church Music," *Christian Examiner* 4 (1827): 69.

The musicians who caught Mason's vision and promoted it in churches, public schools, singing societies, concerts, and publishing ventures were part of a larger group of people, most of them in the North, working to create a culture that featured American values. The networks of people who contributed to new directions in church music overlapped. For example, among the era's renowned "princes" of the American pulpit was Henry Ward Beecher. His Plymouth Church in Brooklyn was a tourist destination, and the music he promoted set standards elsewhere. Discouraged by the poor quality of congregational singing, some prosperous congregations hired choirs or quartets to lead their music and to sing for them. Beecher objected because, like his father Lyman Beecher, he believed that music empowered personal and corporate religion. He hired a talented organist and worked with him to compile a hymnal of singable hymns published with their tunes. A large choir drawn from the congregation led congregational singing, and midweek services provided opportunities for the congregation to learn new hymns for use in Sunday services. The result was a model for congregational singing presented by one of the nation's most influential congregations. Beecher's organist, meanwhile, participated in Mason's music schools.

The interest in choral music stimulated music publishing, and again Mason set the example. He arranged music and published books for churches and the music institutes his associates conducted. Two of his most influential protégées, George F. Root and William Bradbury, similarly taught, published, composed, and conducted. They created the need for resources and then supplied the need: sacred music publishing became a lucrative business.

Music publishing flourished as well alongside the voluntary associations working for the common good, and hymns suited to various endeavors found wide use. Many of them exuded evangelical fervor and millennial hopes. Crusades against slavery and for temperance, Sabbath keeping, and peace, for example, had their own hymns; and annual conventions or association anniversaries were opportunities for new songs. Inexpensive Sunday school hymnals flooded the market as the Sunday school movement expanded with the nation. Mason's protégée, William Bradbury, made a fortune meeting the steady demand for new materials: this demand created a need for text, much of it met by women. Bradbury contracted with Fanny J. Crosby, a blind woman unusually adept at expressing herself in rhyme, and helped transform her into the nation's most prolific hymn writer.

Camp meetings and revivals promoted particular practices reflected in another cluster of sacred songs that featured choruses between the stanzas of familiar hymns, intoned God's judgment on sin, anticipated a heavenly home, and captured a frontier view of life. Patriotic themes and Manifest

Destiny were woven through the texts Americans sang as they antici-
pated the coming of God's kingdom. Holiness camp meetings featured
hymns that celebrated Christian perfection while Adventists sang about
the Second Coming. The prominence of evangelical Protestants meant that
every social cause had a sacred dimension as part of the quest for a Christian
America, and thus every cause had its hymns. The popularization of sacred
song and its use outside congregations created tensions for those who held
high views of what was appropriate in the sanctuary. The music used in
"social services" and revivals and offered by nondenominational publishers
threatened to displace familiar traditions encapsulated in denominational
hymnals; the people often demanded the new, but in some denominations,
musical gatekeepers resisted with varying success.

HYMN SINGING AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE: THE MORMON EXPERIENCE

While the music of the dominant Protestant culture evolved, the Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints developed its institutions far from the
centers of Protestant power. The Saints valued music, and in the twen-
tieth century the excellence of their famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir
helped erode lingering doubts about Mormonism as a faith and Mormons
as an American community. Mormons began working on their first hym-
nal in July 1830, just three months after the Church of Jesus Christ of
the Latter-day Saints was organized. They believed that Joseph Smith's
instruction to his wife, Emma, to prepare a hymnal was spoken by divine
command, and so they valued their hymnal highly. The first Mormon hym-
nal was published in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835 under the title, *A Collection
of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*. Nearly two-thirds of
its ninety hymns were familiar Protestant numbers, but Mormons them-
selves contributed thirty-four texts born of their new sense of identity as
God's restored people. Eliza Snow, Parley Pratt, and other converts con-
tinued to compose new texts that spoke to and from Mormon experience,
and so a large corpus of new sacred songs evolved. A second important
Mormon hymnal was published in 1840 in England under the supervision
of Brigham Young. Like Emma Smith's hymnal, this *Collection of Sacred
Hymns for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe* printed text
without tunes, and each edition featured a higher percentage of hymns
by American Mormons. In 1889 in Salt Lake City, the church published
Latter-day Saints' Psalmody, a book that featured tunes as well as texts by
Mormon composers. By then, the church relied increasingly on its own tal-
ent, though it continued to use some texts and tunes common to American
Protestants, often adapting the lyrics.

The Latter-day Saints had choirs in their early settlements in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Early settlers in Salt Lake City formed a choir in 1847. Known today as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, its name taken from the Tabernacle in which it has performed since 1873, the 360 singers and the Tabernacle's 11,623-pipe organ perfected a distinctive sound. The choir's weekly radio broadcasts began airing in 1929: Music and the Spoken Word, featuring the choir, is the longest-running radio broadcast in history. During the 1950s, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir became a face of Mormonism to the larger culture. Long-playing records, an extensive repertoire that included familiar beloved traditional hymns, a tour of Europe, and a Grammy for its rendition of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" earned the choir a place in the musical mainstream and eased worries about Mormon "otherness." Performances at national events helped make the Mormon Tabernacle Choir "America's choir." No other choir seriously challenged its cultural influence, and no other American sectarian religious group used music more effectively to give itself a mainstream face.

HYMNS AND VOCATION

The growth of foreign and home missionary efforts presented new challenges and opportunities for religious music. For the most part, missionaries translated familiar Western hymns, but some also wrote new texts to explain Christianity to their converts. During the 1820s, for example, Adoniram Judson, pioneer Baptist missionary to Burma, authored a hymn for the baptism of his first convert. Judson found hymns a natural vehicle for expressing spiritual purpose, desire, and hope: from childhood, Judson expressed his life's goal in the words of Isaac Watts' hymn, "Go Preach My Gospel, Saith the Lord." Judson's wife, Sarah Hall Boardman Judson, translated Western hymns into Burmese; they were distributed as cards for reading and distribution as well as compiled into books for singing.

Sarah Boardman Judson belonged to a growing group of nineteenth-century women who provided hymn texts that found wide use. Anne Steele, Fanny Crosby, Frances Ridley Havergal, and Catherine Winkworth were among the better known of dozens of women whose names regularly appeared beside hymn texts. By providing a Christian vocabulary for devotion and testimony, women profoundly influenced popular understandings of the Christian life despite their absence from the pulpit. The British translator Catherine Winkworth, for example, undertook the daunting task of introducing the rich corpus of German hymnody in English. She expanded not only the literary options for English speakers, but also their musical repertoire by setting her translations to their German tunes. Two

editions of *Lyra Germanica* (1855 and 1858) and Winkworth's 1863 *Chorale Book for England* established Winkworth as the most influential transmitter of German sacred music to the English-speaking world. In 1869 she published *Christian Singers of Germany*, biographies of the German hymn writers that provided context for her translations. In less than a decade, the translations migrated to the United States.

TRANSATLANTIC IMPULSES: THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

Winkworth's work with hymns arose from her personal interest in German literature and her enthusiasm for the spiritual traditions German poets represented. Still other nineteenth-century hymns expressed the convictions of movements within or around denominations. The Oxford movement, for example, was an Anglican movement with complex roots, but one of its concerns was fidelity to the Christian past. Its promoters made much of ancient Christian practices and the traditions and liturgies handed down through the centuries through Greek as well as Latin customs. Translations and adaptations of Greek and Latin hymns by English musicians and literary figures greatly expanded the worship vocabulary of congregations around the world. The Oxford Movement introduced a wide selection of Catholic devotional poetry to the hymn-singing public and gave England John Mason Neale, its most important hymn writer since Charles Wesley. Neale intended his hymns – many of which were translations like "Jerusalem the Golden" – for all Christians everywhere and accepted no remuneration. He did, however, explain clearly why Protestants needed ancient hymns: They had authority derived from the Church Fathers, tradition, or saints and so were superior to the hymns of personal testimony popular among nineteenth-century transatlantic Protestants.

Several participants in the Oxford movement abandoned the Anglican Church for Catholicism, a church in which they found the beauty and poetry they thought was missing from the Church of England. The most famous of these, John Henry Newman, wrote the hymn, "Lead, kindly light amid the encircling gloom." Two others contributed substantially to hymnody suited to English-speaking Catholics who had for their use few recent compositions that arose from the world they knew. Frederick William Faber and Edward Caswall who composed hymn lyrics were the most prolific of the Anglican-turned-Catholic hymn writers who attempted to address modern English Catholic experience. In 1849, Faber published *Jesus and Mary: Or, Catholic Hymns for Singing and Reading*, a collection designed to offer Catholics a book comparable to the growing number of nineteenth-century English hymnals. Protestants promptly embraced many of Faber's hymns as they had long cherished those of ancient and medieval Catholics.

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," "Hark, Hark My Soul, Angelic Songs Are Swelling," "O Jesus, Jesus, Dearest Lord," and "Souls of Men, Why Will Ye Scatter" were a few that found a wide public. Faber's best-known hymn was probably "Faith of Our Fathers," lyrics that, as originally written, had particular meaning for English Catholics. Faber grounded his text in the English Catholic experience of persecution and envisioned the day when "Mary's prayers" would win England back to the true faith. Within five years, Protestants edited this objectionable sentiment out of the third stanza and embraced the hymn. They assigned opposite meaning to the persecution Faber referenced; for them it recalled Catholic persecution of Protestants.

Faber's contemporary, Edward Caswall, a one-time Anglican priest, became a Catholic priest in 1852. Converted in 1846, he published *Lyra Catholica* (1849), a collection of original hymns and translations that arose from his new perceptions of the Christian life. His well-known and most widely used translations include "When Morning Gilds the Skies" and "Jesus! The Very Thought of Thee." Caswall criticized contemporary Protestant hymnody for dwelling on individual experiences and emotions; he intended his hymns to draw individuals beyond themselves to eternal realities.

AMERICAN CONTRIBUTORS

The most prolific American hymn writer during the nineteenth century was Fanny J. Crosby, a blind woman whose life spanned the century from 1820 to 1915. No one knows precisely how many thousands of texts she authored; to disguise their reliance on her work, publishers often resorted to pseudonyms. Crosby was adept at putting her thoughts into rhyme and could match any meter a musician demanded. Music publishers eager to sell Sunday school, revival, or temperance hymnals found her an invaluable ally; and her collaboration with the musical associates of evangelist Dwight L. Moody ensured ever wider circulation of her texts. She composed hundreds of texts for Sunday school hymnals. Sometimes text preceded tune; at other times, she provided texts for specific tunes. The musicians with whom she collaborated often composed popular secular as well as sacred tunes, and most of her texts were set to peppy gospel melodies with choruses.

The revivals associated with Dwight L. Moody facilitated the popularity of the style of religious music known as gospel songs. Moody depended on music to capture and channel emotions; his services moved along with hearty singing but no undue displays of enthusiasm. His songster, Ira Sankey, made mass choirs and congregational singing a feature of Moody's revival services and popularized as well the energetic and singable testimony songs

by living lyricists that were the core of gospel hymnody. Revivals not only gave visibility to existing new music, but they also stimulated musical innovations. The solo singer became a fixture at revival services. Sankey and others wrote texts and tunes suited to Moody's topics. The enthusiastic response encouraged Sankey to edit hymnals, and millions of copies of gospel hymns associated with Moody's campaigns flooded the market. More and more middle-class families owned pianos, and gospel music found a place in homes as well as revivals. Well-known authors of sacred lyrics were in demand for hymns for local occasions – a church anniversary, a Sunday school program, or a family event. Gospel songs were democratic and ubiquitous, never confined to the sanctuary. They expressed the cultural mood but also influenced it, and religious music's associations with particular people and occasions widened its appeal. Moody was popular, and Sankey's sure musical instincts both assisted and enhanced Moody's purposes, and so the music associated with community events migrated to congregations, homes, foreign mission stations, urban rescue missions, and schools. Nondenominational gospel tabernacles devoted to urban evangelism adopted it as their primary music.

By the end of the nineteenth century, then, a growing variety of hymnals expanded the types of sacred music available to congregations and individuals. Entrepreneurs geared up to meet growing demands; they also worked hard to create a wider market. Denominational hymnals had many competitors, and congregations sometimes used different hymnals for morning and evening services, while Sunday schools, Christian Endeavor meetings, Student Volunteers, YMCAs, or missionary circles had the option of inexpensive dedicated hymnals. While mainline denominations revised their hymnals every few decades, nondenominational publishers catered to the appetite for new and up-to-date materials with new songbooks every few months.

ADAPTATIONS FOR URBAN NEEDS

The rapid influx of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century impacted every aspect of American religious life. Urbanization and industrialization along with immigration were accompanied by demographic shifts that altered the content and practice of congregational life. Baptist pastor and educator Walter Rauschenbusch, for one, collaborated with Moody's songster, Ira Sankey, to edit two editions of *Evangeliums Lieder* (1904), translations of gospel songs into German for the use of the hundreds of thousands of Germans who poured into American cities. From the mid-1880s, the Salvation Army flourished in American cities, and Salvationists brought with them from Britain their

own tradition of rousing popular music that distinguished their European evangelism. Salvationists used music to draw crowds; hearty singing of sacred text set to familiar folk tunes invited everyone to participate; and song lyrics contributed by recent converts emphasized that gospel songs belonged to the rank-and-file. For Salvationists, participatory music, vocal or instrumental, was emphatically the people's language of praise.

Hymns written for children formed another distinct group of nineteenth-century sacred songs. The vast majority appeared in Sunday school hymnals, but others were printed in denominational hymnals for use in catechism classes or family devotions. Featuring repetitive lines and simple texts, they continued a tradition that reached back to Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, but nineteenth-century children's hymns often idealized childhood and encouraged duty and discipline. Cecil Frances Alexander, an Anglican bishop's wife, proved adept at producing enduring children's hymns, some of which migrated to other sections of hymnals, and many of which gained popularity in the United States. She wrote the well-known Christmas carol, "Once in Royal David's City," as an explanation of a section of the creed. In "There Is a Green Hill, Far Away," she adopted a direct narrative style to expand on another part of the creed. J. R. Watson observed that many nineteenth-century hymns for children reveal "an adult's conception of what a child should be" and "sweep aside the real needs of children and adolescents."[9]

Some American congregations also continued to cherish the English cathedral tradition with its choirs, anthems, and organ compositions. Sacred music from the classical repertoire was common in congregations that preferred formal worship; and paid choirs, soloists, and instrumentalists persisted despite the popularity of gospel hymns and congregational singing.

At the end of the nineteenth century, then, Protestant hymnody came in many varieties: Each denomination, movement, theological enthusiasm, reform cause, or voluntary association had its repertoire. African Americans had their own ways of appropriating classical English hymns, many of which their tradition subsumed under the name of Isaac Watts. Widely shared texts and tunes constituted a small common core, but the business of religious music stimulated a steady supply of new material, much of it in the gospel song tradition that prized rhyme and rhythm over literary worth, and singability over musical excellence. The vast majority of gospel songs were short lived; publishers fed the national appetite for new materials, and use dictated survival. Very gradually, a handful of widely used gospel songs found a place beside older selections in denominational hymnals.

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[9] Watson, *English Hymn*, 436.

POPULARIZING AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC:
THE JUBILEE SINGERS

Also in the late nineteenth century, many Americans discovered African American spirituals. After the Civil War, northern denominations supported missionaries and educational institutions working in the South to improve the lives of former slaves. In 1866, through the American Missionary Association, Congregationalists established Fisk Free Colored School (now Fisk University) in Nashville, Tennessee. Home missionaries were the school's first teachers, and white Protestants confronted each other over racial differences. In 1871, professor of music and veteran of the Union Army George L. White organized a choral ensemble to tour and raise funds for the school's pressing financial needs. He called the group of nine former slaves the Jubilee Singers (see Leviticus 25). After initial performances of spirituals in small churches and on street corners, the Singers' persistence against the odds of segregation and poverty combined with their repertoire of sacred songs, their performance style, and their musical excellence to win them enthusiastic responses from the predominantly white audiences that attended performances. Endorsements from prominent Americans like Henry Ward Beecher and institutions like Oberlin College helped turn the tide. Funds poured into Fisk. In 1872, the Singers performed at the World Peace Festival in Boston and toured the Northeast to rave reviews. They performed at the White House as guests of President Ulysses Grant. A tour of Britain in 1873 raised funds for Fisk's first permanent building, aptly named Jubilee Hall. The day after the Singers arrived in England they performed before Queen Victoria who requested "Steal Away" and "John Brown's Body" and praised the ensemble's sound. She commissioned a floor-to-ceiling painting of the Jubilee Singers that today hangs in Jubilee Hall. William Gladstone and other members of the political and social elite joined members of the royal family in enthusiasm for the Singers' renditions of spirituals performed with piano accompaniment in a distinct style. White audiences encountered Negro spirituals as at once worship and entertainment, artistic performance and pilgrim songs.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Twentieth-century religious music had strong continuities with the past but, as in the past, it built on older styles by incorporating new trends – especially the new media that transformed American popular culture.

Among the most obvious sources of continuity and change was the revival tradition. After Moody's death in 1899, his successors routinely partnered with song leaders who featured particular songs, instruments, or

choral styles: the Moody-Sankey success story proved that people responded to music. Like Sankey, up-and-coming revival musicians like Charles Alexander, Homer Rodeheaver, or Cliff Barrows put their own stamp on the music that made revival campaigns memorable. Favorite songs, instrumental solos, and mass choirs were as much part of crusades as stirring preaching. Billy Graham preached before more people than any other person in history, but the musical routine around his sermons never varied. Before Graham came to the podium, the baritone soloist George Beverly Shea sang; and after each sermon, a mass choir of thousands of voices solicited audience response with a solemn rendering of the simple song, "Just as I Am." Electronic media made the signature sounds of favorite revival music available year round.

Much American Christian music has always favored new sounds and new texts over old, but some Episcopal and Anglican congregations preserve the tradition of sung matins and sung evensong, two services in which sections of the liturgy are set to music. The services come from the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the music draws from a rich Anglican heritage reaching back to the sixteenth century, but also embraces compositions by recent composers like John Rutter or Herbert Howells. These services may rely on the language of Thomas Cranmer and the King James Version of the Bible, or they may use revised texts of these two sources. They often feature choirs that sing much of the service in Latin and the vernacular. Together with the sung Eucharist, such services express continuity with the pre-Reformation heritage of the Anglican Communion.

Continuity and change combine as well in the interrelatedness of popular and sacred music that made much of American religious music the people's music in the first place. As in the nineteenth century, the musical sounds of the twentieth century have their sacred versions; as before, this has not been without controversy. The influence of folk and commercial music on religious music, performances, and recordings of hymns and gospel songs by Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Pat Boone gave hymns new sounds. Broadcasts from the Grand Ole Opry on WSM-Nashville featured hymns sung by popular entertainers and showed how deeply hymnody was woven into the fabric of popular culture.

The emergence of black gospel music from the churches into the marketplace introduced a roster of performers who found a huge public: gospel quickly transcended its church roots to become a wildly successful popular sound. Thomas A. Dorsey, the "father" of gospel music, was the son of a preacher and a blues pianist and lyricist who combined jazz sounds and blues rhythms with religious lyrics. Congregations resisted this "devil's music," but Dorsey persisted against the odds long enough to see the tide turn. He produced over eight hundred hymns, and accomplished

singers cut records that took the sound to the airwaves. Mahalia Jackson signed a lucrative contract with Columbia Records in the 1950s and sang Dorsey's "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" at Martin Luther King's funeral. Gospel singer James Cleveland won four Grammys, and in 1968 he formed the Gospel Workshop of America. Gospel quartets and mass gospel choirs involved thousands of people in gospel music performance and marketing.

White Protestants developed their own traditions of southern gospel song, much of it popularized by traveling quartets, recordings, and radio. Skilled quartets teamed with accomplished accompanists whose improvisations became as much a part of the tradition as the vocal performance. The tradition has developed over the years and has affinities for country music. The Southern Gospel Music Association maintains a museum and Gospel Music Hall of Fame in Pigeon Fork, Tennessee.

Advances in electronic media expanded musical possibilities at the same time that they raised performance standards. Religious music had long been a form of high art, but new media vastly increased the sounds many Americans accepted as appropriate for sacred song. Radio and television popularized particular artists and songs, and live performances showed the possibilities of electronic music and the power of personalities in the business of performing religious song.

New hymns, many of them by women, expressed modern theological trends. Themes of justice and inclusion took prominence, and as the civil rights movement found support in mainline denominations, the African American texts and other freedom songs popularized during marches, rallies, and sit-ins gained a place in denominational hymnals. Growing global awareness in American denominations influenced the incorporation in hymnals of texts and tunes from other parts of the world as well as the inclusion of translations into Spanish of a few favorite English texts. Taken together, the hymns included in denominational hymnals present a glimpse of what of the church should be through the eyes of their editorial committees – ecumenical, diverse, inclusive, global. They reveal change over time in a denomination's language, priorities, piety, theology, and practice. Stanzas omitted, texts altered, and hymns added are one measure of self-understanding.

Midcentury liturgical renewal in mainline denominations influenced the organization of hymnals and brought greater awareness of the church year. In the Catholic Church, liturgical renewal began in Benedictine monasteries in Europe in the nineteenth century. In some places it included congregational singing. It made its way to the United States through Benedictine institutions like St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, where the founding of Liturgical Press in 1926 was an important early step.

In 1935 Liturgical Press published its first music, *Parish Kyriale*, a collection of Gregorian chant with modern notation. Promoters spread their views through the Catholic press and summer schools conducted through places like the Pope Pius X Institute of Liturgical Music at Manhattanville College (established 1916). To enable (silent) lay participation, in 1936 Joseph Stedman published *My Sunday Missal*, an English translation of the Latin liturgy. In 1940, some twelve hundred clergy and laity convened in Chicago for the first National Liturgical Week, an event that was later absorbed into the National Liturgical Conference (begun 1944). The Gregorian Institute of America (GIA), established in Pittsburgh in 1941, offered services to church musicians. In such ways – and guided as well by several twentieth-century encyclicals that touched on sacred music – American Catholics, lay and clerical, cultivated their long musical legacy.

Amid growing attention to church music and singing, GIA publications published the *Gregorian Institute Hymnal* (1954), the first of the many hymnals it has since supplied to Catholic congregations. The changes instituted by Vatican II energized Catholic hymn and tune writing. Guitar music, vernacular folk masses, scripture choruses, and the embrace of classic Protestant hymns left some Catholics distressed. They reached for music in chant style and translations of ancient Latin hymns. The catalogue of GIA Publications reveals how diverse contemporary Catholic music is. From seminars on how to sing the revised Mass to hymnals for organ-based singing and others for parishes preferring contemporary music, GIA offers combinations of service music and hymns that target every style.

Vatican II coincided with the emergence of the charismatic renewal, a movement that influenced singing practices in Protestant and Catholic traditions. Charismatics focused on the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues, sang in the Spirit, and preferred scripture choruses and simple lines of praise and worship to formal hymns. Singing was often spontaneous, and religious enthusiasm inspired new songs. Guitars or bands provided accompaniments. The movement's early music was characterized by simplicity and informality. While much of it was soon forgotten, some choruses endured and found wide acceptance beyond the movement. The charismatic movement ebbed and flowed in denominations and shaped new nondenominational networks where contemporary Christian music popularized the sound that emerged and developed out of the renewal. By the end of the century, marketing and media profoundly influenced Protestant and Catholic music, especially in mega-, seeker-sensitive, and emergent churches.

The popularity of new styles of religious music in congregations means that organs and hymnals are less important than they once were. Bands and projected texts keep the music going, with repetitive text a feature of

praise and worship style. Traditions that rely on service materials bound into hymnals keep books in pew racks, but sometimes place a supplement alongside so the congregation can sing texts and tunes. People who want to hear religious music can tune in on radio or TV anytime or create their own iPod mix. Christian sacred musical sounds take on new forms in each generation and from classical to rock, from chant to rap, from shape note to round note. Hymn subjects capture the essence of each period's devotion, resolve, and yearning. Texts migrate among denominations, and some become familiar sounds of the popular culture. Both tunes and texts are a valuable source for the student of American religion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Blumhofer, Edith L. *Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby*. Grand Rapids, 2003.

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Harris, Michael. *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church*. New York, 1994.

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Noll, Mark A., and Edith L. Blumhofer. *Sing Them Over Again to Me: Hymns and Hymnbooks in America*. Tuscaloosa, AL, 2006.

Stowe, David. *How Sweet the Sound: Music in the Spiritual Lives of Americans*. Cambridge, MA, 2004.

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RELIGION AND THE NEWS

DIANE WINSTON

News – an acronym for the four directions – is current and consequential information that covers all corners of the globe. According to standard definition and contemporary practice, news is timely, significant, proximate, controversial, current, and unexpected.[1] It is reported weekly in newsmagazines, daily in newspapers, hourly on radio, and instantaneously online. Ubiquity ensures its influence: news orders political priorities, structures social concerns, cements loyalties, and promotes a sense of belonging to something beyond oneself. "Newspapers," writes Benedict Anderson, provide "remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations."[2] Or, as 1010 WINS, a New York all-news radio station promises, "You give us twenty-two minutes, we'll give you the world."

Religion performs similar functions of defining and ordering identities and worldviews, which helps to explain why the two have a complicated, often fraught, relationship. In today's world, religion is news when it meets journalistic expectations of timeliness and relevance. But in other periods and places, religion was the news; that is, events were newsworthy because they had teleological significance. Centuries before Christians adopted the term "gospel," or good news, to convey the novel and world-changing message of their faith, men and women used oral, pictorial, and architectural media to share news about the seen and unseen worlds. These reports can still be "read" in places such as the Lascaux cave paintings, the Giza pyramid complex, and the Parthenon.

When British colonists came to the New World, they too found affinities between visible and invisible realities, which they construed

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[1] http://www.america.gov/st/democracyhr-english/2008/April/20080416211618eaifas0.8870203.html (accessed 23 September 2009).

[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London, 1998), 36.

as evidence of God's presence. Strange weather, bumper crops, and misshapen births were news, signaling divine response to the settlers' attempts to build a holy commonwealth. Initially this news was reported in sermons, almanacs, and broadsheets, but the why and how of Puritan reports echoed down the generations, influencing the style and substance of American reportage. According to journalism historian David Paul Nord, "[C]haracteristics of American news – its subject matter and its method of reporting – are deeply rooted in the religious culture of seventeenth-century New England."[3] Specifically, says Nord, the press's "current-event orientation, supported by reportorial empiricism and authoritative interpretation," is its Puritan legacy.[4]

Yet just as religion influenced the definition and production of news, so did the development of journalism affect the shape and evolution of religion in America. The "who, what, why, where, when, and how" of newsgathering and the constraints of journalistic storytelling have influenced how religious groups presented themselves to the public – or not. Press coverage can make or break a religious leader, movement, or institution. Yet playing the news game also can distort religious teachings. Especially vexing to religious sensibilities is the press's fickle nature: a group that received good coverage in one instance cannot reliably count on similar treatment in other circumstances. But in an increasingly secular society, despite a strikingly religious populace, the press has been the main avenue that religions have to reach the public beyond their pews.

Religion and the news not only are bound by a relationship at once mutually constitutive and militantly competitive, but also have played, often in concert, crucial roles in American nation building. The Puritan notion of a city on a hill was just one of several religious visions for the New World. Anglicans in the South, Roman Catholics in the West, and Jews in the mid-Atlantic told very different stories. Separately and together they chronicle a chosen people with a divine call to a promised land. This mandate gave colonists a sense of common cause and a unity of purpose that over time became a national mission. Religion was at the heart of that mission, and stories about religious leaders, issues, and conflicts were among the first news to travel through the colonies – knitting together readers with threads of shared concern. For over three hundred years that relationship has waxed and waned, but several factors remain constant. Religion has always been part of the news, and its coverage has reflected the reigning worldview. Depending on that worldview, religion news has

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[3] David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers* (Urbana, 2001), 31.
[4] *Ibid.*, 50.

fallen between two poles that sociologist Peter Berger describes as substantive and functional, colloquially expressed as beliefs and behaviors.[5] Functional coverage looks at what religion does, how it functions in society. The substantive perspective treats religion as a transcendent phenomenon, focusing on its supernatural and experiential dimensions. Puritans, seeking to integrate belief and behavior, fused the two in reports on natural occurrences. Since then, however, editors have sought the best balance for the market. In the nineteenth century, that meant scandal, heresy, hypocrisy, and soul saving – sensational stories depicting the clash between belief and behavior. In the twentieth century, sensationalism remained a religion narrative, but its primacy was superseded by conflict: conflict within a religion, between religions, or among political opponents motivated by clashing religious identities.

RELIGION AND NEWS IN COLONIAL AMERICA

In the spring of 1721, a smallpox epidemic gripped Boston – the sixth time that the deadly disease had ravaged the population since its settlement. Fifty years earlier, 700 people, or 12 percent of the population, had died from an outbreak. This time, it would strike 6,000 of the city's 10,500 residents and claim 800 lives.[6] Even more might have succumbed if Cotton Mather, the leading Puritan cleric and an amateur scientist, had not forcefully advocated for inoculation. The practice was new to the Western world; Mather had read about injecting healthy people with small amounts of a disease and knew slaves who had been inoculated in Africa. But when he suggested the idea to Boston's doctors, all but one of the city's ten physicians decried the procedure as dangerous and misguided.

Mather and his backers persevered, and as the debate spread, medical fault lines paralleled religious and political divisions. Anglicans led the fight against vaccinations, arguing that it was not only medically unsafe, but also theologically unsound since it challenged God's sovereignty over human life. Eager to win support, the anti-inoculation camp started the *New England Courant*, a newspaper dedicated to attacking Mather, his allies, and their campaign for preventive medicine. Supporters of both the British episcopacy and crown, they opposed the Puritan majority's religious independence and feared its nascent bent for political autonomy. In

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[5] For a longer description of the typology and an analysis based on its usage, see Sarah Forbes Orwig, "Substantive and Functional Representations of Religion in Four American Newspapers, 1893–1998" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1999).

[6] William David Sloan, "The Origins of the American Newspaper," in William David Sloan, ed., *Media and Religion in American History* (Northport, 2000), 44.

the guise of refuting experimental medical procedures, the *Courant* valorized divine authority and a concomitant acceptance of human limits. Other local papers trumpeted Mather's contention that God gave human beings the ability to reason so they could improve their situation. Mather triumphed when the facts bore out his speculation: the fatality rate for those who were inoculated was much lower than for those who had not received the shot. But even after the epidemic ended, the *New England Courant* kept up the fight.

America's first newspapers preceded the *New England Courant* by thirty years, but they were similarly steeped in political and religious perspectives. All began in Boston, the colonies' largest city and its intellectual center. Boston's Puritan majority prized religious and intellectual freedom, but only up to a point. Ministers did not tolerate theological dissent and moved quickly to expel outliers. Yet they also encouraged a vigorous academic environment – leading the colonies in schools, printing presses, and book publishing. Publishing was important because it was a way to educate and evangelize, both accomplished through reporting news. Initially, Puritans shared "news" of natural occurrences, but over time news also encompassed current events such as trials and executions, wars and famines. When reported by men such as Cotton Mather, or his father Increase, these events also assumed a providential dimension. All that occurred attested to God's supremacy, reinforcing the faith of believers and seeking to convict those who had doubts.

In 1690 when Benjamin Harris set out to publish America's first newspaper, the residents of Massachusetts Bay Colony felt beleaguered. Outraged by high taxes, colonists had deposed and imprisoned the British governor. Emissaries negotiating with the British king were divided over a new form of governance. Closer to home, attempts to fight off hostile Indians and their French supporters were floundering. Bostonians were angry, hungry, and scared. Harris, who had worked for London newspapers, decided that his new hometown would benefit from accurate information. *Publick Occurrences, Both Forreign and Domestick*, designed to be a monthly newspaper, was his solution. The newspaper would make certain that "Memorable Occurrents of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are"[7] by providing reports on everything from military expeditions against the Indians to local fires, trials, and sermons. But within days of publication, local authorities shut down *Publick Occurrences*. The reasons for its suppression are not fully clear. Ostensibly Harris had not received the proper license, but the very volatility of the times may have made the newspaper a liability, especially since Harris sympathized with the Mathers, whose

[7] *Ibid.*, 40.

religious and political leadership was resented by British supporters as well as some fellow Puritans. Moreover, with religion and politics so closely entwined, a newspaper that imputed divine providence to anti-British sentiment was seditious. It would be another fourteen years before Boston was home to another newspaper.

Yet within two decades a thriving newspaper culture had spread throughout the colonies, and by 1735 eight of the colonists' fifteen papers were printed in Boston. Similar to news reports a century earlier, these papers teemed with religion. Religious activities were regularly noted, and hymns, sermons, prayers, and scripture were customary features. Political stories had a religious dimension, and reports on laws and governmental decrees noted religious motivations. Religion was a fact of life covered by the press as well as the main mode of interpreting the news, be it a rise in taxes or a string of unusual earthquakes. But in 1739, religion became news in a way that was unprecedented in scope and span. British evangelist George Whitefield arrived for a preaching tour of the colonies, and his ministry was soon awash in controversy. Some thought he was God's messenger; others were less sure. According to a contemporary, "[H]e became the common topic of conversation from Georgia to New Hampshire. All the newspapers were filled with paragraphs of information respecting him, or with pieces of animated disputation pro or con."[8]

Whitefield was America's first media celebrity; his activities so fascinated readers that local newspapers included updates on meetings that occurred way beyond their borders – something rarely done before. Whether readers loved or hated Whitefield, they wanted to know more about him. In turn, the peripatetic preacher piqued their curiosity by assiduously courting it. He promoted his revival meetings, sold his own memorabilia, and made certain the press knew his every move – even padding accounts of attendance to bolster his reputation. He courted controversy, initially affronting Anglican leaders and later supporting Methodism, a breakaway movement from the Church of England. Methodism had started out as a means to reform Anglicanism, but religious fervor stirred by both Whitefield and the Great Awakening – a series of religious revivals that started in New England – had driven crowds into the fold. The American press took a dim view of Methodism and its fervent followers, but Whitefield remained a media darling.

Whitefield both underscored and extended the relationship between religion and news. As a popular religious figure, he was a newsmaker, but controversy and celebrity made him an object of fascination. Moreover, the

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[8] David Copeland, "Religion and Colonial Newspapers," in Sloan, *Media and Religion in American History*, 63.

widespread interest in Whitefield and his mission gave colonists a sense of unity and purpose. New Hampshire readers donated to his orphanage in Georgia, Charleston's citizens wanted to hear about his meetings in Boston, and Virginians wondered how many souls he saved in Philadelphia. Up and down the eastern seaboard, news about the itinerant evangelist and his crusades opened a new channel for a national consciousness. That he himself had rebelled against the Church of England, increasingly a symbol for the colonists' discontent with British authority, also was significant.

In 1770, when Whitefield passed away during an American tour, his death was extensively reported. By then, many colonial newspapers had shifted from an overarching religious perspective to a more political one. The swing reflected social, political, and demographic changes in the colonies. Immigration had increased religious diversity, a growing commercial sector had made economic concerns central to many citizens' life, oppressive taxation had focused colonial attention on British rule – and the Puritans were dying off. Newspapers still printed religious news and cited religion to show that events, including acts of rebellion, were part of God's plan. But the normative understanding of news as religion and religion as news had faded. Increasingly religion would need to prove it was newsworthy, and news would seek to fill the authoritative space that religion had held in a more homogenous, less dynamic, and independent-minded society.

THE PENNY PRESS: RELIGION AND NEWS RECONFIGURED

Historians debate the role religion played in the cultural developments leading up to the Revolutionary War and in the years immediately after. The consensus view is that hostility toward the British monarchy and the Church of England went hand in hand. Religion may not have played a primary part in fomenting rebellion, but it did feed the patriotic spirit, which the colonies' two dozen papers avidly fanned. In a similarly secondary way, the Founding Fathers acknowledged the importance of religion, especially insofar as it helped cultivate political virtue, but they opposed any amalgam of church and state. Hoping to avoid the religious tensions that afflicted Europe's kingdoms, the Founders kept God out of the Constitution. They later amplified their position in the First Amendment, prohibiting religious establishment while protecting the free exercise of religion along with a free press. But even before Thomas Jefferson opined in a letter to Danbury's Baptists about "a wall of separation between church and state,"[9] religion was mucking up politics. In the bitterly fought 1800

[9] http://candst.tripod.com/tnppage/baptist.htm (accessed 30 September 2009).

presidential election between Jefferson and John Adams, the latter's supporters used both church pulpits and news pages to denounce the Virginia politician as an "atheist" and an "infidel." So damning were the calumnies mounted against Jefferson that, according to a magazine article written several decades later, "when the news of his election reached New England, some old ladies, in wild consternation, hung their Bibles down the well in the butter cooler."[10]

Newspapers were in the thick of the election fight because most were partisan, political organs. Selling subscriptions to like-minded readers who could afford a hefty price as well as payment in advance, newspaper editors had little care for balance or objectivity. They thrived on factionalism, discord, and dissent, and their scope was both partisan and limited. Many were organs of political parties; others specialized in commercial news aimed at the growing mercantile class. When these newspapers wrote about religion, it was usually to promote radical positions that ran counter to traditional pieties. Nevertheless, they were surprisingly successful, and by 1825 there were more than eight hundred newspapers around the country – more than in any other nation.[11] However the industry was at the brink of great changes that would transform content, delivery, and audiences. During the 1830s innovations in printing and papermaking made it much cheaper to produce a newspaper. Prescient pioneers realized that workingmen would gladly pay a penny for entertaining news. The resultant "penny press" revolutionized news reporting, journalistic standards, and industry economics. It also changed the way that the press treated religion.

One of the penny press's first big stories was a scandalous tale of sex, money, murder, and religion. The "Prophet Matthias" was a self-styled religious leader who bilked his followers, slept with female acolytes, and possibly killed a pesky donor.[12] Matthias, who before his spiritual rebirth was a carpenter named Robert Matthews, set up a religious commune in 1833 with several of New York's leading evangelical merchants. A year later, Matthias' "kingdom" was in ruins, and he was on trial for fraud, assault, and murder. The proceedings received national coverage in large measure because they fit the marketing needs of the new press.

The change from subscription-based weeklies to reader-bought dailies required newspapers to attract mass audiences rather than a limited base of partisan subscribers. Editors found success with sensational narratives that

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[10] http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/187307/election-1800 (accessed 30 September 2009).
[11] Nord, *Communities of Journalism*, 88.
[12] Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America* (New York, 1995).

commingled crime, hypocrisy, and judgment. Matthias' story had all three cast in a narrative replete with sex, race, and religion.[13] It not only provided a lasting template for news about religious scandals but also exemplified the changing news environment. The underlying teleology that had marked colonial and early national news coverage was giving way to a commercial and political dynamic that privileged stories of crime and punishment. These narratives, presented in titillating detail, not only appealed to news consumers but also provided a vision of the American nation that was rooted in human law and secular justice. Divine providence remained in the mix, but its authority over the quotidian realm had receded.

In fact, God's role, or lack thereof, in the penny press became the professed cause for the "Moral War" of 1840. The fight centered on publisher James Gordon Bennett and his flamboyant *New York Herald*. Bennett was among the best-known penny press pioneers, and he is credited with spearheading modern religion coverage in the *Herald*. Religious materials had always been part of the news mix; from the first colonial papers on, editors had printed sermons, hymns, and scripture. Bennett continued to provide this kind of reading matter, extending it to include reports on religious meetings, activities, and leaders. Bennett, a Roman Catholic, was curious about religion, supportive of religious liberty, and ready to expose any piety that smacked of hypocrisy or malfeasance. Accordingly, he began covering religion like any other topic of interest. Clergy peccadilloes, congregational scandals, and denominational crimes were fair game, as were nonreligious instances of murder, mayhem, and immorality. Bringing a new verve to American journalism, Bennett surprised readers by reporting on religious wrongdoing, but he shocked them by including stories such as a page-one feature about Helen Jewett's murder. She was a prostitute, thus her brutal killing was not considered standard news fare, and other papers initially deemed it too sensational to cover.

In 1840, several New York newspapers, as well as local clergy and businessmen, launched a "Moral War" against Bennett and the *Herald*. Nineteenth-century newspaper editors frequently went to "war" with one another, but the fight against Bennett was waged "ostensibly on moral grounds. The attack escalated into an economic boycott aimed at driving the *Herald* out of business."[14] Bennett's opponents accused him of overloading his pages with sex, crime, scandal, and sensation. He also was condemned

[13] See Jeannine Marie Lombard, *Slavery on Trial: Law, Abolitionism and Print Culture* (Chapel Hill, 2007), 71–100.

[14] Judith M. Buddenbaum, "The Religion Journalism of James Gordon Bennett," 5, http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini .jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED270803&ERICExtSearch_ SearchType_0=no&accno=ED270803 (accessed 6 October, 2009).

for satirizing religion and criticizing church leaders. Some historians, how-ever, argue that clergy were less concerned with critical coverage than with Bennett's policy of covering meetings that they preferred to keep private. Many also disliked his stories about the growing entanglement among reli-gion, business, and politics. In fact, one study of the *Herald*'s religion cov-erage found it "was more complex and less easily stereotyped as irreverent and critical of religion" than conventional wisdom holds.[15]

In the short run, the Moral War hurt the *Herald* financially but did not shut it down. Bennett continued to report religion, but changes in person-nel and newsgathering affected both the content and the tenor of coverage. Previously, Bennett wrote the bulk of stories, so most were about New York and mirrored his own interests and inclinations. After the Moral War, he hired correspondents around the country. Thus, after the mid-1840s, the *Herald*'s religion news extended beyond Gotham's borders to include New England's evangelical abolitionists, frontier revivals in upstate New York, Mormon controversies in Nauvoo, Illinois, and nativist attacks on Philadelphia's Catholics.

As newspapers in general and the penny press in particular became more secular in tone and content, the religious press played an increasingly important role for the churchgoing American public. Until the birth of the penny press, most newspapers – religious or not – had a mix of religious and secular information. Moreover, most religious periodicals were non-sectarian in order to appeal to the widest possible number of subscribers. But the same innovations that led to the development of a mass-produced, widely circulated secular press also affected religious publications.

After 1830, many more religious newspapers started up, rooted in denominations and missionary organizations. Some editors sought to reach coreligionists nationwide as well as to convert the unchurched. But others, involved in reform efforts, used their newspapers to promote their causes. As the secular press focused more on the sensationalism of human deprav-ity, religious newspapers called on the faithful to work for God's kingdom. Christians were expected not only to rescue lost souls but also to save society, toiling to eradicate poverty, injustice, alcoholism, slavery, child labor, gambling, prostitution, and war. According to David Paul Nord, these religious papers best represented Alexis de Tocqueville's vision of how the American press would promote a national culture of democratic pluralism.[16]

Anticipating Benedict Anderson's description of the newspaper's role in building an "imaginary community," Tocqueville saw the press linking

[15] *Ibid.*, 11.
[16] Nord, *Communities of Journalism*, 92–107.

citizens together and enabling them to be active participants in a democratic society. Many religious newspapers did just that: readers debated issues and actions, finding unity of purpose despite geographic distance. However, the pluralistic and participatory model for journalism that was nurtured by religious communities found little traction in the secular press. The new model there adhered to a commercial logic that commodified news by selling sensationalism. The press's goal was neither to better society nor to build community; rather, it was to make money for its owners and advertisers.

POSTBELLUM AND PROGRESSIVE ERA NEWS AND RELIGION

Throughout the nineteenth century the number of American newspapers continued to grow: in 1850, there were three thousand; thirty years later the number had risen to seven thousand.[17] Content also shifted. The penny press ushered in an era of easy reading and sensationalism that helped to cultivate a daily reading habit among growing urban populations. But in 1851, when Henry Jarvis launched the *New York Times*, he hoped to bring a level of sobriety and responsibility to New York's pell-mell press. A decade later, reporters nationwide inaugurated a new era of depth coverage when they sought to illumine the misery and the ferocity of the Civil War. Religion, of necessity, was woven into their battlefield stories and provided a strong narrative thread for reports on the families back home. But after the war, the constancy of religion news diminished. Deference was paid to established Protestant denominations; clergy were cited as authoritative sources and frequently wrote editorials on the issues of the day. But their activities rarely made the front pages, a coup increasingly reserved for news of the awful and the aberrant – and the occasional barnstorming evangelical.

During the 1870s, coverage of these tropes often coincided. Newspapers, along with the rest of the economy, had been battered by the decade's economic downturn. To keep readers' attention as well as to boost sales, editors looked for religion stories that appealed to both skeptics and believers. This was accomplished by covering religious spectacles that informed the pious, entertained the prurient, and often, as an added boon, propelled a political subtext. It was a tried-and-true strategy: Decades earlier, stories about George Whitefield and the Prophet Matthias had done all three. But more was at stake since in the intervening years newspapers had evolved from small operations to large companies. Thus in the mid-1870s, when a

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[17] http://www.nyu.edu/classes/stephens/Collier's%20page.htm.

heresy trial, a clergy sex scandal, and an urban revival occurred within a few years of one another, all received wide-ranging coverage.

David Swing was a popular local pastor and a prominent national preacher when his Chicago presbytery tried him for heresy. The charge was made by a conservative coreligionist who sought to staunch the denomination's growing liberal wing. Congregants and ministerial colleagues admired Swing's broad-minded religiosity. Articulating the religious uncertainty of the times, he channeled it into an optimistic faith that was rooted in feelings and actions rather than doctrine and theology. But at a moment when Presbyterians were increasingly divided about rigorous adherence to their creedal statements, Swing's rejection of orthodox teachings and biblical literalism provoked conservative Presbyterians.[18] They argued that religious truths could not be cut to suit the times, and Swing was duty bound to preach and teach them. Ultimately Swing won the trial, but his opponents had their own triumph. He resigned from the Presbyterian ministry rather than face a second trial on appeal.

The story made headlines because of Swing's preeminent reputation and the trial's enactment of liberal religion's challenge to orthodoxy. Religious and secular reporters were on hand for the entire month of proceedings, and out-of-town newspapers organized cooperatives to supply them with regular updates. The Chicago dailies printed verbatim courtroom transcripts, and reporters vied to dramatize the scene. Even the staid *New York Times* dripped with vibrant details. According to its anonymous correspondent, "Prof. Patton, the prosecutor, was the very personification of a theologian. He is thin, spare, wiry, nervous, spectacled, keen, sharp, incisive, imperturbable and cold-blooded." Swing, on the other hand was so "calm, quiet and unobtrusive," the reporter doubted anyone would "suspect him as the man on trial."[19] Most secular journalists supported Swing; likewise religious writers across the Protestant spectrum. Even those who did not fully share his views believed he had a right to hold them, especially since he was unapologetically Christian.[20]

Swing's foremost rival as the leading light of Protestant liberalism was Henry Ward Beecher. Both men were as well known to Gilded Age newspaper readers as George Whitefield was a century earlier and as Billy Graham would be a hundred years hence. Beecher came from a distinguished Protestant family: his father Lyman had been a Presbyterian leader

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[18] See Gary J. Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805–1900* (Louisville, KY, 2001), 275–9.

[19] "Prof. Swing's Trial," *New York Times*, 10 May 1874, 1.

[20] See William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, 1992), 48–75.

and seminary president, and among his fifteen siblings Harriet authored *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Catherine advocated for women's education, and Isabella worked for female suffrage. Henry, too, was a social reformer. He edited an abolitionist newspaper, spoke out on the issues of the days, and preached a tolerant and open-minded gospel at Plymouth Congregationalist Church. The church, located in Brooklyn – then the nation's third largest city – was a meeting place for the era's movers and shakers.

In November 1872, Victoria Woodhull – a notorious feminist, suffragist, and free love advocate – broke the story of an adulterous affair between Beecher and a married woman in her newspaper, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. Beecher's paramour was Elizabeth Tilton, the wife of Theodore Tilton, a friend, congregant, and fellow traveler in the abolitionist movement. Both men had been editors of *The Independent*, a Congregationalist newspaper with a strong antislavery stance. The attachment occurred several years earlier, but the principals kept it quiet until Woodhull, spurred by what she perceived as middle-class hypocrisy, went public with the details. Newspapers nationwide blasted the story of the illicit liaison; according to some wags, it received more coverage than had the entire Civil War.

Tilton, a well-known reformer, was doubly aggrieved when Plymouth Church – Beecher's bailiwick as well as his own congregation – upheld its minister's innocence, but expelled him. He turned to the secular courts for redress, suing Beecher for alienating his wife's affections. The press covered the subsequent trial in salacious detail, and from January to July 1875, readers were privy to the particulars of Beecher's family, Tilton's career, and the emotional needs that drove each point of the titillating triangle. In Brooklyn, the trio's hometown, the trial ignited a newspaper war that used religion as a proxy for political rivalries.[21] The *Brooklyn Daily Times* drew a parallel between Beecher's "moral failures and the corruption of city politics."[22] Its competitor, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, painted Tilton as a black-hearted slanderer and championed Beecher and the city's leaders.

Most national newspapers lined up with the *Brooklyn Daily Times*. Reporters routinely satirized both Beecher and Tilton for their teary testimonies, but painted Mrs. Tilton as a long-suffering saint. Many compared her to Heather Prynne, Nathaniel Hawthorne's fictional heroine who valiantly wore a scarlet letter "A" on her breast.[23] The trial lasted six months and ended with a hung jury. Several jurists justified the verdict by

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[21] See Bruce J. Evensen, "'Saucepan Journalism' in an Age of Indifference: Moody, Beecher and Brooklyn's Gilded Press," *Journalism History* 27:4 (Winter 2001–02): 163–77.

[22] *Ibid.*, 167.

[23] For more on the scandal, see Richard Wightman Fox, *Trials of Intimacy: Love and Loss in the Beecher-Tilton Scandal* (Chicago, 1999).

explaining that if Beecher were found guilty, it would have cast doubt on all religious leaders. Tilton, emotionally broken and financially ruined, was vindicated in many newspapers – including the *New York Times*.

Coincidentally, at the very same time that the Beecher verdict was delivered, forces for religious revival were gathering in his city. Dwight L. Moody, "God's Man for the Gilded Age," had returned to the United States after a wildly successful two-year tour of the British Isles. Eager to bring his message home, Moody chose to kick off his American campaign in the "city of churches," as Brooklyn was known. The city's clergy planned the crusade, which would be boosted by newspaper coverage. Brooklyn's own papers toed the lines set down by the Beecher trial. The *Brooklyn Daily Times* criticized the embattled minister for missing Moody's organizational meetings. The *Eagle* lambasted Moody's team for excluding Beecher from their planning.

Moody understood the press's importance to his mission. As a young evangelist in Chicago, he routinely harangued newspaper editors for coverage of his meetings.[24] But "crazy Moody" was treated as a local joke until his triumphant British tour demonstrated how religious revivals could also save newspaper sales. Readers were hooked on coverage that charted the evangelist's success. Back in the States, where the economic downturn had hit newspapers along with other industries, editors and publishers hoped for a similar outpouring. On the day the Brooklyn meetings began, city streetcars were blazoned with Moody's name. Excitement filled the streets as thousands tried to gain entry into the rink where the service would be held. The *New York Herald* compared the multitudes to "one large river of life" flowing through "a promised land," creating a scene "never before witnessed in any city on this continent."[25]

Many of the hundreds who were turned away waited outside the arena hoping for a glimpse of the great evangelist. Reporters, aware of their part in feeding the frenzy, described the excitement swirling on the streets. As the *Herald* noted, the press "had prepared the popular heart for the great outpouring of the divine power."[26] Eager to spur sales, editors opined that after the tawdry Beecher trial, they were ready to run good news. As the week went on, the *Times* and the *Eagle* fought over the story line. According to the *Times*, Moody's revival bore spiritual fruit. The *Eagle*, however, saw his glory quickly fading; spectators were curious but not

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[24] See Bruce J. Evensen, "'The Greatest Day That Our City Has Ever Seen': Moody, Medill and Chicago's Gilded Age Revival," *Journal of Media and Religion* 1:4 (2002): 231–49.

[25] Evensen, "'Saucepan Journalism' in an Age of Indifference," 171–2.

[26] *Ibid.*, 171.

converted. Most other papers found a middle ground: They noted crowds continued to throng the services, but whether they came for entertainment or evangelism was unclear.

When Beecher finally went to Moody's services, he sat in the back of the hall and told reporters that despite their differences in theology (Moody was as conservative as Beecher was liberal), "we can't have too much religion."[27] He also came forward at a special ministerial meeting and sought forgiveness, albeit in an oblique confession. The admission generated another Beecher-fueled news cycle, and even the *Eagle* acknowledged that Moody might have done some good. Still, by the time the revival ended, notwithstanding a month of packed houses and nonstop reportage, the paper concluded that Brooklyn's citizens had been, were, and would be fine without Moody's ministrations. Not surprisingly, the *Times* opined otherwise, noting the locals were better off after four weeks of prayer and spiritual regeneration.

According to journalism historian Bruce Evensen, the national press saw Moody's stint in Brooklyn as a bellwether for his mission to make old-time religion fit an increasingly modern age. Most were divided on the answer, but they all agreed that the crusade was good for business. Accordingly, papers in the other large cities played a similarly central role in publicizing Moody's local campaigns. Whether or not he saved souls was secondary since by dramatizing religion he made news and sold papers. In some cities, the success or failure of the revival also served as a stand-in for newspaper wars over city leaders and urban morals. But Moody was thrilled to see the secular media doing God's work. "'I pray Heaven's blessing to rest upon the press of Chicago,' he told them in a widely quoted benediction. 'I hope they will continue to spread the Gospel of Christ as they have done during these meetings.'"[28]

Moody, Beecher, and Swing personified the type of religion news that nineteenth-century newspapers sought. Editors looked for drama, conflict, and sensation to draw readers and attract advertisers. Not all stories adhered to the formula, but those that won banner headlines and ongoing coverage did. Religion news that appeared inside the paper reported on the mundane aspects of institutional life such as religious holidays, church activities, local conflicts, and sermon recaps. Even significant events such as the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions could not muster as many news columns as a scandal. The parliament, held in conjunction with World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago, was the first time Western and Eastern

[27] *Ibid.*, 173.
[28] Evensen, "'Greatest Day,'" 244.

religious leaders formally met for public discussion. For many Americans, the meeting was a rare opportunity to hear firsthand reports on exotic "Oriental" religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

Organizers hoped to initiate interreligious dialogue, but some Christians, dismayed that "heathens" received equal footing, refused to participate. Despite that frisson of conflict, newspaper coverage, other than from the Chicago press, was sparse. Chicago's dailies included news, features, and transcripts from each day's meetings. But out-of-town newspapers barely noted the sixteen-day convocation and its panoply of world religions. Some reported on the opening day festivities; others covered speeches by the Swami Vivekananda, one of the event's most popular figures. Few, however, reported on what was a very significant occurrence in the religious world and which had ramifications well beyond the Chicago gathering.

Members of the religious community could hardly be surprised by the oversight. As religion became peripheral to the news, clergy lamented the press's lack of social responsibility and moral leadership. Disparaging the media's commercial orientation, ministers condemned both the style and content of secular newspapers. They deplored sensational stories told in florid prose and lacking moral uplift, and they condemned advertisements that hawked useless products and worldly entertainments. They believed that newspapers had a social and moral obligation to help improve society, which, to their thinking, meant inculcating a Christian worldview. Commenting on the "pernicious influence" of the "new journalism," the New York Ministers' Association recommended "that whatever the sentiments of publishers and editors, religion should be treated by the press as a factor of prime importance in the life of the country, should be mentioned respectfully, and the reports of religious enterprises, special services and local progress should be made as full as their significance properly demands."[29] Specifically, the association called on the press to stop running unnecessarily brutal details about personal scandals, divorces, suicides, trials, arrests, and executions as well as to ban advertisements for illicit behaviors like gambling.

Ministers were well aware that the power to sway public opinion had migrated from pulpit to press. The loss of cultural authority was bad enough, but they were further incensed that newspapers – which once did and still could use moral suasion for social good – bowed instead to Mammon. Charles Sheldon, a Congregationalist minister in Kansas, wove these concerns into his 1896 best seller, *In His Steps*. The book, subtitled "What Would Jesus Do," recounted the efforts of ordinary churchgoers

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[29] "The Duty of the Press: Recommendations as to the Pernicious 'New Journalism' Adopted by New York Ministers," *New York Times*, 26 January 1897, 12.

to live out Jesus' teachings. Among their number is a newspaper editor who seeks to remake his paper according to Christian values. Several years later, Sheldon had the opportunity to do just that, when the owner of the *Topeka Daily Capital* suggested he put his ideas into practice. For a week in March 1900, the "Sheldon Edition" was the talk of not just the town but the entire country. Reporters nationwide descended on the small Kansas city, and daily circulation jumped from 11,000 to 363,000 as copies sold worldwide.

As New York's ministers had advised, Sheldon suspended ads that he deemed illicit and immoral. Likewise he instructed reporters to seek "'the most vital issues of the day that affect humanity as a whole,' in an attempt to 'influence its readers to seek first the Kingdom of God.'"[30] Articles, many reprinted from other sources, reported on social reform, temperance, world famines, and foreign missions as well as the insidious effects of corporate trusts, saloons, and the stock market. Local and state news also was included, especially if it had a moral component (the organization of an anticigarette league) or socially redeeming value (reports from local colleges). A major sensation, the Sheldon Edition provoked endless columns evaluating its alleged success or failure. Some blasted its biased perspective; others hailed its high moral tone; still others wondered if it was really a newspaper. Nevertheless, the effort crystallized the late-nineteenth-century debate over the relationship between religion and news, demonstrating how much had changed since the Puritans reported evidence of God's hand in the world around them.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Charles Sheldon's experiment could not overcome the secularist tide in news coverage and in the journalism profession more generally. Papers started religion sections to include church news and religious advertisements, but page-one stories were evaluated according to standards of newsworthiness that reflected worldly concerns such as power, politics, and scandal. Between 1870 and 1930, changes in the news business, including the growing importance of advertising and the need to reach a diverse readership, further mitigated against a moralizing Christian perspective, much less sectarian religious coverage. Writing in 1933 on recent social trends, researcher Hornell Hart noted that the most significant change had been the "shift from Biblical authority and sanctions to scientific and factual

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[30] Ron Rodgers, "'Goodness Isn't News': The Sheldon Edition and the National Conversation Defining Journalism's Responsibility to Society," *Journalism History* 34:4 (Winter 2009): 208.

authority and sanctions."[31] Hart's contention was based on quantitative surveys, including one that looked at trends in religion coverage. Between 1905 and 1909, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* listed 21.4 stories per year on religion. That number plunged to 10.7 in 1930 and 1931. Similar declension marked journalism's religious content. In 1905, 78 percent of stories were positively inclined to "traditional Christianity." By 1931, only 33 percent were similarly predisposed, and the numbers were even smaller when elite publications were counted. In that domain, the percentage of positive religion stories dipped from 57 percent in 1912 and 1914 to 18 percent in 1930.[32]

Similar trends occurred in the *New York Times*, in which, between 1875 and 1930, the diminution of religion coverage could be quantified in terms of total news stories, page one stories, and percentage of total news space.[33] Sociologist Richard Flory, looking at *Times* editorials between 1870 and 1930, discovered parallels in the paper's attitude about religion. Through the 1880s, editorials had "an explicitly pro-religion and, more specifically, pro-Protestant Christianity stance."[34] The paper's changing predilections were evident in editorials about the growing clash between science and religion. Initially, the *Times* sided with the latter, opposing attempts to jettison traditional orthodoxies for modern science. But the paper's position shifted, and by 1900 the *Times* advocated the liberal vision of religion as a social force for good over and against the conservative campaign for theological rectitude.

During the 1920s, the *Times* – like many American newspapers – weighed in on the conflict between science and religion that, in 1925, coalesced around the teaching of evolution and specifically the state of Tennessee's legal suit against John Scopes. Although its news pages strived for objectivity, the *Times'* opinion columns aligned with what they deemed to be the forces of science and modernity. Editorials claimed that espousing Fundamentalist religion was symptomatic of an "ill-balanced mind"[35] and feared its practitioners made America look foolish to the rest of the world. The *Times'* editors, like many journalism professionals, believed that their profession had superseded religion as society's authoritative truth teller

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[31] Richard W. Flory, "Promoting a Secular Standard: Secularization and Modern Journalism, 1870–1930," in Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests and Conflicts in the Secularization of American Public Life* (Berkeley, 2003), 398.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Robert B. Pettit, "Religion through the Times: An Examination of the Secularization Thesis through Content Analysis of the New York Times, 1855–1975" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1986).

[34] Flory, "Promoting a Secular Standard," 400.

[35] *Ibid.*, 406.

and interpreter of events. Journalists told true stories of the contemporary age whereas Fundamentalists told tall tales steeped in the supernatural. The traditional religionists won the 1925 trial, but they lost control of the narrative. From the 1930s on, writes Flory, the kind of religion that received positive press coverage "was a new religious expression in which science and rationality were authoritative."[36]

Even as newspapers reduced religion coverage, general interest magazines picked up the slack with in-depth, illustrated features. Starting in the latter half of the nineteenth century, venues such as *Harper's*, *Munsey's*, and *The Outlook* ran articles on topics ranging from the Salvation Army's open-air evangelism to the history of Unitarianism in New York. Of special note was *McClure's*, a monthly magazine founded in 1893 by Samuel Sidney McClure. Raised in a pious Presbyterian home, McClure retained his childhood commitment to religious service. His goal as a publisher was to be an instrument of God's will and the "nation's 'moral self-respect,'" by inculcating truth and inspiring readers.[37]

McClure did that by making his magazine into the era's moral lodestar. With its stable of similarly high-minded reporters, *McClure's* Progressive-era journalists penned exposés of corruption and wrongdoing in business and government. Dubbed "muckrakers" for their willingness to dig up the nation's dirt, most of the group – which included Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, William Allen White, and Ray Stannard Baker – considered their work akin to a religious vocation. They believed that America needed better laws and governance, but that true change required moral and spiritual regeneration. Baker also reported on organized religion, and in *The Spiritual Unrest*, a 1909 collection of articles, he investigated the real estate holdings of Trinity Church Wall Street, "the richest church in America," as well as faith healing and slum missions.

Along with the Progressive Era, muckraking's heyday ended by World War I, but magazines continued to cover religion more expansively than newspapers. When Henry Luce, the son of Presbyterian ministers in China, launched a weekly newsmagazine, he mandated regular coverage of religion. In its early decades, *Time* included weekly updates of religion news alongside extensive feature pieces. Religion, for Luce, had a political aspect that was as important as its faith dimension. Foremost, it was a tool against Communism, an ideology that Luce bitterly opposed, particularly after Mao Tse-tung began his conquest of mainland China. Later, when Luce

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[36] *Ibid.*, 409.

[37] Bruce J. Evensen, "The Evangelical Origins of Muckraking," in Sloan, *Media and Religion in American History*, 191.

acquired *Life* magazine, the weekly's photojournalism spreads included pieces on religious leaders, country pastors, and urban churches.

During the interwar years, newspapers covered "kooks and spooks," the newspaper terms for religious oddballs and eccentrics, as well as institutional religion. Reporters were less interested in movements than in their leaders: swamis and yogis, faith healers and holy rollers, Catholic crusaders and Protestant moralists, Daddy Grace and Father Coughlin, Sister Aimee and Dorothy Day, Reinhold Niebuhr and Frank Buchman. These men and women were newsworthy insofar as they did the unexpected, whether it was scandalous, criminal, or extraordinary: confronting powerful politicians, rallying thousands of followers, or healing through the power of faith. Papers also covered religious issues that reflected community interests: religion and science, religion and politics, religion and social welfare, as well as current events such as religious outreach during the Great Depression and the debate over religious pacifism. Yet the press's focus on religion news, either as what religious leaders did or what religious fanatics believed, made it possible to miss two of the twentieth century's most significant religion stories: the destruction of European Jewry and the morality of the atomic bomb. The press's decision to downplay the extermination of eight million Jews has been explored by many scholars.[38] Explanations are myriad, and among them is the fact that the victims belonged to a minority faith. In the calculus of news coverage, already stretched by a world war, the fate of a far-away non-Christian community did not seem compelling. Similarly, the morality of using the atomic bomb, a decision that would seem to be an apt topic for religious leaders, was not part of the press mix. Rather, the attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki were evaluated wholly within the context of ending the war. It would be several years before the ethics of that momentous choice became a topic of public conversation.

By the end of the war, and the century's midpoint, coverage of religion reflected a new synthesis of the sacred and the secular. The right kind of religion was as American as apple pie, and the postwar suburban dream featured a white picket fence, a happy homemaker, and a Sunday benediction. Coexisting with that realm was a workaday world ever more bound to a belief in better living through science. Religion spanned the two insofar as it provided moral and spiritual underpinning to a progressive vision of a technologically enhanced future. Accordingly, newspapers paid more attention to its role in society, and by 1950 the need for a religion beat was apparent to many editors. Religious leaders were quoted on the issues

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[38] For example, Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge, UK, 2005); Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press & the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York, 1985).

of the day, especially when they echoed a growing national consensus that America's leadership in a new world order was rooted in her providential destiny. But it was not only mainstream religion that received press attention; "holy rollers," too, were poised for a comeback. In 1949, press czar William Randolph Hearst ordered his Los Angeles newspaper to "Puff Graham," a decision that made evangelical youth leader Billy Graham into a national star. Over the next fifty years evangelicalism would increasingly claim column inches. Its renaissance, in a world where science and technology proved incapable of providing global panaceas, was yet another example of how news made religion just as religion made news – and both helped to make the American nation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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RELIGION AND THE MEDIA, 1790–1945

TONA J. HANGEN

Religious organizations made innovative and often aggressive use of media and communications technology during the long nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, shaping those technologies and their cultural impacts in complex ways. Earlier the invention of printing in Europe had unintended consequences for established churches by fostering religious dissent. As print replaced face-to-face human exchanges as the primary medium of social communication and cultural currency, Protestants mastered the printed word as a tool of religious purification. In early America, the adoption of Protestant culture by Native Americans and African slaves included adopting literacy – or at least the recognition of literacy as a central power in Anglo-American society.[1]

However, early Americans got their religious reading from Europe, and domestic markets for religious media took time to develop. By 1790 some parts of the United States had very high literacy rates; in rural New England, for example, few people could not sign their own name to a legal document. Over time a mass reading public emerged both for "high culture" reading such as books and sermons, and "low culture" – broadsides, ballads, newspapers, and tracts. While the centers of production for this mass print culture were urban areas (particularly Philadelphia, Boston, and New York), the distribution and – more importantly – the consumption of print media were decentralized, and the inherent authority of clergy was challenged by an explosion of religious printed matter from nearly

[1] Colin Morris, *Wrestling with an Angel: Reflections on Christian Communications* (London, 1990); Carolyn Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking about Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1988); Leonard Sweet, "Communication and Change in American Religious History: A Historiographical Probe," in Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *Communication and Change in American Religious History,* (Grand Rapids, 1993), 1–90.

none in 1800 to, by midcentury, what Nathan Hatch has called the "grand engine of a burgeoning religious culture."[2]

One of the earliest examples of the rise of religious publishing and of the development of a richly contested culture of religious reading was the career of Philadelphia printer Mathew Carey. Carey was among the first American publishers to exploit a national market and to compete successfully with books from England, creating a massive distribution system comprising book agents, the most famous and tireless of whom was Episcopal parson Mason Locke Weems, author of a pithy fictionalized biography of George Washington. Weems and his ilk opened vast rural markets of the early national hinterland in the 1790s. Carey and Weems finally hit on a profitable business line of prepaid household family Bibles sold by itinerant booksellers, with a new edition each year from 1800 to 1820.[3]

Carey may have gotten a head start in the religious book market, but he was not alone. In 1798 Elias Smith published the nation's first religious newspaper, a fortnightly titled *Herald of Gospel Liberty*.[4] In the early nineteenth century, Methodist circuit rider Lorenzo Dow also proved a prodigious publisher, composer, and theatrical folk preacher, accompanied on his travels throughout the American backcountry by a flood of broadsides, pamphlets, journals, and books.[5] One itinerant nicknamed "Bible-Leaf Joe" (Joseph A. Coe) was in the habit of tearing out a page of the Bible as an ad for the quality of the edition he peddled.[6] Although better known for apple orchards, Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman) also sowed seeds of Emanuel Swedenborg's "New Jerusalem" by carrying and distributing

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[2] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989), 126; William J. Gilmore, "Elementary Literacy on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution: Trends in Rural New England, 1760–1830," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 92:1 (April 1982): 87–171; William Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville, TN, 1989); Madeleine Stern, "Dissemination of Popular Books in the Midwest and Far West during the Nineteenth Century," in Michael Hackenberg, ed., *Getting the Books Out: Papers of the Chicago Conference on the Book in 19th-Century America* (Washington, DC, 1987), 76–97.

[3] James N. Green, "From Printer to Publisher: Mathew Carey and the Origins of Nineteenth-Century Book Publishing," in Hackenberg, *Getting the Books Out*, 26–44; Richard W. Clement, *Books on the Frontier: Print Culture in the American West, 1763–1875* (Washington, DC, 2003).

[4] Nathan O. Hatch, "Elias Smith and the Rise of Religious Journalism in the Early Republic," in William L. Joyce, et al., eds., *Printing and Society in Early America* (Worcester, 1983), 250–77.

[5] Hatch, *Democratization*, 128–33.

[6] Stern, "Dissemination," 79.

literature during his travels.[7] American religious leaders and publishers could now dream of placing the same printed message into everyone's hands across the nation, through emerging technologies of stereotype and steam-powered printing, machine papermaking, railroads, telegraphy, electricity, and broadcasting. Each of these technological innovations accelerated trends already in place in the first decades of the nineteenth century: the national reach of high-volume, low-cost print media, and the rapid growth of a vibrant market economy both for American products and for religious ideas.[8]

Religious publishers were business and technology innovators in the early nineteenth century, oriented toward growth but not necessarily profit. They developed new kinds of organizations: the benevolent society and the charitable corporation. In 1787 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in North America (SPGNA) was founded to Christianize Indians and to distribute free religious literature including Bibles, testaments, tracts, songbooks, and primers. The SPGNA was the first of many charitable and benevolent societies, over nine hundred of them founded in New England alone.[9] The Bible Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1809, bought Mathew Carey's Bibles and gave them away as fast as they could, believing that the presence of Bibles in homes and libraries could not help but uplift American frontier communities. The Philadelphia Bible Society soon became a major investor in stereotyping, an expensive new printing technology but one that permitted huge economies of scale and the ability to roll out tens of thousands of Bibles from a single set of plates. Thus Bible societies soon found themselves selling Bibles to the emerging middle class in order to finance Bible giveaways to poorer folk. The American Bible Society (ABS), founded in 1816, united similar societies across the eastern seaboard, concentrating Protestant wealth and business acumen in New York and sending out colporteurs to peddle or give away Bibles in cities and hamlets alike.

The ABS was one of three enormous multidenominational publishing houses that served as the voice of the interconnected system of organizations and reform movements that came to be called the Benevolent Empire; the other two were the American Sunday School Union (1824) and the

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[7] Michael H. Harris, "'Spiritual Cakes upon the Waters': The Church as a Disseminator of the Printed Word on the Ohio Valley Frontier to 1850," in Hackenberg, *Getting the Books Out,* 98–120.

[8] David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York, 2004), 5; Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age: Media, Religion and Culture* (New York, 2006), 26–8.

[9] Nord, *Faith in Reading,* 32.

American Tract Society (ATS) founded in 1825. Both had as core missions the printing and distribution of popular religious literature, such as tracts. Tracts were simple, free, short narrative pamphlets explicating a point of doctrine, recounting a dramatic conversion, or telling a cautionary tale of moral decline. By 1824 the New England Tract Society issued 770,000 tracts yearly, sending teams of tract-bearing visitors into poor urban neighborhoods to organize prayer meetings, provide spiritual counsel, and drum up church attendance. Sentimentality suffused visitors' reports and business correspondence, suggesting the pull and organizing power that emotive stories held for antebellum reformers.[10] By 1831, the New York Tract Society annually handed out more than five million tracts to the city's 36,000 families in planned monthly doses, especially in public places like wharves, hospitals, and institutions. David Nord notes that counting all of its publications, the ATS annually printed at least five pages for every man, woman, and child in America. Abolitionists, too, in the mid-1830s mailed millions of pamphlets from the American Antislavery Society to households all over the nation.[11]

Both Bible and tract societies worked to make religious media as free as the message. They operated within the market, in the sense of being large and complex business structures intent on recordkeeping and financial accountability, paying considerable attention to what themes and subjects satisfied readers most. But theirs were values that opposed market forces, concentrating formidable business enterprise on products that were, at the point of exchange, free of cost. They adopted cost-saving technology such as steam-powered presses long before they were widely used in secular book publishing, and they developed unit cost accounting even before the railroads did.[12]

Another thrust of the Protestant publishing juggernaut was Sunday schools, coalescing in the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) founded in 1824. Sunday school instructive materials were a major zone of access to print materials in antebellum America, and a key piece of the story of literacy education parallel to the common school and lyceum movements.[13] Religious leaders continually bemoaned the lack of "godly" literature in far-flung towns and appealed for donations in order to provide inexpensive

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[10] Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York, 1985), 149–54.

[11] Nord, *Faith in Reading,* 45–50.

[12] Victor Neuburg, "Chapbooks in America: Reconstructing the Popular Reading of Early America," in Cathy N. Davidson, ed., *Reading in America: Literature and Social History* (Baltimore, 1989), 81–113; Harris, "Spiritual Cakes," 101.

[13] Gilmore, "Elementary Literacy," 16. See also Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790–1880* (New Haven, 1988).

moral reading (often richly illustrated) and to buttress the efforts of missionaries and religious colporteurs in spreading the word.[14]

Religious publishing aided mission work in the United States and overseas. The American Home Mission Society, founded in 1826, got its materials from the ABS, the ATS, and the ASSU, and then in turn provided them to Presbyterian, Congregational, Dutch Reformed, and Associate Reformed congregations.[15] The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sponsored some of the first Anglo-American Protestant missionaries in the Far West and Pacific islands. In 1820, for example, they sent a group of missionaries and a small hand press from Boston around Cape Horn to Hawaii to print native-language primers. Printing and religion mixed freely in other Indian missions too; devout Baptist and Indian agent Jotham Meeker used a printing press to introduce an alphabet and printed primers of the Ottawa language in Shawanoe, Kansas, in the 1830s; and after Cherokee and Creek removal to Indian Territory, the ABCFM furnished a press to those highly literate communities to print primers and readers in their own languages.[16]

Fruitful and determined individuals added to the explosion of religious print. The output of Adventist William Miller is suggestive – printing and distributing four million pieces of literature in the four years prior to 1843, the year Adventists prophesied Christ's Second Coming. Publisher and promoter Joshua Himes made William Miller a religious superstar and helped him blanket the country with cheap literature. In 1842 Miller sent copies of the *Mid-Night Cry*, his two-cent daily newspaper, by direct mail to every clergyman in the state of New York.[17]

The period between 1790 and 1810 witnessed an explosion in newspaper publication; papers sprang up that appealed to less educated readers, or openly mocked elites.[18] In the 1790s, Congress gave newspapers favorable postal rates, which also encouraged the growth of religious newspapers. By 1850 there were close to two hundred religious periodicals in America, fully half of them newspapers.[19] Of the six hundred religious journals founded in America by 1830, only fourteen had existed before 1790. Publishers even took advantage of newspaper postal rates to issue

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[14] Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill, 2004).

[15] Harris, "Spiritual Cakes," 110.

[16] Clement, *Books on the Frontier*, 70–77.

[17] Hatch, *Democratization*, 126; "Elias Smith," 275.

[18] Hatch, "Elias Smith," 260.

[19] Sweet, "Communication and Change," 36; Wesley Norton, "Religious Newspapers in the Old Northwest to 1861: A History and Record of Opinion," *Journal of the West* 19:2 (April 1980): 16–21.

and ship cheap books – often serial fiction – as periodicals or unbound newspaper "extras," to be assembled, bound, and resold at the end of the rail line.[20] Transportation improvements helped carry the penny press and other cheap periodicals afar, by rail, steamboat, canal, and stagecoach. By 1823, a *Christian Herald* editorial could caution that the press should be regarded with "a sacred veneration and supported with religious care" and must be supported, lest the pulpit fall.[21] In the 1830s, the Methodist weekly *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, along with the monthly *American National Preacher*, each claimed circulation of twenty-five thousand, giving them the largest circulations in the world at that time. Antebellum religious periodicals catered to foreign-language audiences too, including German Methodist, Jewish, and Catholic papers, Scandinavian Lutheran papers, a Chinese-language paper edited in San Francisco, and the Cincinnati *Israelite*, the mouth of Reformed Judaism in America. The printing office of the Mormon *Evening and Morning Star* in Jackson County, Missouri, was one of the westernmost printing presses in the early 1830s. Joseph Smith's death in 1844 by mob violence was instigated partly over who was to control the local printing presses in frontier Missouri and Illinois Mormon communities.[22] Nineteenth-century religious newspapers, like story papers, blended journalism and fiction to appeal to working-class readers. One of the century's most popular writers and editors, Ned Buntline, stoked anti-Catholic sentiment with serialized thrillers that evoked fears of "papal Empire."[23]

The impact of all this cheap reading material may be seen on many cultural fronts. The first was the sheer reach of religious print and the scale of its distribution, supplying millions of households and Sunday schools with books, Bibles, hymnals, newspapers, and tracts. Religious book and periodical production went up 500 percent in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.[24] The second was a transformation in reading styles and rituals. "Traditional literacy" in the eighteenth century consisted of deliberate, reverential, intense reading, often marked by memorization over a lifetime

[20] David D. Hall, "The Uses of Literacy in New England, 1600–1850," in Joyce, et al., *Printing and Society in Early America*; Stern, "Dissemination."

[21] Brown, *Word in the World*, 49; Hatch, *Democratization*, 142.

[22] Norton, "Religious Newspapers," 19, 21.

[23] Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley, 2002); Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York, 1993); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (London, 1987); Richard H. Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, 1993).

[24] Brown, *Word in the World,* 47.

of encountering a few texts. Family Bibles often contained family record pages, pedigree charts, or tables of proper names, becoming repositories of genealogical information.[25] In the transition from a book-scarce world to a book-abundant world, reading came to emphasize "extensive exposure to many printed texts rather than repeated, intensive examination of the same ones."[26] Pious readers owned ever more available religious books as devotional texts, as primers for learning how to read, or even as physical totems for display (some colporteurs carried "stretchers" – book spines mounted on a strip of fabric, to show prospective buyers how the books would look on a shelf). Some religious books were dissembled and lent to others in pieces, evoking the multiplication of loaves and fishes.[27]

The new reading opened a door not to agonized Calvinistic soul-searching, but to liberated self-examination and the negotiation, creation, and management of an autonomous self. For Transcendentalists of the 1840s, reading was a key to self-discovery and new realms of thought. New reading appealed to new readers: not just gentlemen and clergymen, but now to the working class, women, immigrants, children, and the unchurched. And the new religious print material existed side by side, and indeed competed with, a raucous antebellum print culture that was rowdy, bawdy, and saturated with provocative or shocking images and genres that were raw and potentially transgressive.

Fiction was part of the antebellum American publishing explosion. Fewer than a hundred fiction titles were published between the Revolution and 1820, but eight hundred in the ten years before 1850, and by 1855 novels were more than half the books published in the United States.[28] Even within sermons, instruction increasingly took the form of a compelling, emotionally infused narrative, rather than theological exposition. Moral and didactic fiction was among religious publishers' steady sellers, even when it paraded as "true" biography, such as Parson Weems' *Life of Washington.* Some of the most popular novels of the nineteenth century were religious themed or explicitly mission-oriented. Indeed, narrative fiction became the primary genre for religious discourse, especially evident in the flood of nineteenth-century anti-Catholic popular fiction, like Maria Monk's sensational *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836). Promoting or containing female religiosity were important themes in such fiction, at a time when American Protestantism was becoming increasingly feminized, hence the popularity of "escaped nun" tales, positioned

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[25] Gilmore, "Elementary Literacy," 257.
[26] Richard D. Brown, "From Cohesion to Competition," in Joyce, et al., *Printing and Society in Early America*, 302; Hall, "Uses of Literacy," 23–4.
[27] Stern, "Dissemination," 78; Nord, *Faith in Reading*, 139.
[28] Brown, *Word in the World*, 51.

as "romances of the real" or exposés that played with notions of religious truth and fiction and the emerging field of journalism. Narratives of captivity and rescue took on religious dimensions in stories of enslavement to sin and cathartic release through conversion. Popular religious fiction was overwhelmingly female fiction: written by, or for, the female reader. Sacrificial mothers and maudlin children's death scenes in domestic fiction reflected widespread images of Christ and elevated domesticity and its perils to a spiritual plane.[29] By the middle of the century, features of popular printed matter like illustrations and story serialization had made their way into mainstream publishing and into Bibles and religious periodicals.[30]

In 1871 Mark Twain observed that theater, newspapers, and "the despised novel" rather than the "drowsy pulpit" supplied Americans with their religious sensibilities.[31] Control of licentious reading habits gradually passed from the moral authority of clergy to legislation, for example, the 1873 Comstock Act to suppress obscene literature.[32] At its centennial in 1889, the Methodist Book Concern's book list included travel writing, "harmless fiction," biography, history, and "entertaining and elevating romances," showing that some religious sensibilities had found ways to coexist with fiction.[33] Christian evangelical publishing reached its apex of commercial success with Lew Wallace's novel *Ben Hur* (1880), which sold 230,000 copies in its first seven years, and over 2.5 million copies by 1913. Late-nineteenth-century religious novels were effective literary tools of the Social Gospel movement, but were subject increasingly both to commercialization and to parody – suggesting the deep roots and popular reach of religious fiction in the American media landscape.[34]

ORAL COMMUNICATION, REVIVALS, AND HOLY THEATER

Newer reading styles of solitary, introspective reading in a world of print abundance existed side by side with older communal, oral, and public media

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[29] Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xvi–xviii, 128.

[30] Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York, 2004), 1, 37–8; David S. Reynolds, *Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America* (Cambridge, MA, 1981); Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, 2000), 159.

[31] Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain, A Biography: The Personal and Literary Life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens* (New York, 1912), 4:1625.

[32] Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*, 159.

[33] Clement, *Books on the Frontier*; Stern, "Dissemination"; Michael Hackenberg, "The Subscription Publishing Network in Nineteenth-Century America," in Hackenberg, *Getting the Books Out*, 45–75.

[34] Reynolds, *Faith in Fiction*, 1–6, 208–9; Brown, *Word in the World*, 78.

practices that persisted in American culture.[35] Methodism is an illustrative example. Religious colporteurs dedicated to Christian evangelism trod the same roads as itinerant booksellers and Methodist circuit riders who may have lacked educational credentials, but who excelled at extemporaneous sermonizing. Antebellum revival sermons took their cues from tracts: spoken in the local vernacular, relying on brevity and emotional impact, delivered with little preparation from a few key points scribbled on one's sleeve – "off the cuff," indicating the new homiletic style.

Camp meetings exemplified the old orality made new. Kicked off by the 1801 revival in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, by 1820 almost a thousand camp meetings had been held.[36] Charles Grandison Finney's revivals in upstate New York in the 1820s exemplified these patterns of religious worship. Finney's was a traveling show, a systematic and entertaining fuse for religious fervor, and a potently effective combination of prayer, testimony, and exhortation that facilitated dramatic conversion in public settings of groaning, weeping, sometimes fainting crowds. Tent revivals were religious theater, holy carnivals, the first large-scale public entertainments; participants exhibited emotive, sometimes raucous religious expression that resisted control.[37] Showman and circus impresario P. T. Barnum got his start selling Bibles.[38] Peddlers and revivalists alike spoke of the elixir of metamorphosis; patent medicines and revivalism both relied on itinerant oral performances, here today and gone tomorrow. Medicine shows, lectures on magnetism, and mesmerism were part of the nineteenth-century American culture of itinerant entertainment, all eyed with skepticism because of their purported special influence over women and for claims to sell soul cures packaged as healing waters and powders.[39] Independent religious promoters became a familiar reality in the "free-wheeling marketplace of religious ideas" that favored the most colorful entrepreneurs.[40]

HYMNODY AND THE MEDIUM OF RELIGIOUS MUSIC

Music and hymnody were a key form of religious media in the long nineteenth century and a conduit for spiritual sensibility, religious values, and

[35] Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page*; Nord, *Faith in Reading*; Hatch, *Democratization*.
[36] Ellen Lorenz, *Glory Hallelujah! The Story of the Campmeeting Spiritual* (Nashville, 1980), 22.
[37] R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York, 1994).
[38] Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York, 2003), 93.
[39] Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (San Francisco, 1994); Donald M. Scott, "Print and the Public Lecture System, 1840–1860," in Joyce, et al., *Printing and Society in Early America*, 278–99.
[40] Hatch, *Democratization*, 213.

pious practices.⁴¹ For the burgeoning evangelical denominations, hymn singing was the medium – the very wind – of the Holy Spirit. Hymns often mediated the moment of conversion. Hymns were an educational medium for children and new converts, an aid to prayer and preaching, which served as homiletic devices and literary material for poets and novelists. They packed dense religious meaning into compact ritual form and helped develop denominational identity. Hymnody was part of American mass religious culture, and hymn books, songsters, and tune books were part of the avalanche of antebellum religious publishing.⁴²

Music, like reading, benefited from the proliferation of ever cheaper print technologies and the spread of religious itinerancy. Religious music was transformed by the introduction of shape-note singing, first published in 1798 in the pathbreaking musical handbook *The Easy Instructor*. Shape-note style became celebrated and widely used in rural America, eliminating the need for traditional musical training, and creating its own market for shape-note hymnals and songbooks, such as Benjamin Franklin White's 1844 shape-note compilation *The Sacred Harp*. Many nineteenth-century southern homes contained but few books, perhaps only the Bible and a copy of *The Sacred Harp*.⁴³

Small word-only books called "songsters" came into print starting at the end of the eighteenth century and circulated in camp meetings. The syncretic blending of secular and religious tunes and the interchangeability of lyrics and tunes because of common meter indicate that published religious songs were part of a rich culture of musical creativity that embraced, but was not limited to, hymns circulating in print form. Among the earliest was New Hampshire Baptist Joshua Smith's *Divine Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, first published in 1784 and running into multiple editions in the early nineteenth century. Camp meeting songsters spread south and west in the early decades of the nineteenth century, in tandem with the spread of traveling revivals, religious book selling, and rapid growth of the Protestant evangelical denominations on the frontiers of Anglo-American settlement. Mormons published their first songster in 1835, edited by Emma Smith with evident tune borrowing from popular songs. Shaker convert Richard McNemar, who had attended the 1801

⁴¹ Philip B. Bohlman, "Prayer on the Panorama: Music and Individualism in American Religious Experience," in Philip V. Bohlman, Edith L. Blumhofer, and Maria M. Chow, eds., *Music and American Religious Experience* (New York, 2006), 242.

⁴² Stephen Marini, *Sacred Song in America: Religion, Music and Public Culture* (Urbana, 2003); Stephen Marini, "Hymnody and History: Early American Evangelical Hymns as Sacred Music," in Bohlman, Blumhofer, and Chow, *Music and American Religious Experience*, 123–54.

⁴³ Brown, *Word in the World,* 202; see also James R. Goff, Jr., *Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel* (Chapel Hill, 2002).

Cane Ridge revival, first compiled Shaker songs with tunes from folk and
tavern ballads, love songs, and dance airs. The 1805 *Christian Harmony, or
Songster's Companion*, published in Exeter, New Hampshire, contained many
secular melodies like sea chanties.

Not all religious songs were published, of course – many were passed
orally, repeated, passed on to other gatherings, or forgotten. Music was a
spontaneous, fluidly moving medium with its own momentum, particu-
larly among black Methodists and Baptists, who relied on oral transmission
to share the distinctive musical style that found expression as black spiritu-
als.[44] But musical publications trace religious change; for example, Reform
Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise published the first American synagogue liturgy,
Minhag America, in English in 1857. Wise called for organs in synagogues,
Protestant-style chorale hymns, and songs that departed from traditional
cantorial style. Reform musical innovations influenced Americanized
Jewish synagogue music in the late nineteenth century, although the influx
of two million Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews between the 1880s
and the 1920s exerted a strong pull in the opposite direction.[45]

MASS EVANGELISM AND MASS CULTURE
BEFORE BROADCASTING

Music and keen promotion strategies were both crucial in the success of
late-nineteenth-century mass evangelism, which preceded broadcast-
ing by several decades, but which laid the groundwork for American
religious organizations to embrace new technologies of mass communi-
cation. Evangelist Dwight L. Moody and his song man, Ira D. Sankey,
harnessed the power and reach of mass media for evangelism. They issued
sermon reprints, sometimes in handsomely bound commemorative edi-
tions, published special hymnals for specific revivals, plastered their venues
with posters and circulars, negotiated discounted fares and special tick-
ets on excursion trains, and arranged for prayer chains to link volunteers
and backers in common purpose. Their organization aggressively sought
favorable newspaper coverage through advertising and daily press releases
and maintained a well-furnished reporters' box at every meeting. Moody
hawked autobiographies, even selling his own personal effects at auction.
City papers marveled at the vast crowds and fell over themselves to scoop
one another in reporting Moody's sermon texts and bask in the halo of his

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[44] Lorenz, *Glory Hallelujah*, 74; Hatch, *Democratization*, 150–60; Linda Gilbert Davenport,
Divine Song on the Northeast Frontier: Maine's Sacred Tunebooks, 1800–1830 (Lanham, MD,
1996).
[45] Bohlman, "Prayer on the Panorama"; Marini, *Sacred Song in America*.

celebrity as a way to boost their circulations.[46] The music of Moody revival services, collected and published by Sankey in 1875 as *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, popularized the emerging genre of gospel music and sold at least a million copies.

The mantle of celebrity mass evangelism after Moody's death was assumed by Billy Sunday, whose evangelistic career spanned from 1896 to 1935 during which he probably preached to between eighty and one hundred million people. Sunday started as promoter and "advance man" for a Presbyterian tent evangelist, then struck out on his own, garnering large urban crowds by the 1910s. Like Moody and Sankey, Sunday was astute at getting press coverage and turning it to his advantage; he was nominally Presbyterian, but many other denominational periodicals favorably covered his revival career. He developed a specialized team to orchestrate publicity, hold prerevival prayer meetings, train choirs, ushers, and tabernacle staff, and coordinate thousands of volunteers. He used the most sophisticated business practices of his day and appealing advertising: postcards, portraits of himself wearing his old baseball uniform, sermon reprints, and posters. Sunday overlapped with the radio era, but he did not use the new medium regularly; his career had been made on the sawdust trail, and he preferred crowds to the impersonal microphone of the new-fangled radio.[47]

The careers of Moody and Sunday suggest the deep immersion of American religion in mass culture and advertising by the turn of the twentieth century, and the fascination with media and images as tools of self-transformation. Religious visual media of the late nineteenth century included lantern slide shows to enhance revival sermons. Some religious artists built their careers around supplying images for broad interdenominational distribution in this way. Joseph Boggs Beale, for example, painted over six hundred religious slides that were published and distributed in sets depicting the biblical testaments, *Ben Hur*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and fantastic images of apocalyptic future events.[48]

Advertising, too, took cultural cues from religious themes of metamorphosis, redemption, and progress, not to mention missionary zeal for products and services. To take but one example, a *Harper's Weekly* ad for Pear's Soap, published 16 May 1885, quoted prominent Protestant minister Henry Ward Beecher, "If Cleanliness is next to Godliness, then surely

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[46] Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age.*

[47] Roger Bruns, *Preacher: Billy Sunday and Big-Time American Evangelism* (New York, 1992); Robert Francis Martin, *Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862–1935* (Bloomington, 2002).

[48] Terry Lindvall, *Sanctuary Cinema: Origins of the Christian Film Industry* (New York, 2007); David Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York, 1999).

SOAP is a means of GRACE." Religion and business merged seamlessly in the best-selling book by Congregationalist advertising executive Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), which cast Jesus as the founder of modern business and an exemplar for the modern corporate man.[49]

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

As visual imagery and promotional media in American mass evangelism suggest, technologies that multiplied and reproduced the human image found ready audiences in American religion. One of the most intriguing religious aspects of the new medium of photography may have been the vogue for spirit photography, in which grieving Victorians sat for daguerreotypes or photographic portraits, in hopes that the final plate would show the ghostly presence of their deceased loved ones. Spiritualists hoped that these images would lend an air of science to their claims of communication with the world of spirits, but this was undermined by exposing hoaxes like Boston's Dr. William Howard Mumler. After establishing himself as a well-known spirit photographer, Mumler was put on trial in 1868 in New York City for public fraud and eventually acquitted, although disgraced; P. T. Barnum was a witness in the trial.[50]

Motion pictures, too, were a medium for American religion. In 1885, the Reverend Hannibal Goodwin, rector of the House of Prayer Episcopal church in Newark, New Jersey, filed for a patent on celluloid film strips and started the Goodwin Camera and Film Company, a business soon sold to George Eastman. The moving picture was "born a child of the church," in the words of a 1918 column in *Moving Picture World* by the Reverend W. H. Jackson.[51]

Some of the earliest motion pictures were an outgrowth of public interest in religious spectacles, in particular, stereopticon or lantern slide versions of the Bavarian Oberammergau Passion Play, which circulated in the 1880s and 1890s on the American lecture circuit. In 1897 a film of the Horwitz Passion Play was screened in the United States in a multimedia program that also featured a lecture, organ music, sacred hymns, and lantern slides. But the Horwitz project was actually scooped by Richard Holloman and Frank Russell, who filmed a knockoff passion play on the rooftop of New York's Grand Central Palace Hotel. Theirs was a nineteen-minute film

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[49] Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 143–4, 178.

[50] Nancy M. West, "Camera Fiends: Early Photographs, Death, and the Supernatural," *CR: The Centennial Review* 40:1 (1996): 170–206; Charles Case, "The Ghost and Mr. Mumler," *American History* 43:1 (2008): 42–9; Sarah A. Wilburn, *Possessed Victorians: Extra Spheres in Nineteenth-Century Mystical Writings* (Aldershot, UK, 2006).

[51] Lindvall, *Sanctuary Cinema*, 56.

with live narration that opened in Holloman's Eden Musee, a lowbrow venue and wax museum. Passion plays were an important part of early cinema, running longer than other turn-of-century films, and providing filmgoers – who were still learning what it was to be a film audience – the experience Pamela Grace calls "ritualoid entertainment – a sense of religious involvement blended with the pleasures of film-going."[52]

Filmmakers drew on biblical and religious narratives to make other early films in the decades before 1920. By 1909, the American Lithograph Company was advertising *Jepthah's Daughter*, *Salome*, *Saul and David*, and the *Judgment of Solomon* as "Grand Biblical Reels for Sunday Shows." Sidney Olcott made a 1912 film about the life of Jesus on location in the Near East, titled *From the Manger to the Cross* (noticeably avoiding any theological statement about what happened after the cross). Like Passion play films, Olcott's production was first attacked as blasphemous, but eventually received widespread praise, partly as a result of a concerted publicity campaign that advised theater owners to offer ministers and clergy an advance screening, prepare written invitations ("preferably in gothic type"), use incense in the exhibition room, and arrange for an organ to provide the silent film's musical score.[53]

By the mid-1910s, representing Jesus on film was no longer controversial, and religious organizations found ways to use motion pictures in missionary and church work. For example, Connecticut Congregationalist Herbert A. Jump installed a projector in his church and published a 1910 pamphlet titled "The Religious Possibilities of the Motion Picture," arguing film could move even an illiterate audience with sacred stories. One Long Island clergyman actually resigned his pastorate after seeing a film of *Pilgrim's Progress*, turning instead to film promotion rather than pulpit ministry. Thomas Edison supplied the Presbyterian Board of Publications with films and projectors for Midwestern churches in 1913. The Federal Council of Churches ran a projection room at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Some evangelists, including Chicago's Paul Rader, made silent films to promote their revival campaigns.[54] Salvation Army Commander Herbert Booth made his own movies to attract audiences to his salvation sermons. The Salvation Army even set up a Cinematograph Department, first using the novelty of film itself to draw a crowd to little nature documentaries

[52] Pamela Grace, *The Religious Film: Christianity and the Hagiopic* (Malden, MA, 2009), 22–3.

[53] Ivan Butler, *Religion in the Cinema*, International Film Guide Series (New York, 1969), 34.

[54] Douglas Carl Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion: American Fundamentalists and Mass Culture, 1920–1940* (Athens, GA 2001).

(called "actualities"), but also employing filmic special effects like smoke and vapors to convey sensational tales of early Christian martyrs that harrowed and titillated audiences. In 1919, the Methodist Centenary in Columbus, Ohio, featured an eight-story-tall outdoor motion picture screen, and the celebration included speeches by director D. W. Griffiths and Adolph Zukor, the founder of Paramount Pictures.[55] Some of these hopeful film ministries ended when sound films and radio were developed, but denominational film production continued throughout the 1920s, supplying visual sermonettes, moral features like the Presbyterian temperance weeper *The Story the Keg Told Me*, and Sunday Bible story one-reelers from companies like Sacred Films Inc., in Burbank, California, an offshoot of the Weiss brothers' more profitable business in cheap dramas and western cliffhangers.

Some Hollywood films with religious themes were racy, sexualized, or violent – giving rise to the same kinds of criticism that had been levied a generation earlier on fiction. Cecil B. DeMille's 1927 epic *King of Kings* showed how Hollywood studios and religious leaders had reached some level of accommodation. DeMille consulted religious advisors including the head of the Federal Council of Churches' Film and Drama Commission, had actors sign pledges of good conduct while working on the film, opened the first day of filming with an interfaith prayer service, and conducted a Catholic Mass on the set daily. But still *King of Kings* played loose with biblical text and historical details, providing viewers more than glimpses of fleshly delights.[56]

In 1915, the Supreme Court ruling in *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio* established that movies were subject to state and federal regulation like any other American business. State and municipal censorship boards proliferated, chopping, banning, or confiscating film prints at will. In 1922 Hollywood formed industry self-regulation groups and developed the Hays Production Code, nicknamed for the head of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, the straight-laced Presbyterian William Hays. The code, written with Catholic and Protestant participation, arrived about the same time that theaters were being wired for talkies and was in effect until the late 1960s. For its first twenty years, the head of the Production Code Agency was Joseph Breen, a devout Catholic who personally oversaw scripts, story lines, and the final cuts of all Hollywood motion pictures, and whose views were in line with

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[55] Lindvall, *Sanctuary Cinema*, 7, 56.
[56] Butler, *Religion in the Cinema*, 11; Gerald E. Forshey, *American Religious and Biblical Spectaculars* (Westport, 1992) 15–17; Grace, *Religious Film*, 28; Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion*, 91.

the influential Catholic Legion of Decency.[57] In the late 1930s, weekly film attendance exceeded eighty-eight million, more than three times the weekly attendance at churches and synagogues.[58] These cathedrals of mass culture competed with churches, but also accommodated some of their core values and were shaped by religious leaders positioned as moral gatekeepers of the industry.

TELEGRAPHY, RECORDED SOUND, AND RADIO BROADCASTING

The first words electronically transmitted, by Samuel Morse's telegraph wire in 1837, were the nondenominational religious query, "What hath God wrought?" The telegraph revolutionized news and business in the United States, and it found religious uses also. In 1857 Protestant evangelicals made use of telegraphy in the Union Prayer Meeting Revival.[59] Inventors explored the possibilities of wire transmission to "broadcast" religious services to telephone subscribers.[60] In 1912, for example, an enterprising revivalist in Anson, Texas, connected a megaphone to a telephone receiver to send his service to more than five hundred people who were prevented from attending by bad weather, noting "a number of conversions."[61]

With the development of wireless telegraphy and radio after the turn of the twentieth century, new possibilities emerged for evangelism on a massive scale and for connecting audiences through new media. One of the first wireless radio broadcasts was a religious offering of sorts, on Christmas Eve 1906. Roland Fessenden transmitted a short broadcast from the wireless station at Brant Rock, Massachusetts – words, a poem, and a rendition of the Christmas carol "O Holy Night" on the violin – startling ship radio operators who were accustomed to picking up only Morse code dots and dashes. Reportedly some thought they were hearing angels.[62]

The development of radio owed much to the popularity of the Victrola and phonograph recordings, which helped create eager national audiences for recorded and broadcast sound. Religious phonograph recordings spurred early religious broadcasting; the popularization of religion as commodified entertainment made its migration onto the new medium

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[57] Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Administration* (New York, 2007).
[58] Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion*, 90.
[59] Sweet, "Communication and Change," 54.
[60] "Church Services by Telephone," *American Telephone Journal*, 30 July 1904.
[61] Marvin, *When Old Technologies Were New*, 215.
[62] Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin, and Bettina G. Fabos, *Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication* (New York, 2009), 93.

of radio a natural progression. Victrola records of Jewish cantorial performances achieved commercial success and influenced many synagogue cantors' style.[63] The new Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century, too, spread partly through phonograph records that captured not only Pentecostalism's exuberant musical style but also its distinctive practice of glossalia. Pentecostal phonograph recordings gave voice to women exhorters and talented church musicians, such as Arizona Dranes, who cut records for Okeh Records in the 1920s – often sold alongside blues and gospel race records by train porters and travelers along the routes of the Great Migration in and out of the South.[64] Some of these grassroots revivalists and gospel recording artists were among the early pioneers of radio, like the Lefevre family, who performed in Pentecostal and Church of God revivals and had a Sunday morning radio program in Atlanta in the late 1920s, sponsored by NuGrape and Orange Crush soft drinks. The Carter family, too, went from migrant work picking cotton to become the signature soundtrack of Pappy O'Daniels Flour on Texas radio in the 1930s, transitioning from hillbilly and western tunes to all gospel based in part on audience demand from fan letters. Billy Sunday's music leader, Homer Rodeheaver, also promoted gospel recordings through phonographs and radio airplay, reportedly selling a million of his recording of the "Old Rugged Cross." James Vaughan's gospel music school in Tennessee, which had begun in the 1910s to publicize his line of gospel songbooks, started a radio station in 1923 to give many gospel performers radio exposure and also branched out into phonograph records. The synergistic link of radio and records seen in jazz, big band, and later top forty, was evident in religious radio from the beginning of the medium.[65]

Radio sounded like mass evangelism but overcame the barrier of physical presence, allowing people to become part of an audience without actually being present and vaulting the barrier between public worship and private devotion. Radio multiplied the effect of religious speech on a scale that late-nineteenth-century evangelists could have only dreamed of. By bringing American religious organizations into the world of broadcasting, radio facilitated parachurch organizing that preceded Christian right political activism by decades. Radio relocated the setting of some religious services and content out of sacred spaces and into secular spaces, which provided new venues for contacting the unchurched, but which also enmeshed religious broadcasters in complex and demanding commercial relationships.

[63] Marini, *Sacred Song in America*; Mark Slobin, *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate* (Urbana, 2002).

[64] Horace Clarence Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound: The Golden Age of Gospel* (Washington, DC, 1995).

[65] Goff, *Close Harmony,* 74.

As with religious publishing, this was nothing new, but the vast reach and expense of radio considerably heightened the risks and consequences for failed broadcasting ventures.

Unlike print media, the finite spectrum of broadcast frequencies meant a limit to the number of possible outlets. Scarcity forced decisions that prioritized certain kinds of programming at the expense of others. Federal radio policy encouraged religious programming but did not specify how it was to be aired, giving rise to a period of experimentation in radio's early days, starting with church services on KDKA Pittsburgh in 1921.[66] The airwaves quickly reflected the diverse religious landscape of the 1920s, from staid mainstream programming like NBC's sponsored "National Radio Pulpit," to grassroots efforts like evangelist Paul Rader purchasing all-day Sunday airtime from a Chicago agricultural station, to church-owned stations like Aimee Semple McPherson's KFSG in Los Angeles.[67] CBS's "Church of the Air" program in the early 1930s featured speakers representing America's three major faiths, airing Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish segments in separate time slots. Immigrant Jewish listeners appreciated Friday night Sabbath music programs that aired in the New York area, and ironically radio's "Sunday ghetto" featured some of the most vibrant hours for Yiddish broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s since there was less competition with English-language programming.[68]

A few of the earliest broadcasters from outside the religious mainstream have had tremendous staying power on radio: Reform Judaism's "Message of Israel" aired on NBC and later ABC for over fifty years, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcast, "Music and the Spoken Word," still airs weekly after more than eighty years. And radio was an avenue for religious creativity, experimentation with new formats, and taking advantage of the wonder and novelty of the medium itself. The Indianapolis evangelist E. Howard Cadle, whose background was in auto sales, shoe repair, and marketing for the National Biscuit Company, installed radio receiving sets in churches without pastors throughout rural Indiana in the 1930s, giving himself a simultaneous preaching circuit through radio broadcasts over WLW in Cincinnati.[69]

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[66] Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 21–2.

[67] Hal Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television in the United States, 1921–1991: The Programs and Personalities* (Jefferson, 1992); Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial*.

[68] David S. Siegel and Susan Siegel, *Radio and the Jews: The Untold Story of How Radio Influenced America's Image of Jews, 1920–1950s* (Yorktown Heights, NY, 2007); Ari Y. Kelman, *Station Identification: A Cultural History of Yiddish Radio in the United States* (Berkeley, 2009).

[69] Abrams, *Selling the Old-Time Religion*, 38–9.

The "radio priest," Father Charles Coughlin of Royal Oak, Michigan, started with a children's broadcast, and with determined syndication built a vast radio audience for his weekly broadcasts that rivaled that of any large network program. At the height of his popularity in the mid-1930s, Coughlin's sermons had millions of listeners, and he employed dozens of secretaries to open the two hundred thousand letters he received each week. During the Great Depression, Coughlin founded a political party, the National Union for Social Justice, and nearly single-handedly he challenged President Roosevelt's New Deal programs with his radio critiques. Coughlin so frequently crossed the line between inspiration and political agitation that by the late 1930s his program had become synonymous with irresponsible and dangerous demagoguery – and it was forced off the air.[70]

Other Christian critics of the New Deal who used radio to express social tensions or Christian hopes and to unite disenfranchised and beleaguered Americans abounded in the 1930s and attracted the attention of the emerging field of cultural studies. Theodor Adorno analyzed the "psychological technique" of local California broadcasts of one Fundamentalist Christian broadcaster of the political far right, Martin Luther Thomas, criticizing what he saw as unchecked anti-Semitism and hate speech masquerading as Christian religious zeal. Adorno's study of Thomas was part of the effort of the Institute for Social Research to document American mass media culture (including religious media) and to warn of its potential dangers to democracy.[71]

The relentless pursuit of funding to sustain media ministries meant that commercial religious broadcasters used air time for fund-raising, relying on the goodwill of faithful listeners, but tainting all religious broadcasting with the whiff of hucksterism. In 1941, the Federal Communication Commission's *Mayflower* decision, which asserted that broadcasters cannot be advocates, concerned religious broadcasters deeply. Conservative Protestants and other religious broadcasters founded several organizations in the early 1940s to preserve their access to radio, hoping that preemptive self-regulation would stave off regulatory enforcement. Chief among these was the National Religious Broadcasters in 1944, an affiliate organization of the National Association of Evangelicals that stressed financial accountability and that quickly became a formidable lobby for media regulation favorable to commercial religious programming, both on radio

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[70] Colleen McDannell, *Picturing Faith: Photography and the Great Depression* (New Haven, 2004), 157; Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial*, 30–35; Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York, 1982), 82–106.

[71] Theodor Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (Stanford, 2000); Paul Apostolidis, *Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio* (Durham, 2000).

and the emerging new media technology of the 1940s, television.[72] By the mid-twentieth century, religious media had forged new social and commercial organizations, packaged religious messages using appealing communications technologies, and brokered cultural transformations in media consumption that deeply carved the American religious landscape.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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[72] Erickson, *Religious Radio and Television*, 7–8.

RELIGION AND THE COURTS, 1790–1947

LESLIE C. GRIFFIN

When the Framers drafted the U.S. Constitution in 1787, the only mention of religion was the remarkable text of Article VI, which states, "[N]o Religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." That ground-breaking language marked a shift from prior practice in Europe and the states. At the time of the Constitution's drafting, most states had religious qualifications for government officials, following the pattern in Britain, where the monarch was required to be a member of the Church of England. In Europe the guiding principle was *cuius regio, eius religio*: the religion of the people is determined by the religion of the ruler.

Many of the Framers, especially James Madison, believed that the new Constitution protected liberty of conscience by creating a government of enumerated and separate powers that gave Congress no authority over religion. During the ratification process, however, constitutional critics demanded greater protection of individuals from the power of the government. In order to secure the Constitution's ratification, the new Congress drafted a Bill of Rights that protected religious freedom in the following language: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Upon ratification by the states in 1791, the language about religion became the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.[1] The two Religion Clauses of the First Amendment are known as the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause.

Although Madison suggested that the standard protecting liberty of conscience should apply to state as well as federal governments, the

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[1] See Thomas Curry, *The First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment* (New York, 1989).

language of the First Amendment – "Congress shall" – applied only to the federal government. It was not until the twentieth century that the Supreme Court interpreted part of the Civil War amendments – the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause – to apply certain provisions of the Bill of Rights to state governments through a process called incorporation. The Free Exercise Clause was incorporated against the states in *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296 (1940), and the Establishment Clause was incorporated in *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), thus transforming the law of religious liberty into a national standard.

Cantwell and *Everson* marked the beginning of modern First Amendment jurisprudence due to the importance of holding the states and the federal government to the same legal standard. During the era from 1790 to 1947, however, both federal and state courts issued diverse opinions regarding religious freedom and disestablishment. During those years, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its initial interpretations of the Religion Clauses, while state courts construed their own constitutions and common law without restriction by the federal standards.

Although the Framers drafted a secular constitution without reference to God or Christianity, neither federal nor state courts immediately crafted a religion-free law. Instead, throughout the nineteenth century "state as well as federal courts vacillated in their understanding both of Christianity's relationship to common law and of the religious or Christian character of the country as a whole."[2] State courts frequently interpreted the law to be consistent with Christianity and even allowed prosecutions for blasphemy of the Christian religion. Early Supreme Court cases suggested that the United States was a Christian nation.

The Christianity identified with the nation's law was always Protestant Christianity. The greatest challenges to the courts came from citizens of non-Protestant Christian religions or no religion at all, whose numbers were steadily augmented by immigration as well as the growth of new American religions. From 1790 to 1947, the legal trend moved away from the Christian nation and toward more secular interpretations of constitutions and laws, culminating in *Everson*'s adoption of the "separation of church and state" as the best interpretation of the First Amendment applicable to both state and national governments. In the years immediately following the ratification of the Constitution, however, the states had not yet adopted the federal model of disestablishment.

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[2] Edwin S. Gaustad, "Religious Tests, Constitutions, and 'Christian Nation,'" in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville, VA, 1994), 231.

A (PROTESTANT) CHRISTIAN NATION?

The States

On questions of religion, the states were bound by their own constitutions whose provisions regarding religion varied greatly. Most state constitutions contained a free exercise equivalent; by 1947, forty-two of forty-eight states protected liberty of conscience, and the remaining states protected religious freedom in some manner, with language outlawing compulsory religion or protecting conscientious objection.[3] The establishment parallel, however, did not exist, as many states had dominant religions with preferred positions, and the federal Constitution was interpreted to prevent Congress from interfering with state establishments. The right to religious freedom was frequently seen as consistent with the recognition that Christianity was part of the law and necessary to uphold the public order. In the years before 1947, the "dominant pattern was that states sought to balance the general freedom of all private religions with the general patronage of one common public religion."[4] Even the end of state establishments – in Massachusetts in 1833 – did not end the belief that Christianity was a necessary foundation for government.

Blasphemy and Sabbath laws reflected the close connection between Christianity and state law. State supreme courts upheld convictions for blasphemy against Christianity: in New York and Delaware, for the statement "Jesus Christ was a bastard, and his mother must be a whore,"[5] in Massachusetts, for printing that Universalist belief "is nothing more than a mere chimera of their own imagination … as much a fable and a fiction as that of the god Prometheus,"[6] and in Pennsylvania, that "the Holy Scriptures were a mere fable."[7] To attack Christianity, a part of common law, was "a gross violation of decency and good order"[8] punishable by the state. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, for example, identified "*the constitutionality of Christianity*" as "*the question*" in rejecting Abner Updegraph's appeal of his blasphemy conviction and concluding that Christianity was the law of Pennsylvania and the nation.[9]

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[3] John Witte, Jr., *Religion and The American Constitutional Experiment*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, 2005), 108–9.

[4] *Ibid.*, 117. See also H. Frank Way, "The Death of the Christian Nation: The Judiciary and Church-State Relations," *Journal of Church and State* 29 (1987): 511.

[5] People v. Ruggles, 8 Johns. 290 (1811); see also State v. Chandler, 2 Del. 553 (1837).

[6] Commonwealth v. Kneeland, 37 Mass. 206 (1838).

[7] Updegraph v. Commonwealth, 11 Serg. & Rawle 394 (1824).

[8] Ruggles, 8 Johns. at 290.

[9] Updegraph, 11 Serg. & Rawle at 400, italics in original.

In similar fashion, challenges by Jews and Seventh-day Sabbatarians to Sunday closing laws were rejected across the country, and the courts upheld those laws as necessary to the country's moral and social well-being. The dominant arguments were that religious freedom was not violated because the challengers remained free to practice their own religion and the legislature was permitted to pick a holiday convenient for the majority. At times the state courts displayed their own interpretations of scripture. To Abraham Wolf's argument that Jews' religious freedom might be violated by Sabbath laws if they believed that their religion obligated them to work on all six days not their Sabbath, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court replied that "we have never heard of the fourth commandment having received this construction by any persons who profess to believe either in the Old or New Testament," and the Jewish Talmud and Rabbinical constitutions "assert no such doctrine."[10] The rare 1858 opinion of the California Supreme Court overturning Newman's conviction for selling goods on Sunday was quickly rejected three years later when the court upheld a new Sabbath law.[11] After 1854 *economic* challenges that the Sabbath laws violated equal protection by favoring some businesses over others succeeded, but the religious claims continued to fail,[12] and in 1900 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Minnesota conviction of a barber who opened his shop on Sunday.[13]

An 1854 decision of the Supreme Court of Missouri affirming Peter Ambs' double conviction for selling ale *and* keeping an alehouse open on Sunday captures the flavor of the Christian Nation that was not "composed of strangers collected from all quarters of the globe, each with a religion of his own" but was significantly created in the "year of our Lord."

> Those who question the constitutionality of our Sunday laws, seem to imagine that the constitution is to be regarded as an instrument framed for a state composed of strangers collected from all quarters of the globe, each with a religion of his own, bound by no previous social ties, nor sympathizing in any common reminiscences of the past; that, unlike ordinary laws, it is not to be construed in reference to the state and condition of those for whom it was intended, but that the words in which it is comprehended are alone to be regarded, without respect to the history of the people for whom it was made.
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> It is apprehended, that such is not the mode by which our organic law is to be interpreted. We must regard the people for whom it was ordained. It

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[10] Commonwealth v. Wolf, 3 Serg. & Rawle 48, 50 (1817); argument repeated in Specht v. Commonwealth, 8 Pa. 312 (1848).
[11] Ex parte Newman, 9 Cal. 502 (1858); Ex parte Andrews, 18 Cal. 678 (1861).
[12] Way, "The Death," 517.
[13] Petit v. Minnesota, 177 U.S. 164 (1900).

appears to have been made by Christian men. The constitution, on its face, shows that the Christian religion was the religion of its framers. At the conclusion of that instrument, it is solemnly affirmed by its authors, under their hands, that it was done in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty – a form adopted by all Christian nations, in solemn public acts, to manifest the religion to which they adhere.[14]

Christianity also influenced the courtrooms where witnesses and jurors took oaths or were disqualified for not having sufficient faith to take the oath. In British common law only Christians could be sworn as witnesses, but in the states the rule gradually changed to allow believers in other religions to testify, but kept atheists from the stand. The courts disputed whether the witness must believe in rewards and punishments in a future state or if fear of punishment in this world was sufficient.[15] Although Quakers were allowed to proceed by affirmation rather than oath according to their religious beliefs,[16] atheists were barred "*because an oath cannot possibly be any tie or obligation upon them. Mahometans* may be sworn on the *Koran; Jews* on the *Pentateuch,* and *Gentoos* and others, according to the ceremonies of their religion, whatever may be the form. It is appealing to *God* to witness what we say, and invoking punishment, if what we say be false."[17] The rule was applied to allow Joe Chinaman's testimony in an 1884 murder prosecution in the Territory of New Mexico because he believed in the Chinese religion.[18]

In contrast, atheist oaths were unreliable because it "would indeed seem absurd, to administer to a witness an oath, containing a solemn appeal for the truth of his testimony, to a being in whose existence he has no belief."[19] Similar reasoning was employed in some jurisdictions to prevent slaves from testifying because of uncertainty whether slaves had any religious sensibilities.[20] In Mississippi, however, in a case about the reliability of a dying declaration, slaves were awarded the same presumption of religious belief as white persons because the "simple, elementary truths of Christianity, the immortality of the soul, and a future accountability, are generally received and believed by this portion of our population."[21]

The slaves' relation to the Christian nation was ambivalent. From the earliest days of the colonies, slaves and Native Americans were encouraged to

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[14] State v. Ambs, 20 Mo. 214 (1954).
[15] Atwood v. Welton, 7 Conn. 66 (1828).
[16] Commonwealth v. Smith, 9 Mass. 107 (1812).
[17] Jackson, ex. Dem. Tuttle v. Gridley, 18 Johns. 98 (N.Y. 1820), italics in original.
[18] Territory v. Yee Shun, 3 N.M. 100 (1884).
[19] Thurston v. Whitney, 56 Mass. 104, 110 (1848).
[20] Republica v. Mulatto Bob, 4 U.S. 145 (Penn. 1795).
[21] Lewis v. State, 17 Miss. 115 (1847).

convert to Christianity rather than pursue their own religions. Christianity frequently provided a justification for slavery as the slaveholders extolled the benefits of leading pagan Africans to the highest good of Christian salvation. Christian missionaries' attempts to convert the slaves to their faith were often opposed by slaveholders who believed that exposing slaves to Christian ideals would make them "saucy" enough to demand the freedom and equality of the Gospel message for themselves.[22] The slave codes reflected the battle between missionaries and slaveholders for the souls and labor of the slaves. The codes prohibited Sunday labor. In Arkansas, it was an indictable offense for masters to force slaves to work on Sunday, and slaves were allowed to attend Sunday services.[23] In Virginia, masters were fined two dollars for forcing slave labor on Sundays, but in North Carolina Sunday labor could be imposed as punishment.[24] As the slaves became more active in the Christian churches, some states imposed laws against slave preaching.[25] Unlike nonslave Protestant Christians, Christian slaves' religious freedom in the Christian nation was limited by the demands of the economic system.

FEDERAL APOCRYPHA[26]

Two early Supreme Court cases are now remembered for their dicta about Christianity rather than their specific holdings, which did not include consideration of the Religion Clauses. Stephen Girard left money to the city of Philadelphia to found a school for boy orphans on the condition that "no ecclesiastic, missionary or minister of any sect whatsoever" teach at the school. His relatives challenged the will on the theory that the provision insulted the Christian law of the state in a similar manner to state laws about blasphemy. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the will in 1844, ruling that because it still allowed for nonclergy to teach the Bible and Christianity, it did not "impugn or repudiate" Christianity.[27] In 1892, the Court heard a church's challenge to the application of a labor law forbidding

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[22] Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1978).

[23] Henry v. Armstrong, 15 Ark. 162 (1854).

[24] Kenneth M. Stampp, "Chattels Personal," in Lawrence M. Friedman and Harry N. Scheiber, eds., *American Law and the Constitutional Order: Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), 203–18, 212.

[25] Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 136.

[26] Philip Kurland, "Of Church and State and the Supreme Court," *University of Chicago Law Review* 29 (1961): 1–96. The term "federal apocrypha" is Kurland's expression for the Court's cases about religion that did not rely upon the Religion Clauses.

[27] Vidal v. Girard's Executors, 43 U.S. (2. How.) 127 (1844).

importation of foreign workers to its attempt to hire a cleric from overseas. The Court interpreted the statute to bar manual workers only, not clergy, and added the reasoning and language for which the case remains famous: "[N]o purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious people … this is a Christian nation."[28] The Christian basis of the law was also at issue when the Court confronted the Mormon Question.

THE MORMON QUESTION

After their church's founding in upstate New York in the 1820s, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons, first arrived in the Salt Lake Valley of Utah in 1847. The Supreme Court's first interpretation of the Free Exercise Clause, in 1879, occurred in George Reynolds' appeal of his criminal conviction in the Territory of Utah, which was governed by congressional legislation outlawing the crime of bigamy, punishable by a fine of $500 and up to five years in prison. As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Reynolds had a religious duty to practice polygamy, and he argued that his religious belief justified his disobedience of the criminal law.

Given the Constitution's identification of a limited federal power, the Court could have ruled that Congress lacked authority to legislate about marriage, a subject usually associated with the power of the states. Displaying little concern about the scope of congressional authority, however, the Court concluded that because Congress "was left free to reach actions which were in violation of social duties or subversive of good order," it could ban the "odious" practice of polygamy, which "was almost exclusively a feature of the life of Asiatic and of African people."[29] The Court relied on the long Christian ecclesial prohibition of polygamy as a reason to uphold Congress's authority and then rejected Reynolds' claim that his religious belief in polygamy should exempt him from a valid law.

Sixty-seven years later, in 1946 the Court relied on *Reynolds* to rule against another polygamist's challenge to a federal law, the Mann Act, which criminalized the transportation in interstate commerce of "any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose."[30] Once again, polygamy did not enjoy constitutional protection but instead provided an "immoral purpose" that justified prosecution.

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[28] Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States, 143 U.S. 457 (1892).
[29] Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145, 164 (1879).
[30] Cleveland v. United States, 329 U.S. 14 (1946).

A fundamentalist Mormon who considered polygamy his religious duty brought that 1946 challenge against the Mann Act. The mainstream church, however, abandoned its commitment to polygamy in 1890 after extensive legal tangles with the federal government. *Reynolds* encouraged antipolygamists to seek new legal means to end the odious practice of polygamy. Of the twenty-five hundred criminal cases prosecuted in the Utah Territory from 1871 to 1896, 95 percent were for sexual crimes.[31] The U.S. Supreme Court upheld laws keeping bigamists and polygamists from public office, jury service, and voting.[32] One law required voters to swear that they were not bigamists and did not associate with organizations that supported bigamy or polygamy. In *Davis v. Beason*, the Supreme Court upheld Samuel Davis' conviction for falsely swearing that oath because he was a Mormon, even though he was not a polygamist. "The fact that this statute made membership in the Mormon Church without more a basis for punishment, that the alleged crime was adherence to a religious belief, that in fact that statute was applicable only to the Mormons, was ignored by a Court that could find no sympathy for so militant a Christian minority sect."[33] Instead, the Court reasoned, "[B]igamy and polygamy are crimes by the laws of all civilized and Christian countries.... To call their advocacy a tenet of religion is to offend the common sense of mankind."[34]

After the Court upheld laws revoking the corporate status of the church and rendering much of its property to the federal government, the church issued a manifesto ending its commitment to polygamy in 1890,[35] and in 1896 Utah became the only state to have a disestablishment clause with "no union of Church and State" – its price of admission to the union.[36]

PACIFISM

In the early twentieth century, at the time of World War I, case law about conscientious objection described the scope of religious freedom. The Court repeatedly held that conscientious objection from military service was a matter of privilege to be granted by Congress, not a constitutional right to be claimed by citizens. The Court upheld the government's refusal to grant

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[31] Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 155.

[32] Murphy v. Ramsey, 114 U.S. 15 (1885).

[33] Kurland, "Of Church and State," 10.

[34] Davis v. Beason, 133 U.S. 333, 341–2 (1890).

[35] Gordon, Mormon Question, 220; Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States, 136 U.S. 1 (1890); United States v. Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 150 U.S. 145 (1893).

[36] Witte, *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*, 112.

citizenship to individuals who refused to bear arms to support the United States or who were *selectively* opposed to war. It also rejected the appeals of Methodist students who were expelled from the University of California because they refused to participate in mandatory military training.[37]

Lurking in the citizenship and draft laws were provisions that appeared to favor well-known religions over less famous ones and religion over non-religion. The 1917 Selective Service Act exempted from military service divinity students, ministers, and members of "any well-recognized religious sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form."[38] A constitutional challenge to the statute was rejected without any reasoning from the Court. The justices issued a dismissive comment that the unsoundness of the argument that the statute violated the First Amendment was so apparent that it needed no analysis.[39] It was not until the Vietnam War that the Court interpreted draft laws to include individuals whose sincere belief "occupies a place in the life of its possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God of one who clearly qualifies for the exemption."[40] Mainstream Christianity enjoyed more legal support than unfamiliar faiths until the Jehovah's Witnesses litigated fiercely for their faith during the 1930s and 1940s.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

According to *Reynolds*, the polygamy case, religious belief does not provide a justification for disobeying the law. When the U.S. Supreme Court decided its landmark cases about Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1930s and 1940s, therefore, it relied on the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment, which states "Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech." The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1881 and took the name of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931. Their important religious duty was to distribute the tracts that bore witness to their faith. When the Witnesses sought to distribute their pamphlets across the states, however, they repeatedly ran into local licensing and permit laws that limited their proselytizing. In a series of cases, the Court limited the ability of state and local governments to silence the Witnesses by putting unconstitutional conditions on their speech.[41]

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[37] Hamilton v. Regents of the University of California, 293 U.S. 245 (1934).

[38] Act of May 18, 1917, ch. 15 § 4, 40 Stat. 78 (1919).

[39] Arver v. U.S., 245 U.S. 366, 389–90 (1918).

[40] United States v. Seeger, 380 U.S. 163 (1965).

[41] See e.g., Lovell v. City of Griffin, Ga., 303 U.S. 444 (1938); Schneider v. Irvington (NJ), 308 U.S. 147 (1939); Murdock v. Com. of Pennsylvania, 319 U.S. 105 (1943); James

The most famous cases involving the Jehovah's Witnesses concerned the Pledge of Allegiance, whose recitation was mandated by many school districts and upheld by the state courts during the 1930s as a way to instill patriotism in the nation's children. The Witnesses objected to the idolatry of the flag salute. The Court rejected a challenge to a Pennsylvania pledge law in the 1940 *Gobitis* case, which arose when schoolchildren Lillian and William Gobitis refused to pledge allegiance to the flag because of their religious belief that the Book of Exodus prohibits saluting a graven image. The Court deferred to the wisdom of the states in discerning the best means of promoting patriotism in schoolchildren, observing that the "ultimate foundation of a free society is the binding tie of cohesive sentiment. Such a sentiment is fostered by all those agencies of the mind and spirit which may serve to gather up the traditions of a people, transmit them from generation to generation, and thereby create that continuity of a treasured common life which constitutes a civilization."[42] In other words, the government's need to foster patriotism outweighed the children's religious freedom.

Only three years later the Court overruled *Gobitis*, concluding that a mandatory salute violated the individual liberty of religious and nonreligious citizens alike. The second opinion, *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, is famous for Justice Robert Jackson's declaration, "If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."[43] As the quotation suggests, the opinion did not depend upon religious freedom but on free speech; under free speech law, *no* citizen, religious or nonreligious, could be forced to proclaim the government's ideas.

The Witnesses had a mixed record of victories and defeats in the Supreme Court. In *Prince v. Massachusetts*, the Court rejected the religious freedom claim of a Witness who sent her nine-year-old niece out in the evening to distribute the organization's pamphlets, ruling that the child labor laws could be enforced against her.[44] As in *Reynolds*, religious freedom was limited by the demands of law enforcement and did not require an exemption from the law for religious citizens. All citizens must obey the child labor laws.

Hitchcock, *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life: The Odyssey of the Religion Clauses*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 2004), I: 43–59.

[42] Minersville School Board v. Gobitis, 310 U.S. 586, 596 (1940).
[43] West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).
[44] Prince v. Massachusetts, 321 U.S. 158 (1944).

RELIGIOUS PARENTS

Prince suggests the limits of the religious rights of parents over their children. As *Prince* held, claims of religious freedom could be limited by the demands of the law, especially where children were involved. Starting in 1840, American courts recognized the doctrine of *parens patriae*, in which the state is identified as the protector or substitute parent of children in order to protect their well-being.[45]

The theory of *parens patriae* justified state intervention to protect neglected or abused children. The doctrine was also invoked against parents who relied on faith healing instead of medical care to treat their children's illnesses. Faith healing practices became more popular at the same time that medicine became more scientific in the nineteenth century, setting religious parents and faith healers against doctors and prosecutors. The debates echoed the central theme of *Reynolds*: Were parents and healers subject to the criminal laws, or did religious belief provide a defense to prosecutions for manslaughter and child neglect?

In 1903, the Court of Appeals of New York considered the history of medicine and faith healing when it upheld the conviction of J. Luther Pierson for failing to seek medical attention for his sixteen-month-old daughter, who suffered from whooping cough and then died of catarrhal pneumonia. The state constitution's free exercise clause offered Pierson no protection. In the court's words, "We place no limitations upon the power of the mind over the body, the power of faith to dispel disease, or the power of the Supreme Being to heal the sick. We merely declare the law as given us by the Legislature."[46] In many jurisdictions, however, the elements of the law appeared unclear or inapplicable to religious cases, and many prosecutions failed.

CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS

The Church of Christ, Scientist, founded in 1879 in Massachusetts by Mary Baker Eddy, was at the forefront of the battle between medicine and faith. Eddy taught that "an individual's sickness is merely an illusion that can be overcome by eliminating erroneous thinking and embracing [her] interpretation of Christ's teachings."[47] The courts were asked to adjudicate cases where such healing did not occur. Jennie A. Spead, a fifty-five-year-old

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[45] Shawn Francis Peters, *When Prayer Fails: Faith Healing, Children, and the Law* (Oxford, 2008), 49.

[46] People v. Pierson, 68 N.E. 243, 247 (N.Y. 1903).

[47] Peters, *When Prayer Fails*, 90.

adult, for example, sued Christian Science healer Irving C. Tomlinson for malpractice when her appendicitis worsened after she followed his instructions to read Eddy's book, *Science and Health*, and to follow the church's program of spiritual healing. The New Hampshire Supreme Court rejected Spead's claim in 1904 because Tomlinson had met the standard of care of a healer, which, it held, was not the same as the standard for a physician.[48] State courts and legislatures were divided over the wisdom of holding Christian Scientist practitioners guilty of practicing medicine without a license under the medical statutes.[49]

The *Spead* decision also explained that the lawsuit for fraud against Tomlinson failed because the defendant sincerely believed in Christian Science. Although a jury might believe Tomlinson's promises were untrue or absurd, the fact that Tomlinson believed them was significant, as the court explained:

> "It is a matter of common knowledge that honest men not only have in the past, but do now, entertain religious beliefs which appear to the great majority of their fellow men both unsound and incapable of belief. So, even if a relation of trust existed between the parties when the plaintiff employed the defendant to give her Christian Science treatment, a jury could not find from the single fact that they were convinced that religious views both parties professed to entertain were absurd that the defendant did not entertain them."[50]

The New Hampshire court thus anticipated the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1944 ruling that a jury may not constitutionally inquire into the truth or falsity of religious claims in the prosecution against Edna Ballard and her son Donald, the leaders of the I AM religion, who were charged with defrauding their adherents of thousands of dollars.[51] Courts and juries may judge the sincerity of religious beliefs but not their truth; for the state to assess the truth of a religion violates the First Amendment.

In the faith healing context, cases involving children were more difficult. In 1903 a Pennsylvania court upheld the involuntary manslaughter conviction of a father who called a Christian Scientist rather than a doctor when his daughter suffered from scarlet fever. The judge charged the jury to consider what a man of ordinary prudence would do in such circumstances without regard to religious belief.[52] State prosecutors repeatedly sought to convict

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[48] Spead v. Tomlinson, 59 A. 376 (N.H. 1904).
[49] See, e.g., People v. Cole, 148 N.Y.S. 708 (N.Y.A.D. 1 Dept. 1914), reversed by People v. Cole, 219 N.Y. 98 (N.Y. 1916).
[50] Spead, 59 A. at 381–2.
[51] United States v. Ballard, 322 U.S. 78, 88 (1944).
[52] Commonwealth v. Hoffman, 2 Pa.CC. 65 (1903).

practitioners and/or parents with mixed results. At times legislatures protected Christian Scientists from lawsuits; at other times it held them to the same standards as medical doctors.[53] In 1917, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the equal protection challenge of a drugless practitioner who was subjected to education and training requirements under California law from which faith healers were exempt. The standard of review under equal protection law was undemanding, and because drugless practitioners and faith healers were different, the court ruled that the law could treat them differently.[54] The courts here and in other situations thus accepted legislative exemptions from the law that the courts were not allowed to create under *Reynolds*.

PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In 1925, the Supreme Court identified a constitutional right of parents to educate their children when it invalidated an Oregon statute requiring children to attend public schools. Although the case involved a Catholic school led by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, the opinion was based on the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment and not on religious liberty.[55] From the 1850s on, however, the Catholic schools were constantly involved in litigation about religious liberty, and it is no surprise that *Everson*, the 1947 case marking the beginning of modern Establishment Clause jurisprudence, involved a New Jersey plan that reimbursed Catholic parents for busing their children to parochial schools.

Catholics composed only 1 percent of the population at the time of the American Revolution, but in the 1820s they began immigrating to the United States in significant numbers. They became 3 percent of the population by 1840, 10 percent by 1866, and almost 13 percent by 1891.[56] Many of them objected to the Protestant Christian nature of the public or common schools, which frequently offered prayer and Bible reading as part of the school day. The Bible was the Protestant King James Version. The immigrants also founded Catholic schools across the country and then, as a matter of fairness, demanded government funding of those schools. The situation in the schools led to two types of legal challenges: Catholic (and Jewish) litigation against the public schools to end both prayers and Bible readings, and lawsuits (and then legislative initiatives) to prevent funding of religious schools.

[53] Peters, *When Prayer Fails*, 89–108.

[54] Crane v. Johnson, 242 U.S. 339 (1917).

[55] Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925); see also Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390 (1923).

[56] Mark Edward DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation of State Blaine Amendments: Origins, Scope, and First Amendment Concerns," *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 26 (2003): 551.

As long as non-Catholic Christianity was viewed as an essential part of the law and the instruction necessary for good citizenship, Catholics were bound to fail. As they increased in number, however, they were able to gain the political clout necessary to challenge what they saw as reprehensible religious instruction in the schools. The city of Cincinnati, Ohio, for example, voted to *remove* prayer and Bible reading from the public schools, and the policy withstood a constitutional challenge in 1872 from citizens who wanted the policy reversed.[57]

As in other matters connected to religion, the states differed on prayer and Bible reading. Where the challenges failed, as in Iowa in 1884, the courts rejected arguments that the schools violated state establishment clauses. The attitude is suggested by an Iowa court's rejection of a challenge to Bible reading with these words: "Possibly, the plaintiff is a propagandist, and regards himself charged with a mission to destroy the influence of the Bible. Whether this be so or not, it is sufficient to say that the courts are charged with no such mission."[58] In contrast, in 1915 the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled in favor of Jewish and Catholic plaintiffs, finding that the King James Bible readings promoted a "distinct preference in favor of the religious beliefs of the majority" that violated the state constitution. The Louisiana court also rejected the argument (later accepted in the federal pledge cases) that excusing Catholic and Jewish students would solve the constitutional problem because that practice "subjects [students] to a religious stigma."[59] Not until the 1960s did the U.S. Supreme Court rule that the states could not sponsor prayer and Bible reading in the public schools.[60]

The courts at times engaged in their own scriptural analysis while resolving the biblical cases. A Catholic student was expelled from public school in Maine in 1854 for refusing to read the King James Version of the Bible. The Supreme Judicial Court of Maine upheld the expulsion because the school district was free to set the curriculum for all students. Anticipating the *Reynolds* argument that the law applies to all, the court wrote that the curriculum would fall apart if every scholar were permitted to challenge the assigned books. Countering the student's argument that she should be allowed to read the Catholic Douay Bible, the court insisted that students needed a common text, and, after a long disquisition on the meaning of translation, concluded that the translation of the Bible was irrelevant.[61]

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[57] Bd. of Educ. of Cincinnati v. Minor, 23 Ohio St. 211 (1872).

[58] Moore v. Monroe, 64 Iowa 367 (1884).

[59] Herold v. Parish Board of School Directors, 136 La. 1034 (1915).

[60] Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962); School Dist. of Abington Tp. v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

[61] Donahoe v. Richards, 38 Me. 379 (1854).

Now 151 years later, some justices of the U.S. Supreme Court continue to argue that different Protestant and Catholic translations and interpretations of the Ten Commandments are constitutionally insignificant even though the displays always involve the King James Bible.[62]

Funding Catholic schools provided a different problem. As noted above, at the time of the Constitution many states contained established churches that received government funding and support. The most famous funding dispute in early American history occurred in Virginia when Patrick Henry proposed legislation that imposed a tax to fund teachers of religion on every citizen, each of whom would then choose which Christian denomination should receive the money. In response to the bill, James Madison wrote the *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, arguing "[T]he same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever."[63] With the help of Virginia's Baptists and other dissenters from the state's established Church of England, Henry's bill was defeated, and in 1786 Madison successfully sponsored Thomas Jefferson's *Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom*.

In the twentieth century, the Supreme Court interpreted the U.S. Constitution's Establishment Clause through the lens of the Virginia experience and frequently invalidated government programs funding religion. In its first two Establishment Clause decisions, however, in 1899 and 1908, the Court upheld federal funding of Catholic institutions.[64] In the first decision, the Court allowed funding to support building a hospital run by Catholic sisters on the grounds that the hospital's medical care was secular, not religious. In the second case, *Quick Bear v. Leupp*, the Court upheld funding to a Catholic school on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota on the grounds that the money was tribe money and not federal money.

Quick Bear must be interpreted within the larger context of the federal and state governments' relationships to the Native American tribes. As with the slave religions, Christian missionaries had long viewed the Native Americans as pagans to be civilized through conversion to the Christian faith. In 1819 federal legislation "making provision for the civilization of the Indian tribes" provided $10,000 to reeducate the Indians to more

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[62] McCreary County, Ky. v. American Civil Liberties Union of Ky., 545 U.S. 844 (2005) (Scalia, J.).

[63] James Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessment*, reprinted in Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), 65–6.

[64] Bradfield v. Roberts, 175 U.S. 291 (1899); see also Quick Bear v. Leupp, 210 U.S. 50 (1908).

Christian ways.[65] In such circumstances, both Congress and the courts were more focused on the Christian education of the Indians than on the Catholic nature of the Indian school in South Dakota. Protestants and Catholics battled for religious control of the Indian tribes without attempting to protect native beliefs and rituals.[66] The courts followed their lead by viewing Native American religions through a Christian lens. The Montana Supreme Court in 1926, for example, observed that peyote was not mentioned in the book of Isaiah, included in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or considered by St. John the Divine in denying the appeal of Big Sheep, a member of the Crow Tribe, of his conviction for peyote possession.[67]

The Catholic school system was a different story. Although early-nineteenth-century efforts to acquire funding for Catholic schools failed, the efforts grew more successful as the numbers of Catholics in the population increased.[68] Catholic success provoked resentment, and in 1875 President Ulysses Grant gave a noteworthy speech opposing aid to religious schools. Representative James Blaine turned the idea into a proposed federal constitutional amendment, the Blaine Amendment:

> "No State shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and no money raised by taxation in any State for the support of public schools, or derived from any public fund therefore, nor any public lands devoted thereto, shall ever be under the control of any religious sect, nor shall any money so raised or lands so devoted be divided between religious sects or denominations."[69]

Although the federal constitutional amendment failed, twenty-nine states added their own Blaine Amendments to their constitutions by the 1890s, and newer states were later required to add such clauses by the enabling legislation that gained them entry to the United States. Thirty-seven states eventually adopted such laws. The state laws varied in scope and detail. In Nevada, a statute passed in 1881 provided state funding to orphan asylums "regardless of creed or sect." The Catholic Sisters of Charity demanded payment for their services at the Nevada Orphan Asylum, but the Nevada Supreme Court denied their funding on the grounds that the 1880 amendment to the state constitution barred any state funding for "sectarian purposes." Although the sisters insisted that providing for the physical needs

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[65] 15 Cong. Ch. 85, March 3, 1819, 3 Stat. 516.

[66] Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill, 2009), 17–58.

[67] State v. Big Sheep, 75 Mont. 219 (1926).

[68] DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 551.

[69] H.R.J. Res. 1, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., 4 CONG. REC. 205 (1875).

of orphans was not sectarian, that the asylum admitted students of all faiths who were not required to participate in Catholic education and services, and that they received an education comparable to the public schools, the court focused on the morning prayers and the religious instruction to declare the orphanage sectarian and barred funding.[70]

In other states, public schools that operated on church property or under apparent control of religious leaders were invalidated under constitutions prohibiting sectarian funding.[71] In Kentucky, a public school was held in a building owned by the Presbyterian Board of Church Extension, which also hired the teachers for the school. The Kentucky Court of Appeals rejected the arrangement with emphatic language:

> The Constitution not only forbids the appropriation for any purpose or in any manner of the common school funds to sectarian or denominational institutions, but it contemplates that the separation between the common school and the sectarian or denominational school or institution shall be so open, notorious, and complete that there can be no room for reasonable doubt that the common school is absolutely free from the influence, control, or denomination of the sectarian institution or school.[72]

The state litigation continued to 1947, when the Supreme Court added its separationist voice to the antisectarian language of the states, and both state and federal courts continued to invalidate aid to Catholic schools.

Immigration law fostered the influx of Catholic immigrants from Europe in the nineteenth century. A 1790 statute allowing citizenship to aliens (noncitizens) who were "white persons" was amended in 1870 to include aliens of African nativity and descent. In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act barring entry and citizenship of Chinese laborers. The courts interpreted the statutes to bar citizenship of Chinese, Japanese, and Hindu (Indian) applicants.[73] It was only in 1965 that changes in immigration law brought large numbers of non-Christian immigrants to American shores, challenging the Christian nation and the American civil religion in new ways and significantly increasing the numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims in the population.

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[70] State of Nevada ex rel. Nevada Orphan Asylum v. Hallock, 16 Nev. 373 (1882).

[71] See, e.g., Wright v. School Dist. No. 27 of Woodson County, 151 Kan. 485 (1940); Harfst v. Hoegen, 163 S.W.2d 609 (Mo. 1942).

[72] Williams v. Board of Trustees Stanton Common School Dist., 173 Ky. 708 (1917).

[73] In re Ah Yup, 5 Sawy. 155 (C.C.Cal. 1878) (Chinese); United States v. Won Kim Ark, 169 U.S. 649 (1898); Ozawa v. United States, 260 U.S. 178 (1922) (Japanese); U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind, 261 U.S. 204 (1923) (Hindu); Kunal M. Parker, "Citizenship and Immigration Law, 1800–1924: Resolutions of Membership and Territory," in Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins, eds., *The Cambridge History of Law in America*, vol. II, *The Long Nineteenth Century (1789–1920)* (Cambridge, 2008), 168–203.

CHURCH PROPERTY

The previous sections of this essay confirm that new American religions and new immigrants of diverse religions posed major challenges to the courts during the years 1790 to 1947. Disputes about the ownership of church property among the majority Christian denominations, however, provided the largest number of cases. In the states, between 1800 and 1920 "there were 87 recorded Sabbath closing law cases, 112 recorded church property disputes, 18 public school prayer and Bible reading cases, 15 cases involving public aid to sectarian schools, and 22 reported blasphemy cases."[74] The property cases primarily involved disputes within Protestant churches, and often raised questions about church doctrine.

The Supreme Court's earliest decisions about churches focused on whether they continued to hold title to their property or the property reverted to the government because of the Revolution. In several cases the Supreme Court held that property rights were not dissolved by the Revolution unless the property in question had not been properly held when the Revolution occurred or the land had not been used for church purposes.[75] The same principle applied to later changes in government; the Catholic Church in Porto (*sic*) Rico kept title to its churches after the island's annexation to the United States.[76] In 1848, moreover, the Texas Supreme Court denied the Catholic Church's claim after the Texas Revolution to land in Victoria, Texas, that had not been "occupied or used." At the same time, the court acknowledged that the Catholic bishop retained title to its pre-Revolution churches.[77]

More difficult property questions involved intraecclesial disputes among church members over the ownership of property. Some complaints involved family members who unsuccessfully sought to recover their relatives' contributions to religious societies.[78] The majority of cases involved disputes between church factions about who rightfully represented the church and therefore held title to the property. The legal standard was in dispute then and remains controversial today. The influential English rule, arising from *Attorney General v. Pearson*,[79] was that property should be awarded to the

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[74] Way, "The Death," 510.
[75] Terrett v. Taylor, 13 U.S. 43 (1815); Town of Pawlet v. Clark, 13 U.S. 292 (1815); Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward, 17 U.S. 518 (1819); Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 21 U.S. 464 (1823).
[76] Municipality of Ponce v. Roman Catholic Apostolic Church in Porto Rico, 210 U.S. 296 (1908).
[77] Blair v. Odin, 3 Tex. 288 (1848).
[78] See., e.g., Goesele v. Bimeler, 55 U.S. 589 (1852).
[79] 36 E.R. 135 (1817).

group most faithful to the original purpose of the church. *Pearson* could favor an orthodox minority rather than a majority committed to a new interpretation of the tradition, and it allowed courts to evaluate whether a "departure from doctrine" had occurred within the church. The party faithful to original doctrine prevailed.

In 1893 the Baptist Mt. Tabor Church in Boone County, Indiana, was split between the "anti-means" and "means" parties. The "anti-means" believed that sinners are regenerated by direct and personal contact with the Holy Spirit, while the "means" thought that God used the means of the Gospel, Christian service, and prayers to do the work of regeneration. The Indiana Supreme Court held that the minority, anti-means position was clearly the original belief of the church and felt comfortable reading the church's articles of faith as if they were a secular document to give victory to the minority.[80] In Texas the Wallis Baptist Church was divided by accusations of the minority that the new majority was guilty of "Martinism," a heresy that the court was never able to define. The Baptist Convention sided with the minority. Although the court had difficulty applying the departure from doctrine rule because it did not understand "Martinism," it ruled for the new majority because it was well known that Baptists are always governed by the local rather than the national group.[81]

The Indiana and Texas cases illustrate the problems with the departure from doctrine rule, with courts haphazardly resolving the intricacies of Baptist views of salvation or settling disputes among Lutherans,[82] Quakers,[83] and Methodists.[84] The U.S. Supreme Court confronted this issue in an 1871 case arising from the Civil War, when northern branches of the Presbyterian Church favored emancipation, while the southern churches defended slavery. At war's end, the church's governing association, the General Assembly, ruled that the proslavery forces must repent of their sin of supporting slavery before being readmitted to the assembly. When proslavery advocates resisted, the result at the Walnut Street Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, left an antislavery minority in control.

In these circumstances, a departure from doctrine rule would focus on what the church originally believed, and possibly conclude that proslavery was more consistent with Presbyterian doctrine. Recognizing that the "law knows no heresy, and is committed to the support of no dogma, the establishment of no sect," the Supreme Court rejected the *Pearson* rule. Instead, in ruling for the General Assembly, the Court held "whenever the questions

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[80] Smith v. Pedigo, 145 Ind. 361 (1893).
[81] Jarrell v. Sproles, 49 S.W. 904 (Tex.Civ.App. 1899).
[82] Kniskern v. Lutheran Churches, 7 N.Y. Ch. Ann. 388 (1844).
[83] Hendrickson v. Shotwell, 1 N.J. Eq. 477 (1832).
[84] People v. Steele, 6 N.Y. Leg. Obs. 54 (1848).

of discipline, or of faith, or ecclesiastical rule, custom, or law have been decided by the highest of these church judicatories to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them, in their application to the case before them."[85]

Watson provided three options for the courts' resolution of property disputes. First, the courts should defer to the highest authority of a hierarchical church. Second, in an independent church under no external control, the majority rules. Third, the courts may enforce express trusts, namely, church provisions that make very clear what the purpose of the church is. An express trust committing the church to honor the Holy Trinity, for example, would legally preclude Unitarians from taking title to the property. The overriding rule was that courts should not interfere in problems of church doctrine. Today, disputes about the morality of homosexuality in the Episcopal Church have led to renewed discussion of the validity of *Watson*'s categories, and state and federal courts have followed *Watson*'s hierarchical rule despite skepticism of the courts' absolute deference to hierarchical church decisions that may conflict with legal principles and legal documents.[86]

CONCLUSION

Terrett v. Taylor, the 1815 Supreme Court decision upholding the Protestant Episcopal Church's right to property held in Virginia before the Revolution, provided one glimpse into a possible vision of religious liberty long before the Religion Clauses of the Constitution were interpreted. The Episcopal Church was established in Virginia before the Revolution, and state legislation had confirmed the church's right to its property in 1661, 1667, 1776, 1784, 1786, and 1788, until those statutes were repealed in 1798 *in the name of religious freedom*.[87] Justice Story challenged such a strict interpretation of religious freedom. His opinion acknowledged the state's right to remove the favored status of the Episcopal Church at law, but then noted that the state's free exercise clause should not limit its ability "to accomplish the great objects of religion by giving [churches] corporate rights for the managment [*sic*] of their property."[88] Story added the following dictum about the Virginia Constitution's provisions on religious freedom: "[T]he free exercise of religion cannot be justly deemed to be restrained by aiding with equal attention the votaries of every sect to perform their

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[85] Watson v. Jones, 80 U.S. 679 (1871).
[86] Kent Greenawalt, *Religion and the Constitution: Free Exercise and Fairness* (Princeton, 2006), I: 263–4.
[87] Terrett v. Taylor, 13 U.S. at 46–9.
[88] *Ibid.*, at 49.

own religious duties, or by establishing funds for the support of ministers, for public charities, for the endowment of churches, or for the sepulture of the dead."[89]

That vision of state accommodation of religion is far removed from the separationist one adopted by the modern Court in *Everson* in reliance on the Virginia experience and from the state decisions interpreting their Blaine Amendments in light of Catholic immigration. Instead, by 1947 the federal and state courts had provided an outline of religious freedom whose details remained to be filled in during the post–World War II era. The incorporation of the First Amendment set the stage for a national law of religion that would replace many of the state disagreements examined in this essay. On the Establishment side, the Court straightforwardly ended the practices of prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Its funding decisions were much less direct, but they invalidated numerous legislative attempts to provide aid to religious schools until the tide turned toward aid for all schools in the 1990s. On the Free Exercise side, the Court continued to balance fidelity to *Reynolds'* ideal that all citizens should follow the law with its desire to accommodate religious citizens. And the courts were forced to reexamine the Christian nation ideal as the United States became the most religiously diverse nation in the world's history.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

U.S. Supreme Court Cases

Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1 (1947).

Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1879).

Watson v. Jones, 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 679 (1871.)

State Cases

People v. Ruggles, 8 Johns. 290 (1811) (New York).

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Green, Steven K. *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, 2010.

Hitchcock, James. *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life: The Odyssey of the Religion Clauses*. 2 vols. Princeton, 2004.

Kurland, Philip B. "Of Church and State and the Supreme Court." *University of Chicago Law Review* 29 (1961): 1–96.

Way, H. Frank. "The Death of the Christian Nation: The Judiciary and Church-State Relations." *Journal of Church and State* 29 (1987): 509–29.

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[89] *Ibid.;* see also David P. Currie, *The Constitution in the Supreme Court: The First Hundred Years 1789–1888* (Chicago, 1985), 138–41.

RELIGION AND PATRIOTISM IN AMERICA, 1790–PRESENT

GEORGE MCKENNA

In Book IV of *The Social Contract* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed a "civil religion" which, like the ancient pagan religions, would deepen and intensify republican patriotism, but without their superstitious adherence to polytheistic gods. Its dogmas would be few: "the existence of a mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity"; an afterlife where the just would be rewarded and the wicked punished; and the sanctity of the constitution and laws of the republic.[1]

America has had from its outset a civil religion of its own, but one far different from Rousseau's utilitarian concoction. America's God is not a distant "Divinity," but a living God deeply involved in the story of a particular people. Even Thomas Jefferson, often called a deist, invoked this God in his second inaugural address in 1809. "I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life."[2]

Jefferson was working out of a narrative that originated more than a century and a half earlier in Puritan New England. The American colonies' main tradition in the eighteenth century was the covenantal Calvinism of the seventeenth. As historian Mark A. Noll writes, "Puritanism is the only colonial religious system that modern historians take seriously as a major religious influence on the Revolution."[3]

Puritanism was a dynamic, activist religion. In 1670, when Rev. Samuel Danforth delivered a sermon titled *A Brief Recognition of New England's Errand into the Wilderness*, the people of New England were well prepared

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[1] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (New York, 1950), 139.

[2] Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (New York, 1984), 523.

[3] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2002), 29, 32.

for the typology that Jefferson later tapped into: England is Egypt, the Puritan settlers are the Jews, and the journey across the Atlantic is the "long and wearisome passage through the uncultured desert." America, of course, is the promised land – a "howling wilderness," but one that permitted the settlers "liberty to walk in the faith of the Gospel," to spread it through the new land, and to make it an example to the world.[4]

Accompanying this activism was an intensely patriotic spirit, though the patriotism at first was largely regional. Peter Bulkeley, one of New England's most influential ministers in the mid-seventeenth century, addressed his congregation as citizens of a new and at least potentially holy nation. "Let us study so to walk, that this may be our excellency and dignity among the Nations of the world among which we live: That they may be constrained to say of us, only this people is wise, an holy and blessed people."[5]

To assert that your nation is specially chosen by God to perform wonderful works in the world seems to carry patriotism into chauvinism. But in all these effusions there was always an anxious note. The formal structure was "if ... then." *If* we remain faithful to God and walk in his ways, *then* the nations of the world will praise us as a holy and blessed people. But if, as Peter Bulkeley put it, we fail to do so, "no people's account will be heavier." This was what John Winthrop, aboard the *Arbella* as it prepared to leave for the new commonwealth, meant in referring to it as a "City upon a Hill." He was not boasting, but warning. "The eyes of the world are upon us," he said. If we can learn to "delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always have before our eyes our Commission," then God "shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations, the Lord make it like that of New England." But "if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken ... we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world ... and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of this good land whither we are going."[6] The anxiety is almost palpable: if we ever forget our divine mission, we will set back the work of God in the world and cause godly people everywhere to curse this nation.

The distinctive legacy of New England Puritan rhetoric, then, is a highly ambivalent patriotism: on the one hand, a confident sense of collective

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[4] Samuel Danforth, *A Brief Recognition of New England's Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA, 1671), 10.

[5] Peter Bulkeley, *The Gospel-Covenant or the Covenant of Grace Opened* (London, 1651), 431–2.

[6] *Ibid.*, 15; and Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings* (New York, 1963), 1: 198–9.

"chosenness"; on the other hand, remorse, repentance, and the constant fear that, because of the colonists' faithlessness, God might at any time "cast us off in displeasure, and scatter us in this wilderness."[7]

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In a supposedly "secular" period, from 1700 to 1776, at least 60 percent of the adult white population attended church regularly.[8] There they sat through sermons that blended religion and politics, using biblical themes to deliver their exhortations. During the revolutionary period, sermons had the same ambivalent style of the previous century, declaiming against the tyranny of the British government, yet suggesting that the suffering of Americans may have been brought on by their own pride, vanity, luxury, and intemperance. As one famous minister warned, the "plain voice of providence" is "that God is awfully offended with all that practice these ruinous and destructive vices."[9]

The anxiety over America's moral declension was balanced by a more hopeful prospect, that America was to be a place where the last battles with Satan and his minions would be fought and where he would finally be defeated. This was the theme of millennialism. Reformation Protestantism has always been fascinated with the final book in the New Testament, *The Revelation of St. John*, where the end of the world is predicted. The story line is that the Christian faithful, after suffering many years of oppression by the enemy, the Antichrist, will eventually be liberated. The Antichrist will be imprisoned for a thousand years – a millennium – during which time the world will enjoy a new era of peace, tranquility, and moral progress until Christ returns. Variations of this theme were shared widely among the clergy in eighteenth-century New England; they believed that they were on the verge of entering that thousand-year period. As Harriet Beecher Stowe put it in the next century, "The millennium was ever the star of hope in the eyes of the New England clergy; their faces were set eastward, toward the dawn of that day, and the cheerfulness of those anticipations illuminated the hard tenets of their theology with a rosy glow."[10]

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[7] Thomas Shepard and John Allin, quoted in Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford, 1855), I: 388.

[8] Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York, 1986), 220.

[9] Samuel Sherwood, "Scriptural Instructions to Civil Rulers," in Ellis Sandoz, ed., *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730–1805*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, 1998), 401–2.

[10] Quoted in Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York, 1962), 85.

When the war officially ended in 1783, the nation had to deal with a myriad of peacetime problems, from staggering war debts to an urgent need to find new trading partners now that America was outside the British Empire. The view that seemed to be gaining ground in the late 1780s was that America needed a firmer government, particularly at the national level, to counter the centrifugal tendencies of states and localities. Hence arose the movement to "revise" the then-existing federal charter, the Articles of Confederation, a movement that culminated in its replacement by the federal Constitution. This period, which extended into the Washington and Adams administrations, was marked by a tone different from that of the revolutionary era. Then, the people needed to be stirred up; now they needed to be calmed down. Patriotism itself took on a different coloration. During the Revolution, patriotism was identified with an apocalyptic fighting spirit, a determination to defeat the British Antichrist. Now patriotism needed a dose of sobriety and self-control. With a new and this time legitimate authority in place, it was time for a new deference to authority.[11]

The Puritan legacy was flexible enough to fit these new times. A decade earlier it had been brought in to justify revolution; now it was reintroduced to extol the virtues of order and social discipline. While still affirming that the Puritans were lovers of liberty, Federalist rhetoric was careful to note that the kind of liberty the Puritans loved was lawful orderly liberty that respected legitimate authority. As a Federalist spokesman put it, in the days of the first Puritans, "habits of industry, sobriety, and subjection to civil government were formed."[12]

PATRIOTISM AND REVIVALISM IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the two generations following the American Revolution, evangelical Protestants launched a crusade to bring salvation to the rest of the nation. From the last years of the eighteenth century to the time of the Civil War, they conducted revivals, proclaimed days of fast and thanksgiving, and founded new schools, colleges, and Christian-oriented reform movements. By the mid-1850s, the evangelical movement would comprise two-thirds of the Protestant ministers and church members in the United States, and about 40 percent of the total population. To understand the history of

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[11] Dean Hammer, *The Puritan Tradition in Revolutionary, Federalist, and Whig Political Theory* (New York, 1998), chap. 4.
[12] John Hubbard Church, *Oration, Pronounced at Pelham … July 4, 1805*, quoted in *ibid.*, 144.

evangelicals in America, writes historian William McLoughlin, "is to understand the whole temper of American life in the nineteenth century."[13]

This was the period of the Second Great Awakening. Like the awakening of the eighteenth century, it was a movement full of zeal and enthusiasm for the saving of souls. But it differed from the First Great Awakening in two respects. First, it was not confined to New England and other areas of the eastern seaboard, but it reached into the West and the South. Second, it was more socially and politically conscious than the first. Its purpose, as sociologist Robert Bellah has observed, was "not only to convert individuals but to inspire communities so that they might establish and transform institutions."[14] This was particularly true in the North. Northern evangelicals did not confine themselves to a narrow definition of salvation; realizing that people's souls are integrally connected to their bodies and to the world around them, they promoted temperance, prison reform, public education, Sunday schools, improvements in diet, abstention from tobacco, saving sailors from moral corruption, and care of widows, orphans, "fallen women," and the mentally ill.[15]

Much of the color and texture of American patriotism – its moralism, missionary spirit, and commingling of Christian and national brotherhood – was generated during this period. Earlier, the revolutionary generation had spoken of the "national union" with respect; they realized its necessity, some welcomed its growing powers, and a few, like Alexander Hamilton, were able to foresee a great American "empire" of continental proportions. But to put flesh on these still-abstract ideas, there had to be a deeper bond: a shared sense of spiritual brotherhood, of national communion of righteousness, that could at once tie Americans together and supply the confidence necessary for the expansion of the nation. To this the work of the evangelicals contributed mightily.

There was a nearly perfect fit between the theology and the culture of the North during the antebellum period in America, grounded as both were in the belief that with the right amount of effort and dedication there were no limits to the nation's moral progress. At its best moments, this culture brought about wholesome reforms in manners and mores, generated an atmosphere of hope, and inspired Americans to sacrifice their personal comfort and even safety for the collective good of the nation. But it

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[13] Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (Knoxville, TN, 1997), 44; Benjamin Schwartz, "What Jefferson Helps to Explain," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1997, 71; McLoughlin, quoted in Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York, 1975), 46.

[14] Bellah, *Broken Covenant*, 47.

[15] Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenge to America's National Identity* (New York, 2004), 77.

was highly intolerant, even uncomprehending, of any worldview that did not proceed from its own Puritan premises.

Some of the best and worst qualities of Puritan culture appeared in the Whig Party, the Democrats' main opposition from 1836 to 1860. The Whig Party has been called "the ghost of Puritanism" because it bore all the earmarks of the kind of activist Puritanism that came down through the First and Second Great Awakenings.[16] It was reformist, dedicated to changing hearts and minds, and nationalist, viewing the nation as a single whole instead of a compact of sovereign states. It was at once traditionalist and progressive, glorying in its Puritan roots while looking toward a future of an increasingly united America. The Whigs were the party of "internal improvements." They called for national programs of economic improvement, such as the construction of roads, canals, rail lines, and banks, but also for improvements in the "internal" regions of the human heart and soul, supporting programs of temperance, public education, prison reform, and humane treatment of the insane – and as its final legacy even as it disintegrated, limiting the expansion of slavery.

The Whigs were the first self-consciously romantic American nationalists. Whig writers and orators in the antebellum period did not shrink from emotional appeals to strengthen people's affection for the Union. In a famous debate with Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, Whig Senator Daniel Webster invoked a kind of mystical populism in rebutting Hayne's contention that the Constitution was a compact of states. Far from being a mere instrument of the states, Webster replied, the Constitution is an expression of the united will of the American people. "It is, sir, the People's Constitution, the People's Government; made for the People, made by the People; and answerable to the People."[17]

LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

It was no coincidence that Abraham Lincoln used nearly similar language thirty-three years later in his Gettysburg Address. Webster was a role model to Lincoln throughout his early career, and the young Lincoln was such an enthusiastic participant in Webster's party that Democrats sneeringly referred to him as the Whigs' "traveling missionary."[18] But by the time of his death eleven years later, he had been transformed in the crucible

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[16] William Lee Miller, *Arguing about Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress* (New York, 1996), 376.

[17] Herman Belz, ed., *The Webster-Hayne Debate on the Nature of the Union: Selected Documents* (Indianapolis, 2000), 126.

[18] Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 93.

of America's bloodiest war, from an ambitious Whig politician into a moral and religious thinker of sagacity and vision.

Lincoln must be seen in both comparison and contrast to the abolitionists, the majority of whom voted for him but distrusted him for his unwillingness to oppose slavery in the existing slave states. Most of them came from evangelical backgrounds, and they retained the intensity and moral certitude of Christian missionaries. During the antebellum period, they did not share Webster's romantic reverence for the Union. While honoring the memory of some of America's founders, they regarded both the nation's Constitution and the institutions of its government as complicit in the mortal sin of slavery. But when the war came, they saw it as an opportunity at last to realize their dream of immediate abolition, and they pressured the White House to use the Union armies for that end. Lincoln at first resisted. He stated, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery." But after his Emancipation Proclamation, the abolitionists knew that Lincoln's "paramount object" and theirs were congruent, if not identical. The war, the bloodiest ever fought in American history, transformed the abolitionists into patriots. America had entered "the great battle of Armageddon," a "blessed war." It was "the Holiest ever waged," "God's war."[19]

Ironically, the nation's commander in chief, who had the most to gain politically by indulging in one-dimensional patriotism, avoided it, embarking instead on a theological dialectic of depth and maturity that brought him to conclusions critical of both sides in the war. "The great theological puzzle of the civil war," writes religious historian Mark Noll, is that Lincoln, "a layman with no standing in a church and no formal training as a theologian, propounded a thick, complex view of God's rule over the world and a morally nuanced picture of America's destiny."[20]

Lincoln's new thinking was set in motion by severe setbacks in the war. After the Union defeat in the Second Battle of Bull Run, he wrote in an anguished note to himself, "I am almost ready to say this is probably true – that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet.... He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."[21] In acknowledging the incomprehensibility, in human terms, of a seemingly endless war,

[19] *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings, 1859–1865* (New York, 1989), 358; Richard J. Ellis, *The Dark Side of the Left: Illiberal Egalitarianism in America* (Lawrence, KS, 1998), 26, 27, 31.

[20] Noll, *America's God* 434.

[21] Lincoln, "Meditation on the Divine Will," in *Speeches and Writings*, 359.

Lincoln was departing from the activism and optimism of typical Whig thinking. He finally reached the conclusion that neither side in the war had a monopoly on holiness or evil, but that both sides had sinned grievously for their complicity in slavery and slave trading. This was a theme in his Second Inaugural Address. Delivered five weeks before Lee's surrender, when victory seemed near, Lincoln expressed his hope and prayer that it soon would come. "Yet," he added, "if God will that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bonds-man's two hundred years of unrelenting toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall, be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so it still must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" To Frederick Douglass the speech sounded "more like a sermon than a state paper,"[22] but it was a particular kind of sermon, a jeremiad, whose roots extended back to Puritan New England in the late seventeenth century.

THE GILDED AGE AND THE RISE OF PROGRESSIVISM

With the war over and slavery ended, northern Protestants were for a time without any grand social causes to invest their energies. But they finally found a political outlet with the first stirrings of the movement later called Progressivism. It had its cultural roots in the same spirit that reforming Whigs earlier in the century had brought to their many benevolent projects, and it could be traced back to earlier times when Puritan preachers reminded congregations of their God-given "errand into the wilderness." The new errand, however, grew from more recent developments. The same industrial machines that created the new wealth also created a new wilderness in the cities of America. Blocks away from the stately mansions of the rich were the overcrowded urban slums where the poor lived amid squalor, hunger, and disease. Many were new immigrants who spoke little English, practiced religions alien to Protestant America, and did the bidding of urban bosses, in return for occasional economic assistance and patronage jobs. In the reformers' eyes, the poor needed to be rescued from poverty and subservience, brought into decent society, and "Americanized." This was the dream of the Progressives, and it combined the optimistic millennialism of the Second Great Awakening with the more liberal, secularized Protestantism that emerged in the post–Civil War period.

Progressivism did not appear suddenly and fully formed in the late 1890s; it had been gestating for at least a decade. One of the earliest and

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[22] Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," in *ibid.*, 686. Douglass, quoted in Ronald C. White, Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural* (New York, 2003), 281.

most influential anticipations of it came in the form of a utopian novel published in 1888, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Bellamy envisaged a new, twentieth-century America in which production would be entirely in the hands of the state, and everyone would receive the exact same wage. Love of country instead of "the pursuit of money" would now be the prime motivator.

Looking Backward is a highly patriotic novel. It is also deeply religious. The philosophical heart of the book is revealed when one of its ministers delivers a sermon celebrating the new religion, reminding his audience how different it is from the dour Calvinism of the past. The old religion posited some sort of inherent seed of evil in human nature. But with the coming of the new society, "it was for the first time possible to see what unperverted human nature was really like."[23] In Bellamy's imagined twentieth century, American society has been reborn, this time without the taint of original sin.

A more down-to-earth response to economic inequality was that of Jane Addams, cofounder of Chicago's Hull House, a leading institution in America's "settlement movement." Hull House was a run-down mansion in a Chicago slum populated by poor immigrants. Addams and an associate bought it, refurbished it, and opened it to all comers. It served cheap meals, held chaperoned, nonalcoholic parties for young people, offered lectures, exhibitions, and lessons in music and art, and staged plays. Part of its aim was to assimilate immigrants into the dominant culture of the North, which combined nonsectarian Protestantism with Whig-Republican politics.

In her work, Addams anticipated much of what was set forth in the Social Gospel movement, which Walter Rauschenbusch, a Northern Baptist minister, was later to develop into a full-blown theology. In 1897 he began a series of studies culminating in a book, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, published in 1907. It was a recasting of the whole Judeo-Christian narrative to make it congruent with the spirit of social reform. Synthesizing the liberalism of northern Protestantism in the post–Civil War era with the social concerns of the new industrial age, Rauschenbusch produced what a recent biographer has called "a manifesto for the white Protestant middle class."[24]

World War I and its aftermath put an effective end to the Progressive era. President Woodrow Wilson entered the war reluctantly, but when he did, he justified it in the context of America's special mission. Bidding goodbye

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[23] Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (New York, 1966), 191.
[24] Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch* (Grand Rapids, 2004), 185.

to the troops as they embarked for Europe, he told them, "The eyes of the world will be upon you, because you are in some special sense soldiers of freedom."[25] A son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers, Wilson never forgot his Puritan roots. When the Senate failed to ratify the Versailles Treaty, Wilson, crippled by a stroke, left the White House in 1921 certain that a wrathful God would punish those who resisted what he took to be God's will. Shortly before his death, he gave a public speech on Armistice Day in 1923 in which he said, "I have seen fools resist Providence before, and I have seen their destruction, as will come upon these again – utter destruction and contempt."[26]

1921–1945: AMERICA DISTRACTED AND ENGAGED

The novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald called the twenties the "jazz age" after the new music that had drifted up from the bordellos of New Orleans. The stern moralism of the Puritans, once honored as an ideal, was now derided. The ideal now was freedom, understood as individual self-expression. This brought some of the leading writers and activists during the period into direct collision with the authorities who were still operating under the legal framework of the previous era. In this era of relaxing standards on sex, it was inevitable that the Victorian era laws banning public information on birth control would be challenged. One of the boldest challengers was Margaret Sanger, founder of the American Birth Control League, later renamed the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. In 1916 she opened America's first birth control clinic in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. The police raided it, and Sanger was arrested for violating a federal law against sending birth control information through the mail. To her, birth control was *The Pivot of Civilization*, the title of her most famous book. Sanger was a fervent believer in eugenics, which aimed at "improving racial stock" by giving the "more suitable" races a better chance of prevailing over the lesser ones. In her lyrical description of its effects on humankind, birth control appears as a dynamic new religion. "It awakens the vision of mankind moving and changing, of humanity growing and developing, coming to fruition, of a race creative, flowing into beautiful expression through talent and genius."[27]

The new patterns of opposition were even more sharply revealed in the controversy over the teaching of evolution. The epicenter of that controversy in 1925 was Dayton, Tennessee, where a high school teacher named

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[25] Quoted in Ralph Barton Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy* (New York, 1944), 587.
[26] Quoted in H. W. Brand, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York, 2003), 121.
[27] Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (Amherst, 2003), 58, 65.

John Scopes was put on trial for violating a state law forbidding the teaching of "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation as taught in the Bible, and [teaching] instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." The "Scopes Monkey Trial" pitted two well-known figures against each other: for the state, William Jennings Bryan, Democratic nominee for president in 1896 and 1900; for the defense, Clarence Darrow, a famous trial lawyer. Scopes was found guilty and given a small fine, but what made the case famous was the verbal confrontation between Bryan and Darrow in which Bryan permitted himself to be questioned by Darrow about Old Testament stories, such as Jonah and the whale, and Noah and the flood. Under Darrow's relentless grilling, Bryan became increasingly evasive and embarrassed.

At the end of October 1929, the stock market crashed, setting off a ten-year period of economic depression. Suddenly – so it appeared, and so it is remembered – the Jazz Age was over. The stock market crash, like the Civil War, was an event that not only changed the direction of American history but also became a great mythical event, a morality play about the consequences of folly and avarice. The American Puritan tradition had taught that in such times people must gird their loins to battle their demons and fight to restore the moral values they lost. Franklin Roosevelt sounded these themes in his First Inaugural in March 1933. "This is a day of national consecration," he began. He called for the restoration of "old and precious moral values" and for "the stern performance of duty." This was a call to arms. "We must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made."[28]

On 7 December 1941 Japanese torpedo planes and dive-bombers suddenly plunged America into a real war. In a radio broadcast on 9 December, Roosevelt summed up the situation. "We are all in this war. We are all in it – all the way. Every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking in American history."[29] Roosevelt did all he could to reinforce this framework, returning to the patriotic theme he had sounded in his First Inaugural Address. Once again, the nation was to be mobilized as one, moving as a national army against a common foe.

Patriotism was blended with religion in this new war, which was associated with Kate Smith's singing of "God Bless America" and Bing Crosby's dreaming of a "White Christmas," tunes written by a Jew, Irving Berlin, yet worked into a distinctively Christian matrix. In a special radio address

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[28] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "First Inaugural Address," in Michael Waldman, ed., *My Fellow Americans* (Naperville, IL, 2003), 100.
[29] "The President's Address," *New York Times*, 10 December 1941, 1.

saluting the troops in December 1944, Roosevelt said, "Here at home we
will celebrate Christmas Day in our traditional American way – because of
its deep spiritual meaning to us; because the teachings of Christ are funda-
mental in our lives; and because we want our youngest generation to grow
up knowing the significance of this tradition and the story of the coming
of the immortal Prince of Peace and Good Will."[30]

THE FIFTIES: THE AMERICAN CELEBRATION

After the Allied victory in 1945, there ensued an uneasy period of national
soul-searching. Americans worried about inflation, housing, and, starting
in the late 1940s, Communism and corruption in Washington. As the
1950s began, Republicans were still haunted by memories of the failed
Hoover administration, but New Deal Democrats had their own ghosts to
dispel: the past associations between liberals and the far Left. Accepting
that challenge was a young Harvard historian, Arthur A. Schlesinger, Jr.,
who wrote the defining liberal tract of the new decade, *The Vital Center*,
published in 1949.

Schlesinger was anxious to preserve and expand the New Deal, which
he felt was threatened by a vocal, active remnant of 1930s radicalism –
Communists, fellow travelers, and others on the Left who failed to draw a
firm line between New Deal liberalism and Marxian socialism. More than
any other writer of his time, Schlesinger succeeded in laying out a com-
pelling ideological map. On the extreme Right were fascists and other
right-wing paranoids; then came "old order" Republicans who wanted a
restoration of some mythical *laissez-faire* past. At the other end was the
extreme Left, the Communists, slightly moderating into fellow travelers
and sympathizers. The vital center was "the new radicalism," the good
kind, based on John Maynard Keynes instead of Karl Marx. "The spirit of
the new radicalism is the spirit of the center – the spirit of human decency,
opposing the extremes of tyranny."[31]

The Vital Center was a secular intellectual's battle against Communism
and right-wing extremism. At a more vernacular level, the battle against
Communism tended to be intertwined with religion. In the popular mind,
what was wrong with Communism was not just that it was tyrannical,
but that it was godless. Indeed, it was tyrannical *because* it was godless.
Protestant America had now fully welcomed Catholics and Jews into the
American fraternity. In return, they served as vehicles for assimilation into

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[30] "President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Christmas Address, Dec. 24, 1944," http://www
.ks-ra.org/presidentfranklindroosevelt.htm.
[31] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Boston, 1949), 256.

"Americanism." The sociologist Will Herberg summed up this aspect of fifties America in the title of a book he published in the middle of the decade, *Protestant – Catholic – Jew* (1955). Herberg contended that the three religions eased the pain of assimilation by encasing each within a religious envelope that allowed them to cling to their ethnic identities while being "equally and authentically American." America was a "triple melting pot," gradually Americanizing the children of immigrants within the three religious compartments. The three, in turn, were committed to the "American Way of Life," blending together homage to the Constitution, a commitment to "free enterprise," equality of opportunity, and "a certain kind of idealism which has come to be recognizably American." This combination, he thought, was the "operative faith of the American people."[32]

Herberg, a former atheist who became a religious Jew, worried that the "American Way of Life" was leaching out the content of all three historic faiths, replacing them with "a kind of secularized Puritanism, a Puritanism without transcendence, without a sense of sin or judgment." He saw a great deal of "religiousness" in the air during the 1950s, but all too often it was "a religiousness without religion, a religiousness with almost any kind of content or none."[33]

Whatever its undesirable effects on religion, however, the American Way of Life helped cement Americans together during a tumultuous decade, one that featured not only Communist investigations, but also the commencement of the civil rights revolution. The American Way consensus was part of larger consensus that developed during the decade. In 1960, the sociologist Daniel Bell published *The End of Ideology*, a book looking back on the 1950s and forward to the 1960s. Bell believed that by the close of the decade all the old ideologies of the past centuries – socialist, Communist, radical libertarian, Fascist – had lost their "truth," their power to move people to action. These action-oriented philosophies, which once functioned as secular religions, are obsolete, for "the problems that confront us at home and in the world are resistant to the old terms of ideological debate between 'left' and 'right.'" Realizing this at last, Western society has experienced a pragmatic convergence of once antithetical views, resulting in "a rough consensus among intellectuals on political issues." From now on, he was convinced, "centrist-liberal values will frame the political discussion."[34]

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[32] Will Herberg, *Protestant – Catholic – Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, rev. ed. (Garden City, NY, 1960), 39, 21, 75, 78, 88–9.

[33] *Ibid.*, 80, 81–2, 259–60.

[34] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, 1988), 406, 400, and 402–3.

THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

Bell's prediction of a calm, "centrist" decade failed to materialize. The six-
ties are remembered today for turmoil and conflict, for "counterculture"
and angry confrontations. The civil rights and antiwar movements were
the forces that drove the tumult. In 1962, a twenty-three-year-old gradu-
ate student, Tom Hayden, who had participated in both movements, wrote
a tract that caught their spirit of anger and earnestness.

It was one of the earliest documents of the Students for a Democratic
Society (SDS), and it was called "The Port Huron Statement," after Port
Huron, Michigan, the town where SDS met that year. Aimed at the younger
generation and written largely in the third-personal plural, it began, "We
are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed
now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit." It
went on to describe a generation that grew up in the 1950s accepting all
the platitudes of the time, but then was confronted with the harsh reali-
ties of America's complicity in the arms race and racial oppression. Most
Americans, Hayden wrote, cannot imagine any alternatives to the present,
but "we" are different. "We ourselves are imbued with urgency."[35]

SDS was founded as an auxiliary to a union-affiliated group, but Hayden's
statement distanced itself from unions and other organs of the "old left."
Their single-minded pursuit of collective economic goals neglected the
goal of individual fulfillment. Individuals are "infinitely precious and pos-
sessed of unfulfilled capacities for reason, freedom, and love."[36] To critics
of the New Left, this sounded sanctimonious and naïve, but it appealed to
many on the nation's campuses where more than one hundred thousand
copies were distributed.

By the close of the 1960s, Hayden's SDS had dissolved into a spectrum
of factions ranging from morose Stalinists of the Progressive Labor Party
to the bomb-making Weather Underground. Nevertheless, some seeds had
been planted in the hearts of many youths who in the next decade became
men and women of influence and power. In the seventies, the sixties entered
the American mainstream.

The prophet of the new decade was a Yale Law Professor named Charles
Reich, who published *The Greening of America* in 1970. Now either forgotten
or ridiculed, the book was much acclaimed at the time. Its thesis was that
young people – or at least the affluent, well-educated young – had adopted a
revolutionary new "consciousness" qualitatively different from that of their

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[35] Tom Hayden, "Port Huron Statement," in Massimo Teodori, ed., *The New Left: A
Documentary History* (Indianapolis, 1969), 165.

[36] *Ibid.*, 164–5, 166, 167.

parents and grandparents, and therein lay the salvation of America. "There is a revolution coming," Reich proclaimed. "It will not be like the revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture, and it will change the political structure only as its final act.... It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a new and liberated individual." The revolution will be driven not by economic laws, but by the dynamic *Weltanschauung* of the young. The best and brightest youth of America had reached a new level of consciousness, "Consciousness III." Their grandparents and great-grandparents had gotten only to "Consciousness I" (laissez-faire Goldwaterism), and their parents had not gotten past "Consciousness II" (the New Deal welfare state). The new consciousness, however, transcended all economic categories. It represents a new ethos of expressive individualism, based on spontaneity, gaiety, empathy, and nonlinear thinking.[37] Reich had a good eye and ear for the cultural currents that had been confined to elite campuses and bohemian neighborhoods in the 1960s, and he helped spread them to much broader circles.

There was, for example, the New Left's harshly critical view of American society and government. Reich made it simple and family-friendly. "America is dealing death," he wrote, "not only to people in other lands, but to its own people." American society "is unjust to its poor and its minorities ... and is, like the wars it spawned, 'unhealthy for children and other living things.'"[38] By the end of the decade, countless other popular works followed this style of calling out America for its numerous sins.

Another current of New Left culture that worked its way into the mainstream in the seventies was a certain kind of religiosity. Reich spoke of "conversions," "redemption," "renewal," "rebirth," and "mysticism." There is a sweet early-Christian-like emphasis on converting by example, spreading "trust, understanding, appreciation and solidarity" among the people.[39] And yet Reich's book is thoroughly secular. Neither God nor any tenet of Judeo-Christian beliefs is anywhere mentioned. It was religious yet secular, a tradition with roots back to the Transcendentalists and abolitionists of the antebellum period, which the philosopher John Dewey in the 1930s hailed as "the emancipation of the religious from religion."[40]

The third development nurtured in the counterculture of the 1960s and broadcast over a much wider area during the seventies was sexual liberation. In Reich, "youthful sensuality" was part of a larger theme of individual self-expression. "Consciousness III starts with the self," he declared. Nurturing

[37] Charles Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York, 1970), 21, 25–6, 60–1.
[38] *Ibid.*, 13.
[39] *Ibid.*, 23, 288, 297, 362, 306, 296, 228.
[40] John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven, 1934), 9, 27.

the self, celebrating the self, pleasuring the self were freed from the taint of sin. The same individualistic premise underlay the Court's landmark 1973 decisions, *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton,* which ruled that a pregnant woman possesses life-and-death control over the fetus in her body for the first six months of pregnancy and, indeed, up to the moment of birth if carrying the fetus to term would adversely affect the woman's "well-being," defined as not only as physical, but also "emotional, psychological," and "familial" well-being.[41] These decisions sparked a resistance movement that, eight years later, helped to put Ronald Reagan in the White House.

1980–2000: CULTURE WARS

The Supreme Court's stance on abortion and the Democrats' embrace of it in 1980 alienated many Catholics, traditionally one of the Democrats' most loyal constituencies. But there were other issues, loosely related under the rubric of "social" or "cultural" issues, which drew voters into the Republican column in 1980. Most them were the negative reactions to what Charles Reich had called "Consciousness III." Summed up, the complaint was that the courts, the mass media, and other organs controlled by eastern elites were trying to foist the moral values of sixties elites onto the public at large. Collectively, it got the name "social issues." Catholics were prominent among "social" conservatives – but not all Catholics. Since Vatican II in the 1960s, liberal Catholics, even those opposed to abortion, felt uncomfortable being lumped together with more traditional Catholics, who at that time were prominent in the Right-to-Life movement. Moreover, by the end of the 1970s, only about half of those who identified themselves as Catholics attended Mass every Sunday, compared to about three-quarters in the 1950s. These were the most reliable prolife Catholics; the other half held views on the abortion issue that were scarcely distinguishable from the rest of the population. Among Protestants, it was the fast-growing evangelicals who were the most likely to be motivated by social issues. Mainstream Protestantism had drifted away from its traditional identification with "Americanism" – many were now among its harshest critics – and either actively supported abortion or tolerated it. Jews were similarly divided: Reform and secular Jews were likely to identify themselves as social progressives, while Orthodox rabbis were often speakers at prolife rallies. The division, then, was not between the three major religions but within them, with theological traditionalists in each religion gravitating toward social conservatism and progressives going the other way. Reagan courted these conservatives, bringing them into harness with two other constituencies, Cold War hawks and fiscal conservatives. His genius lay in

[41] *Ibid.*, 22; Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973); Doe v. Bolton, 410 U.S. 197 (1973).

his ability to drive this troika while keeping the three horses from tangling or biting each other. The coalition served the Republicans well, getting Reagan through two terms and his vice president, George H. W. Bush, through a term of his own.

What was lacking during the presidential years of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton was the soaring patriotic rhetoric that was Reagan's theme music. America, Reagan said, is "a shining city on a hill." The fact that John Winthrop, in his famous speech aboard the *Arbella* in 1630, neither said nor meant those words does not lesson their significance. Simply put, with this and other expressions Reagan made most Americans feel good about their country. The first Bush, in spite of his own record in World War II and his success in routing Saddam Hussein's armies in 1991, could never hit the same note. Unlike Bush, Bill Clinton could give rousing speeches and was particularly adept at improvising before large crowds, but he lacked a consistent focus, perhaps because of his strategy of "triangulating" among opposing ideological groups. In spite of the Lewinsky scandal, Clinton left office with a 66 percent approval rating in the polls – the highest end-of-office rating since World War II – but most Americans today would probably have trouble recalling much about his presidency beyond the scandal itself.

AMERICA AFTER 9/11

"AMERICA ATTACKED." The banner headline in the *New York Times* on 12 September 2001, summed up what everyone in the world now knew: America's own airplanes had been used by terrorists to topple American skyscrapers, burn a crater into the Pentagon, and slaughter three thousand innocent people on American soil.

The savagery of the attacks came as near to unifying the nation as had been seen since the assassination of John F. Kennedy. It all came flooding back. Patriotism. Love of country. People had gotten detached from that kind of affection during the seventies. During the eighties, the Reagan coalition brought it back to large segments of the population, but that made it suspect to those who could not stand Reagan. Now even many of them took to flying the flag. The mood seemed to cross all religious, ethnic, party, and even ideological lines. The divisions that began in the seventies and rankled in the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election now seemed irrelevant. George W. Bush, the gravitas-challenged candidate and lackluster president, suddenly sounded like a credible leader. In eloquent speeches delivered with authority and confidence, he rallied the nation behind a "war on terror" that reached not just into Afghanistan (and later, more controversially, Iraq), but also into every region of the globe, from the cities of Western Europe to the jungles of the Philippines.

Bush's model was World War II, the war his father fought in, the last unambiguously "good war" America had fought. Like World War II, America's participation in the "war on terror" commenced after a sneak attack on American territory that killed thousands. It was Pearl Harbor again, another "day that will live in infamy." Bush framed the crisis as a biblical test of the character of the American people, and he recalled America's spirit in World War II. "Today we feel what Franklin Roosevelt called the warm courage of American unity. This is a unity of every faith and every background." Now, as then, "the world has produced enemies of human freedom," and they have attacked us "because we are freedom's home and defender."[42] In an address to a special joint session of Congress on 20 September Bush said, "In our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment.... Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future."[43]

Bush spoke to a public mood that slowly evaporated over the next seven years, largely because of the war in Iraq – a six-year war that overthrew a murderous tyrant, established a credible (if fragile) democracy, but cost $100 billion a year and more than four thousand American lives. Bush's approval ratings in public opinion polls, in the high eighties in the wake of 9/11, sank into the twenties by the time he left office, casting a deep shadow over Republican prospects. Democrats thus entered the 2008 presidential election season buoyantly, especially after recapturing both houses of Congress in 2006.

On 3 January 2008, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois came in first in the Iowa caucuses, the kickoff event in the race for the Democratic nomination. Here, suddenly, was a fresh face – a young man, biracial, articulate, intellectual, who seemed to have transcended the predictable battle lines of the past, the partisan wrangles over race, religion, and ideology. Obama's victory speech underscored the point. Commending all participants in the Iowa caucuses, he said, "You have done what America can do in the New Year, 2008. In lines that stretched around schools and churches; in small towns and big cities; you came together as Democrats, Republicans and Independents to stand up and say that we are one nation; we are one people."[44] Here, perhaps, was someone who could bridge differences in the nation. The hope was broadly shared as the new year got underway, and,

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[42] George W. Bush, "Remarks at the National Day of Prayer & Remembrance, September 14, 2001, Episcopal National Cathedral," *American Rhetoric: Rhetoric of 9/11*, http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911prayer&memorialaddress.htm, 3.

[43] "Transcript of President Bush's Address," 21 September 2001, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/, 6.

[44] "Barack Obama's Stirring Iowa Victory Speech," http://usliberals.about.com/od/extraordinaryspeech2/a/ObamaIowaSpch.htm, 1.

by the time the election season ended in November, even by many of those who did not vote for Obama.

That the old divisions in America have not gone away, that they may even have intensified, seems unlikely to destroy Americans' hope for ultimate unity. For that hope is grounded on a belief that, whatever Americans' current moods and passions, when the nation really needs them to stand together, they will – because they must. America has a task, an errand, to perform. The content of the errand may vary with the times. At various periods in the past, it meant bringing Christ into a howling wilderness, proclaiming and fighting for independence, establishing a more perfect union, reforming manners and morals, saving the union and freeing the slaves, elevating the poor and protecting the worker, making the world safe for democracy, and fighting totalitarianism. Today the emphasis may be on leading the charge against the terrorists, or leading the world in the quest for peace, or, somehow, both. Whatever the priority, even Americans with the harshest criticisms of their country seem unwilling to shed their hopes for its future – hopes based on a premise not always openly acknowledged but buried deeply in the American psyche. Some 360 years ago, Peter Bulkeley expressed it in theological language when he said of his beloved New England, "[T]he Lord looks for more from thee, than from other people."[45]

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[45] Bulkeley, *Gospel-Covenant*, 15.

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