Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity

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Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity

Movements, Institutions, and Allegiance

Edited by

Stephen Hunt

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Foreword

At first sight, the contributors to the present *Handbook* have set themselves a near-impossible task. In very different forms, Christianity today spans the globe and has at least some presence in every one of the world's cultures. In each of those cultures, moreover, believers face very different issues and controversies, as they engage with a wide variety of interlocutors and conversation partners. If in Europe Christians must confront the pressures of secularisation, in other parts of the world they frame their faith in the very different settings created by Islamic or Buddhist neighbours. All those factors must shape Christian beliefs and practices, as well as the responses of the various churches. Even defining major trends in current Christianity is a daunting task, when issues that seem so pressing today might be forgotten in fifty or a hundred years.

It is impressive then to see how the group of scholars represented in this volume has approached its assignments under the broad headings of "Movements, Institutions, and Allegiance". Can any such collection of essays claim to offer comprehensive truth? Of course not. But focusing on the particular, and with so many specific studies, allows us to glimpse the larger picture. This is doubly true when the contributors are drawn from so many different countries and academic backgrounds. Even American readers who are now well accustomed to exploring the realities of the Global South are certain to find much that is new and valuable in the experiences of European or Australian writers.

Some authors make heroic efforts to sketch global realities. Joseph Williams, for instance, shows the many common trends driving the growth of conservative and evangelical Christianity worldwide, while Joshua Ziefle traces the continuing charismatic revival. In political terms, the world's churches must operate in a bewildering variety of contexts and constraints. In her account of the Orthodox tradition, Maria Hämmerli shows how those churches have not just survived the era of persecution and massacre under Communism, but are groping towards accommodation with new political orders.

But micro studies also produce valuable evidence of much wider application. If we take the world's largest religious institution, the Roman Catholic Church, we often hear about the many issues separating clergy from laity, which together constitute a communications gap. Angela Coco's study of Australian Catholics does not attempt to paint a global picture, but at every point, scholars of other areas will recognise so many familiar themes and sources of strain. As so often across the world, conflicts revolve around changing concepts of gender, sexuality and family.

As a famous maxim declares, *lex orandi, lex credendi*—roughly, how we worship is what we believe. But again, how can any one essay, or even a whole book, survey the diversity of Christian forms of prayer and worship, devotion and practice? Our only solution is to construct such a global picture from building blocks that are individual and particular. In his chapter on "Liturgy, Text Performance," Martin Stringer suggests the impact of new forms of technology on worship styles. Although he bases his comments on the English experience, so much of what he says applies worldwide.

Similarly, although Elizabeth Miller offers a detailed account of one megachurch—Australia's vastly influential Hillsong—much of what she says informs our observations of similar institutions across the Americas and Europe, but also around the Christian communities of the Pacific Rim and even South India. Any account of global Pentecostalism—or of Christianity in general—must grow out of such micro-histories.

Some of the 'megatrends' are surprising for anyone who recalls the predictions about the future shape of religion made in the 1960s or 1970s, which largely focused on the impact of secularism and science. In its attempt to accommodate to post-modernity, the Emerging Church movement described by Josh Packard does indeed fit those older visions, but other recent trends seem deliberately archaic. One startling worldwide reality has been the upsurge of Prosperity Gospel teachings, Health and Wealth doctrines, as described by Simon Coleman (and touched on by Martyn Percy). Here above all we see globalisation in its purest forms, an ideology constantly disseminated and transformed by inter-cultural encounters. Stephen Hunt's chapter on "Forcing the Kingdom" addresses and explains the enormous power of eschatological debate and prophecy in modern theologies, however variously such ideas are viewed.

The book's studies of new and emerging religious movements also remind us of the continuing and perhaps eternal appeal of beliefs and practices that initially seem rooted in traditional and fundamental faith. Although such sects and groups abound, we find here excellent case-studies of several key groups: the Brethren (by Bernard Doherty), the Family International (Eileen Barker), Jehovah's Witnesses (George Chryssides), Mormons (Carter Charles), and Seventh-day Adventists (Christian Feichtinger). The last of these is particularly appropriate, since the Adventists so perfectly speak to themes of globalisation, and of rapid growth among traditional-minded sects. In less than sixty years, the number of Adventists has grown from one million to perhaps eighteen million, and the distribution of believers has changed from a largely US-based concentration to a truly global church.

To differing degrees, similar globalisation has transformed the other once-localised sects, especially the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Again, we witness the triumph of tradition, or of what the famous hymn terms "That Old Time Religion". The great achievement of the sects is to marry a very old-fashioned rhetoric with the latest and most current and indeed post-modern forms of organisation and evangelisation.

Incidentally, it says much about the nature of recent religious trends that this current volume includes charismatic and Pentecostal believers not as a case-study among the various fringe sects, as would have assuredly been the case eighty or a hundred years ago. Rather, they are counted among the world's great church movements, alongside the Catholic and Orthodox. They have clearly made the transition from sect to church, if not to Global Church. Now that is a sign of success, if not of the world being utterly turned upside down.

Half a century ago, would any observer have dared suggest not just that monasticism would still continue today, but that it would be flourishing as powerfully as Stefania Palmisano suggests in her study of "Religious Orders and Monastic Communities"? Or that there would be so much to say about New Monastic Orders? Scarcely less neo-medieval in other, more negative ways, is the fantastic cult of Santa Muerte, so ably described by Andrew Chesnut. As we so often see in other chapters, Chesnut duly stresses the powerful theme of healing that is in various ways still so central to the appeal of Christianity worldwide. We think for instance of Health and Wealth, of the successful sects, of the Adventist expansion…. Do not all depend on offering healing of mind and body, spirit and flesh?

I offer this more as a provocation rather than a sober judgment, but if we were to choose a single word or theme to summarise the success of Christianity in the modern world, might it not be Healing? And if so, how would that differ from the ancient or medieval experience? I stress that this is my view, and not that of the responsible authors in the pages that follow! Each has his or her own theme to pursue.

Might other scholars have emphasised other trends, other movements and new forms of allegiance? Certainly. But anyone conceiving such a project in future will have to take account of the rich insights offered by this *Handbook*. This is an excellent foundation on which to build.

Phillip Jenkins

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Introduction

Stephen Hunt

Christianity, the world's largest religion when measured by various criteria (including approximately 2.2 billion adherents according to the Pew Forum Survey 2011), has for some two millennia also proved to be arguably the most dynamic major faith by way of forging significant cultural influences across the globe (MacCulloch 2010). The fact that Christianity, initially emerging as a sect within Judaism, has endured for so long bears testimony to its enduring appeal as an ethical faith of salvation heralding the condemnation of the sin of fallen humanity and its subsequent call for moral accountability, and the recognition of this imperative in the necessity of accepting the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Yet it is precisely how that message is interpreted which has been a persistent factor in ensuring Christianity's impact throughout a wide variety of historical socio-cultural settings. By universally addressing all peoples without differentiation it perennially held the potential to become the earliest 'World Religion'. Put succinctly, Christianity has journeyed well and entrenched itself in everyday life as a font of meaning and hope, sometimes materialising as a foundation of community consensus and identity, sometimes as a source of tension with its wider social surroundings, sometimes giving legitimacy to edifices of power and authority, sometimes imparting a resource for liberating impulses.

From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century it is patently clear that Christianity's adaptability and durability has ensured it has experienced a turbulent past, volatile present, and challenging future. This edited volume considers the present, sometimes in the light of the past, and ponders future possibilities through some of the more recognisable 'traditions' within Christianity as well as those less well-known and/or more recent expressions which are conventionally designated as constituting 'movements' outside of the historical 'mainstream' of the faith. In turn, this broad aim generates further discrete areas of academic concern. The vast variety of today's manifestations of Christianity logically leads to an exploration of the significance of modes of articulating the faith and the dynamics of allegiance through organisational and non-organisational forms, alongside disparate and competing theologies, beliefs, liturgies and other modes of religious expression, many of which are clearly subject to challenging and potentially transforming pressures in a vast diversity of global settings.

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Christianities

While the current expressions of Christianity seem infinitely multifarious, there is sufficient reason to surmise that this has always been historically so. Christianity originally emerged largely as a religion of the poor, the oppressed, and those situated on the social periphery of the Roman Empire. With its millenarian vision, Christianity's initial message advocated the rejection of material existence, bringing a condemnation of the rich and powerful and the pursuit of the treasures of this world, renouncing all earthly ties. Yet it was, in a brief space of time, to become the religion of Empire and emperors.

During the Middle Ages most of Europe was Christianised by mission or conquest, with the religion making significant inroads throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Ethiopia, and parts of the Indian sub-continent. In its adopted European homeland Christianity played a prominent role in the shaping of Western civilisation, not least of all through the Protestant Reformation where Christianity's link to the disputing power structures and embattle nations of Europe became apparent. The onset of the so-called 'Age of Discovery' witnessed Christianity's spread to the Americas, Australia, sub-Saharan Africa, and a good part of the rest of the world. Here the religion accompanied the colonial expansion of the Western powers. Throughout these centuries of turmoil the extraordinary durability, the cultural adaptability, and the realisation of Christianity as an instrument of both subjugation and emancipation became abundantly apparent.

The socio-cultural and political manifestations of the faith raised crucial questions, not least of all in relation to its contribution to the development of human civilisation. While some past commentators such as Charles Ellwood (1920) could interpret events during its broad historical sweep as a civilising force, more recent accounts have come to question not only whether Christianity's path necessarily carried such potency but whether the chronicles which told its narrative in actuality pointed to the unilinear evolution of a single religion.

European nineteenth century global colonial spread generated the emergence of an extensive discussion around the central questions of which religions belonged or did not belong as a 'World Religions', which variations of these religions could be regarded as authentic (in spite of wide-ranging 'internal' divisions), and, in general, what were the boundaries within the domain of a particular religious faith which lent to its incorporation within the taxology. In recent times this quest for conceptual clarity has led to seeking approaches recognising that the meaning of 'Christianity' itself has varied and continues to be diverse according to socio-cultural influences and the self-definition of copious differing Christian communities.

Given its extensive impact and global geographical spread, the temptation to assign Christianity as a 'World Religion' is enduring. However, the broad classification has itself become increasingly a contended category. In this respect recent scholarship has pulled critical attention to the factors generating notions of 'World Religions' and how such a taxology resonates with postcolonial discourses (cf. Asad 1993). Christianity has no immunity from this. Its founding figure, Jesus of Nazareth, did not venture to create 'Christianity'. The term 'Christian' is to be found in the New Testament canon on only very few occasions. The idiom 'Christianity' does not feature at all. Moreover, since its founding as a 'religion' (arguably by the end of the fourth century as the official state religion of the Roman Empire), the meaning and classification of Christianity continued to be subject to what may be phrased in common academic parlance as 'the social construction' of the faith. Yet even before the canonical founding of the Christian scriptures, and the so-called 'ecumenical' or 'universal' creeds, various 'Christianities' struggled for legitimacy. Today, those forms of Christianity that subscribe to the historical creeds and readily described as 'Trinitarian' (and all that the term theologically implies) is still utilised by scholars of various disciplines to describe the components of the 'mainstream' rendering of the faith. This designation however remains problematic.

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one"—the prayerful plea by Jesus to God to retain unity among his disciples as recorded in the Gospel of John (17:11–12)—proved ultimately to be forlorn petition. Unity within emergent Christianity was short-lived and was evident in many of the Apostle Paul's letters to the early Christian congregations where he condemns major heterodox departures in the faith ("As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (*Galatians* 1:8, 9).

For centuries until the Enlightenment, it was thought that the faith constituted a fairly distinct and monolithic religion bestowed with the same appellation of 'Christianity'. Scholarly scrutiny thereafter undermined the assumption that contemporaneous Christianity reflected how the religion had always historically manifested itself. In his work *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945) Bertrand Russell put matters in perspective when he wrote that "The historian, in speaking of Christianity, has to be careful to recognize the very great changes that it has undergone, and the variety of forms that it may assume even at one epoch". Recent interpretations—particularly in popularised accounts—have forcefully reiterated the view that Christianity was never a homogeneous, single, ancient religion from the onset. In their hotly debated *The Jesus Mysteries* Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy (1999) reinforce this view by stating that "In

the first few centuries CE there really was no such thing as 'the (Christian) Church', only competing factions, of which the Literalists were one".

While *The Jesus Mysteries* and similar publications readily court controversy, contemporary scholarship has also emphasised power structures, hegemonic forces, and aspects of boundary maintenance integral in the struggle to define Christianity. Bart D. Ehman in his much contested but informative volume, *Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (2003), details how early Christianity was a chaotic embroidery of contending beliefs. During the first three Christian centuries the practices and beliefs observable among those who referred to themselves 'Christian' were so differentiated that the variations found today cannot be compared. Ehman contends that the knowledge of most of these expressions of ancient of Christianity are now lost in the midst of time. All of the factions which carried competing forms of the religion insisted they upheld the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, and they all possessed writings which bore out their claims—books reputedly manufactured by Jesus's initial followers. Yet the beliefs and styles of expression have changed to such an extent over the centuries that it is prudent to consider 'Christianity' to be an umbrella term for a multiple faiths all of which had the same name but different beliefs. At an early stage they may have plausibly included systems of polytheism and certainly carried contrasting notions of who Jesus was.

As the faith became the official religion of the Roman Empire a number of controversies surfaced which give some indication of the vast diversities of 'Christianities' and was evident in the Arian dispute—that Jesus, the Son of God, was nevertheless a subordinate entity to God and had not always exist, but rather was created by and was therefore distinct from God the Father. Ehrman attempts to shows how these early forms of Christianity came to be suppressed, restructured, or forgotten. Nonetheless, a series of varied 'Christianities' since—sometimes influencing each other—continued. Modern archaeological work has recovered a number of key texts, and as Ehrman explores, these discoveries reveal religious diversity that says much about the ways in which history is written by those who triumph. For instance, we might cite how the dominant Catholic Church in Western Europe was adept in declaring a monopoly of the faith even before the thirteen century and claimed that there was no salvation outside of the (Catholic) Church (*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*). Thus it was able to draw up boundaries to protect its ecclesiastical domain by determining which variants of the faith were or were not heretical and this was demonstrated by the condemnation (c.1300–1350) of the Bogomil sect and its alleged deviant sexual practices.

Confronting Modernity

Christianity's disorderly history has seen major fissures within the faith, primarily through Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox Church, and Protestantism which itself has been subject to numerous schisms. Such stark partitions have not merely been resultant of theological variance, but marked significant adaptation to radically different cultural and socio-political environments over a protracted period of time. Perhaps, above all, Christianity was the first major faith to confront the ravages of modernity, thus engendering a multitude of debates throughout these major streams and outside of them. In turn, this wrought divisions and fractures, forging liberal-conservative theological contestations. Yet there was always more to the picture. As David Martin in his seminal work *A General Theory of Secularization* (1978) explores, there have been different paths of secularisation and Christianity's concomitant journeying within them has been equally variant. This journeying has, in short, been 'path-dependent' and related to socio-historical trajectories of national and regional setting.

In his more recent work, *The Future of Christianity* (2010), Martin picks at some of his earlier threads and calls upon his far-reaching knowledge of developments of Christianity within Europe, North America, and South America (while also making comparative excursions into Africa, Asia, and Australasia). Practically in concert with recent notions of 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt 2000), Martin investigates various conduits of modernity (which itself has different forms) and vary in their orientations to religion in general and Christianity in particular. Furthermore, Martin insists, there were also several 'Enlightenments', some conducive to the fortunes of Christianity, some misrepresenting and warping the faith, while others proved hostile to religion in any variety. On this foundation Martin is able to present some formidable insights, not least of all that Christian universalising movements invariably falter since they generate antagonistic alternative movements which counter their mobilisation and incursions in social and political realms. His analysis includes a discussion of the main 'traditions' within the faith, namely, Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox Church, and the complex world of Protestantism. Martin revisits the essential variables that have fashioned the fortunes of these streams in different contexts: their relationship with the state, the extent of religious pluralism, political power structures, and the impact of majority and minority religious constituencies within particular social contexts. Catholicism, the Orthodoxy, and the different forms of Protestantism are at variance with each other according to how they relate and respond to these determinants in various ways with responses often determined by the resources that they have at their disposal.

There are further complexities which essentially relate to a globalised world. Today, the major 'World Religions' such as Christianity, as well as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam may understand themselves to be global communities. They preserve their heartlands but also comprise minority presences in other parts of the world. Within each of these categories there are often sub-divisions and the greater part of these are likewise globally dispersed with local concentrations perhaps subject to co-existence (Robertson 1992). Throughout contemporary Christian faith today, diversities continue to multiply in different global settings, forging a response by 'movements' to a range of internal dynamics and external cultural transformations. To suggest that these divisions are articulated principally through conservative and liberal streams of the faith is evidently now an over-simplification. Numerous nuanced and changing positions can be observed, each seeking a space in diverse political and social-cultural settings, and each voicing different narratives which this edited volume addresses.

Do these internal and external variations within Christianity suggest that we can entirely dispose with taxologies? Gordon Melton, in his *Encyclopaedia of Religion in the USA* (1978) categorises expressions of (American) religious life according to 'families'. Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox constitute major branches, with Anglicanism featuring as just one branch within the (Western) 'Liturgical Family'. In opting to adopt the word 'family' to describe expressions of religion, Melton makes claims to a structural consideration of Christianity (and not just Christianity) that achieves two principal objectives. First, it permits religious expressions to be clustered together according to their ecclesial, social and doctrinal resemblance, not according to size or social impact. Second, Melton takes into account not merely a demarcated set of beliefs and practices but forms of ecclesiastical organisation. In doing so he rejects the unsophisticated European-centred distinctions of those such as Troeltsch (1931) in differentiating between 'church', 'sect' and 'denomination' which are potentially pejorative, besides constituting artificial and sometimes clumsy differentiations.

By circumventing such established typologies of organisation we might come to recognise that diversity and change can also be discerned in the way in which Christianity is expressed and systematised—generating the transmogrification of conventional institutional idioms and even their erosion, while radically new trajectories can be identified. Such typologies no longer always stand up to the rigours of the post-modern world and can perhaps only largely be understood as 'churchish', 'sectish' etc. (Stackhouse 1994). This is reflected also in the sources of allegiance and articulations of the faith sometimes across institutional boundaries and national publics. We are therefore able to consider the roles of both Christian leaders and lay people

(and sometimes a blurring of these distinctions), and broader relationships with wider cultural motifs and changing social circumstances.

Cutting across these patterns of change are fresh quarters of renewal and revivalism and energetic movements which may negate institutional forms or even circumvent them altogether. These movements channel the Christian message and mission and in doing so directly engage with the contemporary world in multifarious ways. At the same time longer established cadres, generally viewed as being outside of 'mainstream' Christianity, jostle for prominent positions in the emerging religious marketplace and have themselves undergone notable alterations as they adjust to contemporary circumstances, be they local, national or global.

Engaging the present-day world, in turn, suggests various challenges. There is not the scope to explore them all in detail here. However, the traditionalist-modernist division throughout Christianity that was often observed via conservative-liberal theological disputes and sectarian schisms was initially about the survival of the faith in an increasingly secular environment. Cultural change is nonetheless now far more complex. Environmentalism, gender and sexual rights, opposition to racism, the impact of new technologies, and the negative consequences of globalisation including exploitation in the Majority World are issues which muddy the theological waters. These and other matters confront both liberals and conservative Christians but in such a way that doctrinal cleavages between them may become blurred.

Ongoing cultural change is undoubtedly multi-dimensional. Certainly one further transformation which may be highlighted is the nature of religious belonging and expression in the context of increasing individualism, choice and consumption. This is mirrored, once more, in organisational change. Such organisational adaptations are indicative of a response to fresh socio-cultural conditions, and they also mark an accommodation to the world not, as in the past, to the political status quo but to the demands of choice and commodification at the micro level and strategies for survival in the religious marketplace. That said, Christianity has always competed in the religion bazaar with considerable success and fortitude. Its endurance, then, has long been proven and there is every reason to suggest that Christianity on a global scale is alive and well as it shapes up to the rigours and challenges of its third millennia in existence.

The Aims and Structure of this Edited Volume

This edited volume ventures to encapsulate some of the dominant themes briefly overviewed above and applicable to the Christianity today as a principal

global faith of considerable diversity. In doing so, it embraces contributions from authors exploring a broad scope of crucial areas. Some themes are bequeathed with more exposure than others and many which are not excavated here are done so in the companion to this volume, namely, the *Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity: Trends and Developments in Culture, Politics, and Society* (Brill 2015). While the dominant subject material of this volume is to give space to a discussion of differing dynamics and further frames of reference related to major and minor movements within the faith, the expressions of allegiance and their organisational (or non-organisational) forms, it aims to provide a sample of current literature in the field—identifying both major interests and sub-topics—to guide the audience of readers through important mutual issues pertinent to numerous academic disciplines.

Of all the possible subject areas, plausibly none by way of its essential qualities overlaps across a range of disciplines and draws so wide deliberation as religion, offering the application of contrasting approaches such as those of History, Political Science, Religious Studies and Sociology. By utilising various disciplines the hub of analysis can illustrate the numerous, less obvious ways in which various dimensions of religion have bearing upon what seems to be aspects of social life empty of religion. Christianity marks no departure and has long exhibited social, cultural, historical, political, economic, moral, psychological, philosophical, and legal dimensions. Thus, the need for a nuanced and perceptive approach recognising the intricate inter-weaving of the faith with other aspects of socio-cultural life becomes imperative.

While the aims of this edited volume may be clear in attempting to explore crucial aspects of contemporary Christianity through many materialisations, its elected structure needs some exposition. Clearly there is the need to systematise the volume along the lines of substantive 'themes' and to provide a balanced number of chapters in each part in order to provide a level of coherence and parity. To some extent this constitutes an artificial partition and is not without its shortcomings. The chapters contained in each of the four parts join with a breadth of discrete areas of concern, although there is perceptibly a high degree of convergence throughout. Several of these chapters offer an overview of particular developments in specific Christian 'mainstream' traditions and expressions. Others survey less conventional forms. A number of chapters indicate how studies of Christianity, as with other religious faiths, have become more ambitious and elaborate in their utilisation of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative techniques, alongside historical excavations which bring current developments into a clearer relief.

It is not just methodological innovations that many chapters in this volume communicate. Many give latitude to the recent re-construction of the study of

religion generally, and Christianity particularly, via theoretical advances across the disciplines. Simultaneously, the various chapters traverse the macro–micro divide. Religion is deeply social, not only in the sense that Christianity is a community of believers—the 'Church' however that is defined, containing movements of various hues—but because it shapes relationships and processes at the micro-world level through structure and expressive modes which feed back and inform that community.

Finally, in compiling this edited volume, it was necessary to embark on the imperative of seeking experts in their field who were truly international not only in terms of their global reach but also focus. Broad topics were outlined and authors invited to forge their contribution founded on their expertise in particular areas, while at the same time seeking a balance with the critical themes that demanded addressing. It is these authors, both established and emerging scholars, who demonstrate a vital sense of importance in their spheres and where those fields are presently directed. The chapters which follow collectively pay witness to cutting edge research, showing that academic work around Christianity remains vibrant and inspiring.

Part 1: Major Divisions within the Christian Faith

It is conducive to the aims of this edited volume to commence with an overview of the developments within 'traditional' Christianity—the major divisions which have contoured the faith over centuries: Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox Church and Protestantism. Hence the first five chapters examine trends and counter-trends through a survey of the major expressions that are firmly established as 'historical Christianity'. Each have been obliged to come to terms with modernity and more recently are facing significant trials in the contemporary context, responding to global, regional, and local challenges and within varying cultural and political environments. In doing so they may generate new 'internal' divisions, controversies, innovations and counter-reactions which are predominantly articulated through theological prisms and structures of religious community life.

Protestantism has for centuries proved to be a major contributor to the global expansion of Christianity. Yet at the same time, of all the foremost Christian 'traditions', it is the one most prone to division and fissure. Today it encompasses numerous 'streams' including 'Reformed' churches, Conservative Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and liberal 'mainstream' denominations. In the opening chapter of this edited volume Martyn Percy calls upon Melton's categorisation of expressions of religious life according to 'families' or 'branch'

motifs (as briefly explored above) in order to discuss Protestantism and its tendency towards separation and individuation in ecclesial formations. As Percy points out, Protestants for much of their histories have declined to acknowledge many of their 'cousins', even eschewing communication with them. He argues that the reason for the proliferation of 'family members' is not primarily about expansion, nor the local enculturation of imported or exported religious ideas, but because of a breakdown in relationships as a consequence of discrepancies over authority, scriptural interpretation, perhaps even straightforward dissention embedded within the Protestant tradition itself. In this chapter Percy sets out, records, and offers an account of the propagation of Protestantism in historical relief. Exploiting sociological insights, he then progresses to scrutinise the viability of differing ecclesiological outlooks both present and future. In his summary he suggests that change is now evident. Protestants are increasingly less separated by liberal-conservative dialects, and are more inclined to pursue a 'generous orthodoxy' in denominational life, becoming more ecumenical and where the prefix 'post', such as 'post-evangelical', engender a profound significant in engaging the modern world.

In contrast to innovation, a number of Christian traditions have manoeuvred towards retrenchment—generating reactionary forces in respect of dogma and ecclesiology. In Chapter 2 Angela Coco details how reform can be difficult to implement in the face of ingrained conventional interests. If, through the Vatican II Council, the Roman Catholic Church endeavoured to come to terms with the modern world, the outcomes of the Council have been much debated and contended for over half a century. Coco explores this in the context of Catholic teachings around gender, maintaining that Catholicism exhibits structural dynamics perpetuated by a distinct configuration of communicative behaviours that uphold a conventional system of attitudes which on a global scale endorse the prevailing gendered structures ensconced in Western culture. This amounts to a 'gender regime' that can be interpreted through the conceptual lens of relations—of power, emotions and symbolism. Coco delves into Catholic interpersonal communicative practices, the ideal being implanted in the Code of Canon Law negating a meaningful two-way dialogue in which those in authority may listen and incorporate fresh knowledge necessary to ensure the Church's future survival. Since Vatican II, the officially endorsed foundational knowledge informing social teaching and theology has nonetheless succumbed to a pre-Vatican II style demarcation of the sacramental and social lives and practices. This is closely marshalled by the Vatican and lay Catholics who contest the implementation of Vatican II inspired reform. As a consequence, change is difficult to mobilise due to the variety of modes by which individual Catholics experience and respond to disempowering practices.

As Maria Hämmerli explores in Chapter 3, while Christianity in the West has experienced decline in religious authority and church attendance, Eastern Christianity has thrived since the disintegration of Communist regimes in the 1990s. After decades of enforced secularisation, the range of national Orthodox churches has been re-invigorated, not least of all as very prominent constituencies in the social sphere. Hämmerli considers the current state of affairs of the principal Orthodox churches in Europe (Greece, Russia, Romania, Serbia), but also provides an account of the health of Orthodoxy in ex-Soviet territories (the Baltic countries, Georgia, Ukraine) and elsewhere. This analysis includes a survey of the organisation of these churches, their relation to the state, their social and cultural impact (stemming from the robust relationship between religion, culture and ethnicity), the crucial current debates including the link between the Orthodoxy and nationalism, and responses to the economic climate since 2009. Finally, Hämmerli addresses the Orthodox migration to the West (incorrectly designated 'diaspora') and its relation to the Orthodox heartland and so-called 'mother-churches'. Here she ponders the challenges Orthodox churches confront in secularised and minority environments; their strategies for preserving identity; and the adjustments adopted in fresh locations where they do not enjoy widespread social and political support. Hämmerli finds that regional distinctions in the Orthodoxy are also readily apparent. Disparate ritual practices and theological commitments reveal noteworthy divergent orientations regarding attitudes towards the poor, the efficacy of overt political action, the desirability of ecumenism, and the importance of education and institutional affiliation.

In Chapter 4 Joseph Williams reflects upon the international proliferation of conservative forms of Christianity in the twenty-first century which share important commonalities but also profound differences as evidenced through the diversity driven by contrasting responses to a rapidly modernising, globalised world. In common they reject religious pluralism and Enlightenment-inspired approaches to the scriptures, vociferously attacking liberal definitions of the family, human sexuality, and changing gender norms. Calling on the infallibility of the Bible and committed to evangelising missions, their notions of salvation remain rooted in a conventional Christian narrative centred on the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. For all of the conventions uniting the numerous expressions of conservative Christianity across the globe, deep-seated differences remain. Disparate ritual practices and theological commitments reveal strikingly divergent orientations regarding attitudes towards the poor, the utility of political action, and the desirability of ecumenism. Williams notes however that despite the traditionalists' enmity toward liberal forms of religious innovation, modernising forces nevertheless contour the conservatives' 'old-fashioned' iterations of the faith no less than

they shape more progressive alternatives. The story of conservative Christianity in the twenty-first century—whether in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or North America—repeatedly intersects with the ever-increasing sway of consumer capitalism, technological advance and globalisation, as well as persistent nationalistic currents. Further, if more traditional groups have not escaped the influences of modernising forces, sharp disagreements emerge when adherents endeavour to articulate a Christian response to these trends.

Joshua Ziefle, in Chapter 5, considers Charismatic Renewal—a movement which has been in existence for well over half a century. The movement traces its roots to Pietism, Methodism, and nineteenth century American revivalism and restorationism. By the twentieth century various Holiness proponents connected the doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism with speaking in tongues. These new Pentecostal believers coalesced into independent denominations, constituting the initial strand of the Charismatic Renewal. Over time traditional church leaders increasingly displayed interest in this zealously missionary movement, referring to it as a 'Third Force' in Christendom. By the 1960s Pentecostal cultural modes and practice had expanded to within the more mainline Christian denominations and brought a high degree of ecumenicalism. By the early 1980s classical (First Wave) Pentecostalism continued its worldwide growth, the Charismatic Movement (Second Wave) in Roman Catholicism and elsewhere had profoundly impacted the style and drift of Christianity. A further strand of the Charismatic Renewal (Third Wave) emerged which focused on the embrace of 'signs and wonders'. As it expanded, each strand of the movement generated fresh infusions on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of millions of adherents. Ziefle shows how Charismatic Renewal has revealed remarkable vigour not only in its persistence and ability to transform patterns and praxis but in its replication and adaptation to numerous contexts. In these areas the movement continues to have profound impact as it increasingly becomes a dominant expression of contemporary global Christianity.

Part 2: Christian Institutions and Affiliation

To 'know' the divine relates in Christianity, as well as other religions, to epistemologies and the deduction of divine revelation through a belief system founded on scripture, theology, experience, narratives, and tradition as a carrier of 'beliefs'. In turn, these may all express differing manifestations of devotion, worship and petitioning of the divine. Belief systems are also likely to be articulated via organisational structures and through religious communities

(Hopewell 1987). It is evident, as acknowledged above, that organised expressions of Christianity, the nature of religious belonging, modes of worship and so on are undergoing profound changes to a large extent in response to wider cultural change and which, in turn, have at times been contended by conservative forces as a capitulation to secular impulses. The five chapters in this part address these major themes.

In the first chapter of the second part Stefania Palmisano considers the phenomenon of religious orders which are identified by their dedication to the 'consecrated life'. The chapter analyses religious orders via core historical and modern types and how they connect with the wider ecclesiastical sphere. Specifically, Palmisano focuses on monastic orders in order to depict and discuss changes in convent life. Historical instances centre on monasticism as a total way of being; the canons regular and military orders combining life 'in religion' with the status of priests or knights 'in the world'; the friars, who tended toward a purposive organisation in the assistance of the Church; and, finally, the Jesuit order, the mature product of a long evolution, with its *esprit de corps* and specialised commitment to rationality and individualisation. Thereafter, Palmisano explores religious orders with reference to the findings of some recently conducted European studies surveying the principal changes, as well as the challenges and compromises, which underscore the monastic ideal in modernity. Finally Palmisano considers the development surfacing within contemporary monasticism: the so-designated 'New Monasticism'. Emerging from polemics which challenge historical forms of monasticism today, this amounts to a experimental setting for securing the alliance between monasticism and modernity in that the monks advancing the 'New Monasticism' are cast as interpreters of a radical but troublesome re-invention of traditional monasticism. To this end, after having drawn a general outline of European 'New Monasticism', Palmisano presents a number of empirical examples drawn from the Italian context.

In Chapter 7 Giulia Marotta further contemplates the subject of ecclesiastical hierarchies with reference to the Franciscan order. The key questions she addresses include: how has the radical character of the order developed as a criterion for providing a hierarchical or democratic interpretation of the long story of Catholicism?; and what are the implications of a conflicting interpretation of the history of the relationship between Franciscanism and ecclesiastical hierarchy on the present attitude of adherents towards their Church? Such complex questions have accompanied the principal monastic orders since their foundation in the thirteenth century, and continue to generate spirited discussions among theologians, clergy and lay people. Today the questions engage with Catholic culture and the worldwide appeal of Franciscan monasticism as an agent of change and opposed to ecclesiastical hierarchy as an agent of social

control—thus offering a mode of anti-institutional avant-garde marked by communalism, egalitarianism and environmental issues. On the other hand, the official position of the Catholic Church as well as that of Franciscan monastic orders is one of mutual unity of identity and purpose, assuming the positive value of differences as a constructive asset. In this chapter Marotta examines the link between these two kinds of representation and the enduring popularity and charisma of Franciscanism, thus generating a discussion of the intersection of historical contentions and social circumstances. Marotta's brief, in sum, is to analyse the socio-religious role played by Franciscan monasticism in determining the patterns by which the past and the present situation of the Catholic Church as a hierarchical structure is evaluated in the contemporary age.

In Chapter 8 Martin Stringer contemplates liturgy, text and performance within contemporary Christianity. The chapter opens with a brief survey of the last half century in which liturgy, hymnbooks and the Bible have shifted from being single texts—each possessed and utilised as devotional aides by many adherents—through to multi-platform texts and images especially in terms of their everyday utility. In sketching these histories Stringer signifies how each has impacted the others, hence identifying similarities in the different trajectories as well as points where the journeying of each kind of text has differed. Overall, however, Stringer identifies a clear path of traverse for most 'devotional texts' across a wide range of Christian communities. He then proceeds to address some of the themes that these histories illuminate. This entails focusing on crucial questions related to the demise of history or tradition associated with the separate texts; the critique of the claimed triteness of many contemporary texts; issues surrounding the 'pick and mix' approach to worship and to devotion more widely; worship via the internet; and the loss of a mutual language or discourse of faith in many Western settings. Stringer notes that underpinning these transformations are changing demographics; changing attitudes to power and authority; changing understandings of tradition and truth; and changing outlooks to the public expression of religion. Springer considers the positive and negative features of these developments and draws his own conclusions in relation to the landscape detailed throughout the chapter.

In Chapter 9 Leslie Francis addresses the intricacies of behaviour, beliefs, and affiliation. A prevailing concern of the social scientific study of Christianity has been the attention bestowed on the range of ways in which Christians differ one from another, and the relevant studies indicate considerable diversity in this area. The nature and implications of such diversity has been illuminated by giving serious reflection to the ways in which particular differences among Christians can be identified and discussed. Francis focuses on five viable core constructs employed in this debate and characterised as: affiliation, practice, belief, attitudes, and orientations. Empirical research has begun

to recognise further the social and personal correlates associated with individual differences in each of these five areas. Self-assigned religious affiliation is concerned with the kind of data systematically collected in many national censuses and which frequently differentiate between various 'traditions' within Christianity. 'Affiliation' nonetheless implies neither 'practice' nor 'belief'. 'Core practices' include public religious attendance and private prayer. 'Belief' embraces both content (distinguishing liberal from conservative orientations) and style (distinguishing dogmatic from non-dogmatic). 'Attitudes' identify the affective and evaluative predispositions of negative or positive variance. 'Orientation' captures the essence of notions of 'intrinsic religiosity' and 'extrinsic religiosity' expanded by conceptions of 'quest religiosity'. In this discussion Francis explores these five areas with reference to matters of definition, operationalisation, and the relevant research findings.

In Chapter 10 Abby Day scrutinises Christianity and the prevailing popular notion of 'Vicarious Religion' from the perspective of the nature of Christian institutional allegiance apparent in the prevailing conditions of late-modernity. Day argues that a broad view of both institution and affiliation can aid resolving a number of contemporary paradoxes, particularly concerning the widening gap between institutional affiliation and institutional participation. The chapter takes as its point of departure the idea that a religious institution is an ideal to which people subscribe and aspire (rather than a physical place or fixed point of reference) whose function is to establish and nourish a particular social order. While it is evidently the case that currently fewer people regularly attend church than they did fifty years ago, widespread evidence suggests the majority continue to hold fast to the premise that the Christian institution provides societal cohesion and order. Such adherence takes several forms, from selecting a Christian identity on surveys and censuses, to participating in public discourse about culture and other social norms, to supporting the Church 'vicariously'. Day attempts to show that these actions are underpinned by anthropocentric beliefs about human and other-than-human belonging, in contrast to beliefs in specific theocentric doctrines and dispositions. The nature of that 'belonging' is embodied in late-modern social identities depending on relationality, trust and legitimacy.

Part 3: New Movements within Christianity

While continuing a number of themes developed in the previous chapters, this part focuses particularly on fresh 'movements' within Christianity. The history of the faith is one that is littered with movements of revivalism and innovation. At times they may emerge within the major 'traditions' and sometimes outside

of them in the classical development of sectarian schism (Weber 1958; Wilson 1970) but, as noted above, in the contemporary setting may only approximate such a categorisation. Some attempt to restore an imagined pristine version of the faith and in doing so eschew ecumenism, bring different orientations to the world—sometimes embracing materialism, sometimes profoundly rejecting it. Propelled by the conviction to evangelise the world, many search for new avenues of mission and ways of expressing their 'gospel'. In a globalised world such movements may cut across national boundaries with ease, but also reflect localised settings. They may generate standardisation, or hybridity and rich diversity, sometimes calling upon ancient motifs and belief. Other movements pursue the post-modern culture of playfulness or perhaps produce an eclectic pick 'n mix of spiritual exploration. Others still may introduce new dynamics which may move some of their idioms towards forms of fundamentalism in order to find security as a response to the ravages of relativism.

In the opening chapter of this part Stephen Hunt traces the fluctuating fortunes of one form of Christian millenarianism: post-millenarianism. While periodically influential throughout Church history, post-millenarianism remained largely peripheral to dominant Christian theology. Nonetheless, particularly among Evangelicals Protestants, post-millenarianism has periodically for the last two centuries competed for acceptance alongside pre-millenarianism and amillenarianism as the orthodox teaching in relation to eschatology. Hunt explores how post-millenarianism has its distinct interpretation of Judaic-Christian scriptures, especially references to the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ precipitating the eternal Kingdom of God (the post-millenarianism schema interprets the scriptures as alluding to the messianic advent after the millennium, rather than pre-empting it). Hunt then provides an appraisal of post-millenarianism in recent times. Particular attention is given to its increasing popularity from the latter half of the twentieth century where post-millenarianism has been largely transmitted by forms of neo-Pentecostalism. This has included the doctrines and praxis of the so-called Third Wave movement, Dominion Theology and what has come to be known as Restorationism. The chapter concludes by exploring how post-millenarianism is expressed in the form of contemporary revivalism.

In Chapter 12 Simon Coleman overviews the Prosperity (or health and wealth) Gospel which has attracted both academic interest, as well as passionate condemnation in many Christian circles. While it has undoubtedly enjoyed considerable influence within post-war Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, extensive uncertainty exists over what it actually amounts to. Does it constitute a coherent 'Gospel' or a unified 'Movement'? Is it Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, or even heterodox? In this chapter Coleman briefly explores the history as well as

the diffusion of both the Prosperity Gospel and the responses it has prompted, and suggests that it can usefully be analysed through a focus on the ambiguities and ambivalences it generates. Coleman adopts his perspective from symbolic anthropology: the Prosperity Gospel presents 'matter out of place' not least because of what it articulates about matter-materiality itself, expressed in terms of wealth but also much broader understandings of prosperity. To such symbolic analysis Coleman brings an additional perspective on both materiality and boundaries: that concerned with the political economy of religious movements in relation to what is sometimes seen as the shift in authority and influence from the global North to the global South evident in Christian religious movements. However this 'Gospel' is expressed, it perennially represents powerful cultural and sometimes political and economic resources through which to contend or penetrate boundaries, suggesting analytical metaphors of flow, 'part-culture' syncretism and hybridity.

In Chapter 13 Elizabeth Miller explores the phenomenon of the mega-church exemplified by the prolific growth of the Hillsong Church. Today, the church has over 20,000 members in its congregation in Sydney alone. It has campuses and extension services in various Australian cities, as well as congregations in ten additional countries. The extraordinary expansion of Australia's most famous mega-church provides an example of the increasing power and prevalence of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the country. The chapter examines four key themes running through Hillsong's history: the transnational origins and international flexibility of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches; the place race and national identity have occupied in the development of a particularly Australian version of this movement; the ways in which Hillsong's history parallels and differs from social and economic change in the country from the 1970s onwards and the role of the Prosperity Gospel in these transformations; and finally, the gendered dynamics of the churches and what this signifies by way of their growth and appeal. The chapter also considers how the church and its practices, attitudes, leaders, and members have changed—both adapting to social transformation and, in some, instances causing it. In sketching this picture, Miller examines the reasons for the success of this particular church in an era where many other churches in Australia are declining. This account differs from previous histories as it cogently situates Hillsong in Australian cultural and social history, understanding it as an element of a successful social movement, rather than merely the result of a religious awakening.

In Chapter 14 Josh Packard considers a parallel and contrasting development—the Emerging Church. Packard details how the Emerging Church has evolved in the last twenty-five years primarily in North America, the UK and Australia

as an alternative to the conventional form of mainstream congregations. This relatively new expression of self-consciously post-modern Christianity mirrors the spread of significant distrust among a young generation in the well-respected social institution of the established Church while indicating a turn away from a consumer model of religion. The movement can primarily be described as an assortment of congregations which share discernible characteristics but operate independently of one another with no formal organising body—intentionally and strategically seeking to develop internal styles and structures which are unique, open to change, and constantly evolving. The most essential of these common beliefs is a sense that Christianity should not be treated as a static entity. Hence 'emerging' describes a way of 'doing church' which also engages with the individual's experience of the sacred which changes in the face of profound social transformations. This core belief impacts both Emerging Church organisational structure and religious practices in profound ways. In distinct opposition to rigid forms of religious organisation that characterise mega-churches, Emerging Churches have no distinct vision, mission or institutional form, or formal doctrine. Rather, participants refer to 'conversations'—a term denoting thoughts, ideas and experiences rather than a quest to obtain a 'right' answer about faith. While this movement in no way threatens to dominate the religious landscape or usurp traditional religious structures, it offers the appeal of religious options which operate on largely on the margins of religious life.

In Chapter 15 Andrew Chesnut explores a radically different phenomenon—a movement within Roman Catholicism but not sanctioned by the Church—the cult of Santa Muerte. The chapter explores this Mexican folk saint's paramount role as a *curandera*, or healer of illness. Since the pre-colonial era Mexican culture has maintained a certain reverence towards death, which can be seen in the widespread commemoration of the syncretic Day of the Dead. This cultist worship is condemned by the Catholic Church in Mexico as heterodox, but it is firmly entrenched among Mexico's lower working-classes and various elements of society deemed as 'outcasts'. Drawing on cultural antecedents in which death possesses extraordinary curing powers and tapping into the well-established tradition of saints (both canonised and folk) who heal through faith, Santa Muerte in merely a decade has become one of the greatest healers on the Mexican religious landscape. As measured by the small number of purple votive candles at her altars and shrines, it can be surmised that miracles of restored health do not feature as a significant element of the cult. Here however, Chesnut insists, looks are deceiving. Many devotees seeking healing or offing thanks for restore health tender white or yellow candles instead. The yellow jar candle has a specific association with recovery from substance

abuse, while white tends to be employed for all types of health problems. That three different colours of candles are associated with the quest for health reveals the paramount importance of the Santa Muerte's function as a supernatural physician.

Part 4: Outside of the 'Mainstream'

As briefly explored above, marginalised expressions of Christianity have come and gone with some frequency throughout the history of the faith. Some have endured for a considerable length of time and represent ancient fissures within the broad world of 'Christianities'. Often designated as unorthodox, heterodox, even heretical, they have regularly experienced ostracism, condemnation, and persecution as 'sects' or 'cults' exterior to the Christian 'mainstream'. Very often there are particular elements of their belief systems which constitute distinguishing marks and form the basis of reproach by the traditional churches. Yet, their perennial appearance is not merely about theological departures to recapture some lost 'truth', and in doing so offer a critique of 'established' Christianity, but may reflect their social function according to time and place, and for that reason they may evolve accordingly.

Opening the final part of this edited volume Bernard Doherty considers the Brethren—a Christian movement which is little understood and in some places much denigrated. While encompassing a vast number of often minute fragmented groups across the globe, the Brethren have achieved a theological, missionary and social legacy that is not indicated by their modest numerical strength. Although encompassing a plethora of constituencies bridging a continuum between the mission-oriented 'Open' Brethren to the controversial and inward-looking 'Exclusive' Brethren, these groups share a fertile heritage which calls upon a number of sources. The Brethren derived their early membership and dogma from the experiences of dissenting Protestants in the UK and Ireland. These factions proceeded to embrace a distinct form of pre-millennial eschatology and a discrete ecclesiology which spurned denominational identity in favour of a fellowship rooted in the rite of the 'Lord's Table'. Doherty provides a brief synopsis of the history and major divisions within the broad movement, examining some of the key differences between 'Open' and 'Exclusive' branches, alongside the major continuities in beliefs and practices, particularly with regard to ecclesiology and eschatology. Doherty then offers a summary of contemporary Brethren numbers, geographical diffusion, and the status of scholarship scrutinising the various major groupings. Finally, he analyses recent public controversies surrounding the largest of the 'Exclusive'

Brethren branch, the Raven-Taylor-Symington-Hales Brethren, and how this early twenty-first century cadre, now incorporated as the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, has attracted widespread media scrutiny for its political lobbying and legal battles with governments in a number of Western societies.

In Chapter 17 Christian Feichtinger considers Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). Emerging from the apocalyptic Millerite movement in the 1840s, the SDA have evolved into one of the fastest-growing and most globally dispersed Christian denominations. Though rooted in the nineteenth century Protestant denominations of the USA, the SDA have underlined their self-defined status of God's 'remnant' with a number of unique beliefs and theological doctrines including a specific concept of eschatology, the keeping of the Sabbath, the works of the prophet Ellen G. White, and a distinct anthropology that grounds care for the body, its health and desirable nutrition. Though apocalyptic in their core-teachings, the SDA have not withdrawn from the world but instead have employed a considerable commitment to health care, medicine, environment, and social welfare work. Yet their self-understanding as the 'remnant' and some of their unique doctrines have continued to separate them from the Christian 'mainstream' and ecumenical activities, to some extent due to self-isolation and partly a result of being frequently viewed as a 'sect'. Recently, the formation of progressive and conservative wings, questions about the delay of the Second Coming of Christ, and proliferation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have generated profound challenges for the church that will impact its future development. The chapter deals with the historical evolution of the SDA and explains the origin of Adventist teachings, focusing on the important contributions of its prominent figures. Feichtinger advances to consider fundamental doctrines and beliefs such as the prophecies of Daniel, the 'heavenly sanctuary', the Sabbath, the 'remnant', and the 'health reform'. The chapter then examines pastoral, 'liturgic', and organisational questions, alongside current developments, conflicts, sub-groups and 'heresies'.

In Chapter 18 Eileen Barker overviews The Family International (TFI) which emerged in the 1960s as part of the Californian Jesus Movement and initially headed by David Berg (commonly known as Moses Berg or by his followers as Mo or Father David). The Children of God received notoriety as one of the 'destructive cults' that were becoming visible in the West at that time, while one of the first so-called anti-cult groups was the Parents' Committee to Free Our Children from the Children of God (FreeCOG). The COG/TFI shared many of its beliefs and practices with other fundamentalist Christian factions: a lifestyle which emulated the early Christian Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles, living in communities with a 'common purse'. Integral to the formative days of the group was 'litnessing' (witnessing and distributing literature) and

'provisioning' for their material needs. The movement did, however, differ quite radically from mainstream Christianity in Berg's interpretation of 'the Law of Love' which, for a period in the 1980s embraced the controversial practice of 'flirty fishing'—a form of proselytising that involved prostitution. Moreover, the movement was falsely accused of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, and COG communities were raided by the police in various countries. Barker examines the ways in which the movement has changed over the years, from its time as an clandestine so-called 'cult' to a far more open one that actively interacts with a wide diversity of people in 'the system'. Barker then explores challenges introduced by second-generation membership and the difficulties encountered as members left, some of them subsequently to counter the movement. The chapter also examines the effects of a strong millennial belief, and how as time passed it has changed its expectation. Furthermore, the radical transformations wrought by the 'Reboot' is explored as the movement transmogrifies from its tightly integrated community to a more virtual community in which individuals and nuclear families are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own material and spiritual welfare.

In Chapter 19 George Chryssides considers another much maligned but older movement—the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs). The chapter explores the origins of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (later known as Jehovah's Witnesses), their background in Adventism, and how they moved from being a distributor of religious literature to an organisation claiming the exclusive road to salvation. Chryssides thereafter deals with the key doctrines of JWs, for whom the Bible (or their distinction translation of it) is the solitary source of authority. He shows how their understanding of the scriptures dictates the attitude to the beliefs and practices for which JWs are renowned: their denial of hell and predestination, the role of prophecy, End-Time computations, the differentiation between the 'Great Crowd' and the 144,000 'anointed ones', and their respective expectations before and after Armageddon. The JWs have made themselves controversial, not only for their exclusivity, but for their position on pacifism and the refusal of blood transfusion. The underlying biblical justification for such beliefs is explored in this chapter. Chryssides also considers how JWs seek to revive what they maintain to be the practices of the first century Christian Church. This is envisaged as a community of believers without clergy and eschews elaborate ritual (only baptism and the Memorial—Jesus' last meal with his disciples is undertaken). Finally, following the resignation in 2000 of the fifth president, Milton G. Henschel (1920–2003), the Society as a legal entity is currently headed by two presidents, while spiritually it continues to be directed by the Governing Body. The relationship between these two forms of leadership is examined in this chapter.

In the final chapter Carter Charles surveys the Church of Latter-Day Saints In 1847, the Mormon Church, the main branch of the religious movement named 'Mormonism', settled in Utah after a seventeen-year trek from upstate New York, with long sojourns in Missouri and in Illinois. On the way to Utah, Joseph Smith—the Church's founder—together with his successors, perfected the Church's doctrine, transforming it into a 'Tammany machine', a political force that would lead to the sentiment that it was 'un-American'. A little more than a century after their arrival in Utah the Mormons developed a sense of 'incipient nationality' as their religion shifted away from 'near-sect' to 'near-nation' status, with a homeland of its own in the Rocky Mountains. Charles explores how the 2002 Winter Olympics which took place in Salt Lake City confirmed to Americans, and to the world, that there was indeed a 'Mormon country' with the imprints of Mormonism more evident than anywhere else in America. The Salt Lake Olympics also presented to the public some of the people who make modern Mormonism. Among such people was Mitt Romney, the Mormon who turned the games from a potential Mormon fiasco to a national success. Beginning in 2008, Romney re-emerged on the national scene and eventually secured the Republican Party's nomination and committed to resigning Barack Obama to 'a one-term president'. Charles shows how his failed political enterprise was nonetheless the satisfactory completion of a long and painful political process which illustrates American society's power to marginalise non-consensual religious minorities, to conform, and to eventually integrate them.

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PART 1

Major Divisions within the Christian Faith

CHAPTER 1

Varieties of Protestant Life

Some Sketches on Enculturation and Ecclesiology

Martyn Percy

Introduction

Like new-born children, denominations do not get to choose the name bestowed upon them at birth. Protestants—as the nomenclature implies—were initially protesters. Whether it was Luther with his ninety-five theses at the Wittenberg church door (1517), or the earlier Lollards (followers of John Wycliffe from the late fourteenth century) and their staunch defiance of Roman Catholicism and its alleged abuses, the early Reformers began their ministry as all prophets must: by protesting. The marquee 'Protestant' has, like many other ecclesiastic labels, become a trademark that has overseen a seemingly endless variety of spin-off movements and creations, that have expanded its breadth. Calvinists probably never imagined that they would be named after their founder; likewise Lutherans. Charles Wesley would perhaps shudder to think that his profound spiritual and holiness movement had given birth to Wesleyans. He might be marginally more satisfied with 'Methodists' as the nomenclature for the denomination that carries the theological and spiritual DNA of those first meetings—though brothers John and Charles Wesley themselves were raised and died as Anglicans. And even the innocuous nomenclature 'Anglican' is a seventeenth century 'nickname' bestowed upon the brand of reformed Catholicism that emerged out of the English reformation period.

'Protestantism' is also a 'nickname'—albeit for one of the major divisions within Christianity. The approach taken to Protestantism in this essay is what we might term 'socio-ecclesial'. In other words, this is an exploration of the varieties of Protestantism as 'natural' religious expressions within particular social and cultural contexts. Such an approach does not deny the divine, theological or ideological pulses that prompt and nourish Protestant faith. The doctrinal distinctiveness of Protestantism is in no way compromised or critiqued by exploring such ecclesial expressions as having 'natural' affinities with their sociological and cultural contexts. In taking this approach, we are merely paying due regard to the manifold conditions and characteristics that shape ecclesial life, and, moreover, arguing that Protestantism cannot be understood apart

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from the socio-economic, political and historical contexts that enabled it to flourish. Several interpretative keys need to be simultaneously understood in order to comprehend the origins and later extent of Protestantism.

As a major branch of the Christian family tree (Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy being the other two), Protestantism has arguably produced more offshoots than any other major expression of Christianity, estimated today at 33.000 separate denominations (Barrett et al. 2001). It is commonplace to trace its roots to the early sixteenth century and the work of John Calvin or Martin Luther. But the seedlings of religious and nationalist discontent that led to the Reformation also lie in the post-Renaissance era. The conditions that help to usher in the age of Reformation in the sixteenth century lie further back in previous centuries. Increased access to printing meant that religious tracts could be produced in volume, and at speed. Emerging individualism, often linked to the rise of the merchant class, enabled people to converse more freely about philosophy and religion. Personal piety—and the capacity of individuals and communities to define and refine their local expressions of Christianity—also played their part. As did the slow, gradual collapse of Christendom, and therefore, the power of the Pope, and the rise of nationalism, with space to develop distinctive religious identities.

Long before Luther hammered his theses into the church door at Wittenburg, the context for questioning and protesting in Europe was in place. Luther's Reformation was rooted in a more general and sustained groundswell of discontent and protests directed against the Roman Catholic Church. Luther's genius was to offer an alternative and progressive version of Christianity that affirmed the new learning, nascent individualism and emerging identities in communities, and that was taking a grip across the minds and hearts of Europe. Luther's theology gave protest a focus; its' fruit would eventually be the generic form of Christianity we know as Protestantism. A form of Christianity rooted in the fundamental conviction that the church cannot come between the relationship of God's word (that is, the Bible) and God's people—both individuals and congregations. And that the Church was not to be the judge of scripture, but was ultimately to be judged by it. It was therefore imperative that the word of God was to be available in the vernacular. A Bible available only in Latin effectively meant the interpretation of the text was under the sole control of the Church. But Luther's appeal to *sola scriptura* meant that every person should be able to read God's words in their own tongue.

The rise of Protestantism in Central and South America, as well as Africa, for example, is as much about socio-cultural, political, economic, ecclesiological empowerment for individuals and communities as it is about any theological and ideological currents. What marks out Protestantism from Catholicism is

the way in which local contexts and vernacular, operant religion shape Christian identity (that is, more 'bottom-up'), over and against Catholicism, where formal or operant religion (that is, 'top down') tends to govern the local. Furthermore, the stability of Protestantism in Northern Europe is inextricably linked with politics and economics. Despite apparently grim numbers in church attendance, historical churches maintain high levels of legal membership, largely due to governmental provision of Lutheran funding through a 'church tax'. For Protestants, the shape of contextualised faith has a bearing not only on the ecclesial and theological cadence of a denomination, but also on the development, as a whole, of nations and states.

Here, an understanding of the desire for autonomy is perhaps especially needed. Protestantism was about wrestling control from a remote centre (in his case, Rome), and establishing individual and collective autonomy. Religious freedom, and the right to self-determine—of course taking account of obedience to God under his word, the Bible—is the *sui generis* of Protestantism, and one of the fundamentals that set it apart from Roman Catholicism. It is no surprise, therefore, that the primary proliferator of Protestant profusion is the USA. The country founded on the right to self-determine, self-govern and develop freedom of expression has, inevitably, produced more varieties of Protestantism than would ever have seemed possible to Luther or Calvin.

Consider, for example, three early Protestant settlements in the USA: the Puritan settlements of Massachusetts, the Quaker cultivation of Pennsylvania and the Anglican shaping of Virginia (Fischer 1989). Each denomination not only dominated these early American states, but also brought with them, to each area, religiously-infused ideologies that touched on marriage, politics, trade, association, laws, economics, family life, language and literature. To some extent, the Protestant wars of the seventeenth century in Europe—the English Civil being an example of a form of Anglicanism contested with an emergent Puritanism—were to rumble on well into the world of the new colonies. The American Civil War, to some extent, replays some aspects of the English Civil War, and with same results. The Confederates fought like English cavaliers; the Union were organised more like Cromwell's armies. These religious identities of the north and south in the emerging USA were more than just analogous.

Or consider the case of English Methodism, which could rightly, from its very beginnings, profess to be more interested in the world than in its own interiority. The totemic Wesleyan mantra—'the world is my parish'—has firmly fixed Methodist eyes on looking outwards for centuries. Equally, the Wesleyan core experience—'my heart was strangely warmed'—confirms that the only

major interiority that any self-respecting Methodist should be concerned with is the transformed self-before-God. The origins of Methodism lie in a connexional of two affinities: one of one heart, mind and experience of Christ and the grace of God; and the other united in the implications and out-workings of that for local and global praxis. Thus, early Methodism was not marked by the erection of grand buildings, or by the kind of theological aesthetics that helped shape the Anglican Oxford Movement. The Methodist Movement was true to its founders, who engaged in significant counter-cultural Christian praxis, and became a catalyst for radical social change that went hand-in-hand with preaching the gospel in word and deed. Wesley visited prisons; he worked for the relief of the poor; credit unions were set up; spiritual enthusiasm was inseparable from significant social witness. Put another way, the Christian religion of England began to be both a socially liberating and spiritually motivating force in the lives of ordinary people.

So what exactly is Protestantism? And why is it one of the most diverse and variegated expressions of faith in the world today, covering anything from Reformed traditions, Conservative Evangelicals, Pentecostals, established denominations such as Methodism, through to burgeoning health, wealth and prosperity movements? Protestantism exists in every country in the world, and has to a large extent been the engine and driver of the global expansion of Christianity. After Roman Catholicism, it is the largest grouping of Christians in the world today. J. Gordon Melton, in his *Encyclopaedia of Religion in the USA* (1st Edition, 1978) categorises expressions of American religious life according to 'families'. Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox would constitute major branches, with Anglicanism featuring as just one branch within the 'Liturgical Family (Western)'.

In choosing to adopt the word 'family' to describe expressions of religion, Melton is arguing for a structural understanding of religion that achieves two goals. First, it permits him to reject the simplistic European-centred distinctions of Troeltsch between 'church', 'sect' and 'cult', which are potentially pejorative, besides being artificial and sometimes clumsy. Second, it therefore allows religious expressions to be grouped together according to their ecclesial, social and doctrinal similarity, not according to size or social impact. In this exploration of Protestantism, therefore, we will be working with Melton's family or 'branch' motif—expressions, in other words—and thereby gain some insight into how and why Protestants proliferate, separate and individuate in their ecclesial organisation.

Undoubtedly, there are some benefits in this approach, but it is not without its weaknesses either. As Protestants have known for centuries, many of their 'family members' often do not recognise each another, let alone talk to

one another: 'closed' Brethren have little truck with their 'open' cousins. The reason for the proliferation of 'family members' in ecclesiastical history is not usually expansion, nor the indigenous enculturation of imported or exported religious tradition. It is much more likely to occur because of a breakdown in relationships, perhaps caused by disagreements over authority, interpretation or related clashes, perhaps simple rebellion, or even open hostility.

The history of the expansion of Protestant 'family members' in the twentieth century is no different. For example, the first edition of *The Encyclopaedia of American Religions* in 1978, identified seven distinct Anglican groupings. The second edition of 1993, just 15 years later, identifies no less than 26. Granted, the discovery of 19 new 'Anglican' groups does not mean they are all new: but many are, suggesting a familiar Protestant trend, albeit vested in catholic clothing. The proliferation of Protestant denominations is a puzzle to outsiders, but not to insiders. As Garrison Keillor points out in *Lake Wobegon Days* (New York, Viking Penguin, 1985, pp. 102ff) the problem is one of purity: "… we made sure that any who fellowshipped with us were straight on all the details of the faith… we referred to [others] as 'so-called' [Christians]… but to ourselves, we were simply The Brethren, the last remnant of the true Church. Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them', and [we] believed that was enough. We met in Uncle Al's and Aunty Flo's bare living room…". Keillor's scribblings on his Brethren upbringing are, of course, supposed to raise more than a smile. The novel is an invitation to think about how the natural things in life have a bearing on our sense of the supernatural.

Early Expressions of Protestantism

Max Weber, in an essay on American Protestantism, recounts the story of a German dentist who had recently settled in America. A new patient came to see the dentist, and before treatment commenced, informed the dentist of the denomination he belonged to. It was a Protestant denomination: Episcopalian, to be precise. We should not be surprised that the author of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) makes such an observation. The patient, by indicating his denominational proclivity, was inferring that he had private health insurance – so could pay for treatment. Weber was, after all, a German sociologist, economist, and politician. In the book, Weber expresses the view that capitalism in Northern Europe evolved when Protestants (particularly Calvinists) began to influence large numbers of people to engage in work in

the secular world, developing their own trades, and through their entrepreneurship amassing wealth for further investment. In other words, the Protestant work ethic was an important force behind the unplanned and actions that influenced the development of modern capitalism.

That said, and to any European, this would seem like an odd and irrelevant piece of information to covey to a dentist prior to any procedure. But in North America, denominational membership will invariably give some indication of class and wealth. The exchange between the patient and the dentist indicates something of economic success, and also reliability—which it would not in Europe. Indeed, despite the pluralism of the American religious market, and coupled to extensive geographical mobility, class-denominational symbolism still persists, even though there will be local and regional variations. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists are usually regarded as numbering amongst the 'upper' denominations of class, with Baptists and other Free Church Evangelicals being more 'lower'. This helps to explain the rather waspish and classist remark in the opening of Norman Maclean's novella, *A River Runs Through* (1976): "my father (a Presbyterian minister) always told me that a Methodist was a Baptist that had been taught to read".

This partly explains why American Protestants invented something that would not have occurred to their European counterparts in state-church-systems: the 'letter of transfer'. This was issued to those moving a significant distance to settle in other parts of the US. The letter effectively confirmed their membership of the church and denomination back home, and commended them to the minister of the new local branch of the denomination. The letter, of course, not only certified their religious affinity and spiritual proclivities, but also their assumed participation in the much more earthly world of the Protestant work ethic, including their capacity to help sustain the local church financially. In addition to the subtle nuances of wealth and class defining denominational membership, there are also ethnic aspects to denominational identity and belonging to note. Certain Pentecostal and 'Gospel' churches are primarily African-American in composition. Other denominations may be said to be primarily shaped by white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture.

The purpose, as ever, of sociological perspectives, is to bring order and interpretation to the vast array of complex social phenomenon—and to offer perspectives on the ordering that is offered. In North America, H. Richard Niebuhr's work paid particular attention to the ways in which congregations and churches owed their shape to their context. His *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929) was intended as a "practical contribution to the

ethical problem of denominationalism", which saw division through the lens of dialectics: the disinherited and established; nationalism and sectionalism; immigrants (European) and the churches of 'the colour line' (black). In sketching a basic sociology of denominationalism, Niebuhr sought to navigate some potential paths to deeper unity. But it is his almost incidental observations that particularly distinguish the book. Niebuhr saw that the formation of American Christianity was dependent not only on ecclesial and doctrinal proclivities, but also rooted social, economic and political dimensions that partly accounted for the emergence of denominations. Methodists and Baptists, for example, by eliding their identity with a 'frontier ethos' in the south and west of the US, were able to outstrip their more established competition (for example, Episcopalians and Presbyterians).

Moreover, to understand something of the deeper persistence of class-based identities that have shaped cultural, social and religious horizons, and one need only cast an eye over the quite distinctive foundations and subsequent shaping of the first colonies in North America. The early settlers from Britain brought with them a plethora of assumptions about social ordering, marriage and family life, trade and associations, crime and punishment, and of course, religion. To a large extent, it was the Puritan exodus from East Anglia that shaped the emerging Massachusetts. According to Fischer (1989), the southern counties of England—which had tended to be staunchly loyal to the Royalist cause in the English Civil War—led to significant numbers of distressed Cavaliers and their indentured servants settling in Virginia. The Quakers from the north Midlands settled Pennsylvania and the surrounding land. That the counties of England should so shape early colonial life in North America is unsurprising. It is the extent of that shaping, however, carried into everyday life, along with religion, the explicit and implicit forms of leadership exercised in congregations and communities, as well as in political and economic life, that is noteworthy.

The celebration of Christmas might serve as an example. Puritans in Massachusetts abolished Christian feasts and festivals. As in Cromwell's England, there were fines for keeping Christmas. But as sacred celebrations were blotted out, so were certain sacred prohibitions. Marriages could be conducted at any time, and were no longer prohibited during Lent or Advent. Food for the Puritans tended to be a generally frugal and prudent affair, albeit nourishing. The early Virginians were different. Christmas, Whitsun week, Shrovetide, Hocktide, Twelfth Night and other times and seasons in the liturgical calendar were celebrated with feasts, "parties, dances, visits, gifts and celebrations" (Fischer 1989: 370). Food was plentiful. The basic diet of baked beans and bread marked out Massachusetts.

In Virginia, the favoured dish of middle and upper Virginians, when not fried chicken, was fricassee (sometimes known as 'frigacy'), consisting of meat simmered in an open pan, with spices and herbs added, and claret, egg yolks and oysters added (Fischer 1989: 351). It contrasted sharply with the diet of the average observant Christian in Massachusetts. The Quakers who settled Pennsylvania went further than the Puritans, and simply abolished the western Christian calendar. The names of the months were regarded as 'needless'; so January became the first month, and the year ended with December as the twelfth month. The week began not with the Anglican Sabbath, or with Sunday, but with the Quaker 'first day'. High days and holy days were swept away by the new calendar, as "all days are alike holy in the sight of God" (Fisher 1989: 561). Food-wise, the Quakers led their congregations and communities by making a virtue out of simplicity; and the only thing practiced to excess was moderation. But food was political too. Some Quakers refused sugar because it came from the plantations that exploited Negroes. Others refused salt, believing the tax levied on the condiment paid for military campaigns. All groups supported their views from scripture, naturally.

If time, seasons and food were distinctive amongst the early settlers of the new colonies, so were attitudes to social rank, wealth, power, the ordering of society, and the leadership of congregations and communities. The ordering of society—in which the rules and customs assign roles and tasks to individuals and groups, often related to their wealth and other forms of standing—was as manifest in seventeenth century America as it had been in medieval England. Where one sat in church, and with whom, indicated social status. The type of clothing worn, and the expectations around social conventions and manners were all infused with religious reasoning and spiritual signifiers. Each of the three settlements so far mentioned—Massachusetts, Virginia and Pennsylvania—had distinctive modes of religion relation to social ranking. Underpinning the notion of social ranking were implicit and explicit theological assumptions related to the order created and intended by God, and the extent to which ecclesial polity shaped sociality more broadly.

Puritans settling Massachusetts, for example, appear not to have had an issue with some born to high estate (who would be eminent) and those born to low estate (mean and in subjection). Whilst this might seem surprising for Puritan theology, it is less so when one consider that most of the early Massachusetts settlers hailed from Norfolk, which had an extensive network or manors and stately homes, and where the hegemony of the gentry was largely unchallenged. The Church of England, as a significant landowner, largely supported the status quo. The Puritan settlers in the new world were therefore thoroughly pre-inducted into a social ranking system that largely worked. All

the settlers did was to eliminate the top and bottom strata of social ranking. The wealthy landowners (church, crown and aristocracy) were gone; and the wondering vagrants and beggars that were common in North Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk were also unrepresented in the new colony (Fischer 1989: 174–180). The Puritans, however, were careful to preserve the nuances of the middle orders of society—giving rise to a broad middle class of artisans, traders, farmers, clergy and others. But the Puritans of Massachusetts were far from egalitarian. The distribution of wealth saw to that. Leaders of communities were often apportioned larger shares of land—often in direct proportion to what they had held in England. This ensured, generally, that few were landless, and tenancy was almost unknown. More radical Puritan communities—such as the one that emerged at Providence on Rhode Island—gave equal shares to all settlers, echoing the socio-political theology of the Levellers in Cromwell's England.

Virginians, who were largely shaped by seventeenth century Laudian Anglican polity (so also Protestants), and from the southern counties in England which had hitherto been Royalist in support, imagined different forms of social ordering. For example, they looked upon the preferred sports of Massachusetts Puritans—largely early versions of organised contact sports that would later give rise to 'muscular Christianity'—with contempt. Virginians raced horses, which for spectators was accompanied by betting and much drinking. Virginians loved their blood sports too, and also inculcated the hierarchies that were already established in England. Hunting stag was reserved for the high-born; hunting fox for those of middle rank (Virginians imported foxes specifically for this purpose); rabbit and hare coursing for those lower down the social ranks; cock-fighting and so forth for labourers. Wealth did not necessarily confer social rank, however. In Virginia, as in England, character, virtues, learning, upbringing and reputation were significant indicators. This meant that it was difficult for people to move beyond the social order in to which they were born. Deference did not depend solely on wealth, but rather on a complex tapestry of values and attributes that assigned a person their proper station.

Thus, the gentlemen of Virginia deferred to their king; and the yeomanry deferred to their masters; slaves to their owners, and so forth. The social structuring of Royalist England in the first half of the seventeenth century therefore survived and to some extent flourished in Virginia—with the same kinds of implicit and explicit theological tropes that affirmed such social ordering (Fischer 1989: 374–389). Virginia Anglicans seem to have had few issues with reifying the ways of the old country with that of the new colony. Indeed, we can go further here, and point out that the slave colonies of the south were

shaped by monarchist hegemonies—Britain, France and Spain—whilst the northern colonies were shaped more by republicans. In the American Civil War of the nineteenth century, there is a sense in which the Confederacy fought, prayed and organised like English cavaliers; whilst the north, in contrast, tended to correspond to a behavioural pattern more akin to that of the New Model Army. The American Civil War was, in a sense, partially a class and religious war; although it was primarily centred on freedoms, slavery and governance.

In contrast to the Virginians, the Quakerism of Pennsylvania saw social stratification as necessary, but within a single order of society (Fischer 1989: 566–584). Thus, they believed in spiritual and political equality; but reluctantly accepted the creation of an economy that ensured material inequality. William Penn's intention was to create a society of independents and inter-dependence without great extremes of poverty and wealth. Penn set about selling land in parcels, but with conditions attached. Land had to be subdivided to enable individual settlers to flourish. Residence was usually required for possession, so absentee landlords rare. Penn's system proved to be highly popular as well as efficient. Nearly all the land within fifty miles of Philadelphia was sold by 1715, with average holdings consisting of around 250 acres. Wealth holding was, therefore, relatively egalitarian. Quakers also showed great concern for the poor—much more than their Anglican and Puritan neighbours—and levels of philanthropy in Pennsylvania were, from the outset of the life of the colony, fervent and widespread.

On the issue of class, the early Pennsylvanian Quakers were relatively radical. William Penn regarded hereditary social orders as absurd; and he detested the inequalities of wealth in equal measure. Penn's egalitarianism shaped Quaker manners and customs. Whereas Anglican Virginians bowed or curtseyed to their superiors, or perhaps raised their hats to those of higher social ranking, Pennsylvanian Quakers substituted these rituals with the universal handshake—all were to do this, whether to their superior or inferior. The Quaker ideal was, therefore, a single order of society: classless, open, virtuous, equal and free. This ordering of society, like that of Massachusetts (Puritan-Calvinist) and Virginia (Anglican-Laudian) was rooted in the theological tropes that were latent within the distinctive forms of ecclesial polity that shaped the social and theological constructions of reality.

One of the key issues that faced the early American colonists was how to engage with the indigenous peoples of the land. Aggressive and brutal conflict shaped exchanges from the outset, with skirmishes and reprisals escalating into ever-more ferocious spirals of violence. To some extent, the European migrations to America of the seventeenth centuries—themselves the result of

oppression and violence at home—laid the foundations for violent and forcible settlement of the new world. Those who had been persecuted became persecutors; the enslaved became the new enslavers. The early treatment of American Indians was, therefore, almost uniformly oppressive, except in those places and times where Quaker attitudes to enfranchisement led to dialogue and concord. Overall, however, the early settlers of North America treated the indigenous Indians as 'heathen', and confiscated their lands and territories with impunity. The Indians were, of course, divided by their own tribalism, and amongst the several hundred tribes it is estimated that more than 1200 languages were spoken.

One common denominator amongst the Indian tribes was their self-regard. The tribes often spoke of themselves as *the people* or *the race*—their neighbours, therefore by implication, were not people in the same way, and not to be treated as a race. So the Americans could more easily divide and conquer with impunity.

In contrast, the Maori tribes of New Zealand had a single language, and tended to see themselves and their neighbours as a united and extended family, with common ancestries and shared histories (and occasional internecine squabbles). When Captain Cook came to New Zealand, he brought Tapaia, a Tahitian priest-navigator, who was also his interpreter. Even though Tahitians and New Zealand Maoris had not had contact for several centuries, they could still speak and understand the same language.

As Fischer (2012) points out in a comparative analysis, the situation of the early New Zealand settlers contrasts markedly with that of the early American settlers. To be sure, the early New Zealand colonies were as religiously distinctive (that is, Protestant) as their American forbears. Dunedin, for example, was shaped by Scottish Presbyterians, and retains this distinctive flavour in buildings, polity and church-going. Christchurch (in the Canterbury region) in contrast, was named and 'settled' by Anglicans, and moreover modelled on a distinctive kind of nineteenth century Oxford Anglicanism. Some Methodists settled on Whangaroa, and some Moravians established a mission on the Chatham Islands. The establishment of these new worlds was a mere two centuries apart from those who first journeyed to America, but the social ordering could hardly be more different, and the seeds can be found in a range of subtle cultural and religious factors. The early settlers of New Zealand were also dissenters, non-conformists adventurers and opportunists, like their earlier American counterparts. However, the levels of oppression and violence in Europe during the seventeenth century that drove people to seek a fresh life in the new world were not present in the nineteenth century for those seeking another life in New Zealand. Correspondingly, the colonies that were

established in American were rooted in assumptions about the place of redemptive violence in the cause of freedom and liberty. Themes, indeed, present in many Hollywood films, and almost any USA television police drama one could care to mention.

The original New Zealand settlers, in contrast, were not formed in a culture of redemptive violence at all. The antipathy towards their European countries of origin was rooted in a complex nexus of concerns: for new life, a fresh start, greater opportunity, and so forth. The Enlightenment had taken a firm hold on Western civilization; industrialisation and secularisation were advancing. So, many of those who left Europe to settle in New Zealand did so for the potential: to have their lives more shaped by fairness and freedom than might have been possible had they remained in Europe. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the principles of liberty and justice which shaped early America were also used to oppress and sanction violence on the Indian populations. But migration to New Zealand grew not out of violent oppression at home (and therefore a strong pulse for liberty and justice), but rather out of a desire for fairness and freedom. It was the unfair and un-free conditions of nineteenth century industrial Britain that drove settlers abroad to New Zealand. And it is perhaps unsurprising that in their dealing with the Maori—despite some serious skirmishes, battles wars and rebellions—the eventual settlement of New Zealand with the Maori differed markedly from what Americans did to indigenous Indians. As Fischer suggests, although New Zealand's record was far from perfect, 'where Americans made many Indian treaties and forgot them (all), New Zealanders made one and remembered it' (The Treaty of Waitangi, 1840—see Fischer 2012: 116). The seeds of a more classless society, and one in which there was a different attentiveness to ethnic diversity, have two quite distinctive cultural and religious histories in America and New Zealand.

Why might any of this be of any consequence? Taken as piecemeal, the details may appear not to matter. But in terms of forming a larger sketch of the varieties of Protestantism, we can see, perhaps, that it was easier, socially and culturally, for southern states in the USA to oppress and enslave black people than their northern counterparts. There were economic reasons for this (large estates need cultivating and managing). But socially and culturally, the kinds of European settlements in the south of the USA had deeper roots in class divisions and associated racial oppression. The presence of slave galleries (albeit it obsolete) in Episcopalian churches south of the River Potomac bears testimony. The river that through, so to speak, divided the USA on not only the treatment of slaves, but also on how to read and interpret the Bible. It did not take long for ecclesial differences to form: between Southern Baptists and Northern Baptists, for example; or between southern Episcopalians (who tended to be quite conservative) and their more northerly, liberal cousins.

Contemporary Expressions

Enculturation is a key dimension to studying and interpreting all denominations and congregations. It would be erroneous to imagine that Roman Catholicism, for example, does not vary (considerably) in its expression from place to place. However, what prevents the extensity of diversification and the proliferation of new movements, offshoots and schism (thereby forming new denominations) is the central control and hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church—something that Protestantism has always lacked. Geneva for Calvin, or for that matter, Canterbury for Anglicans, does not function as the same—either totemically, or in actual governance—as Rome does for Catholics. When Protestants deliberate on the meaning of scripture and its practice, including its eventual ecclesial praxis, they do not look to a remote centre of governance. They look to themselves, their interpretation and reification of scripture and tradition in the here and now, and the best modes and methods for missional and congregational enculturation.

Thus, to account for Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists, is to take due note of the synergy between scriptural exegesis and eisegesis, and then their subsequent connections to the socio-cultural contexts in a given place. More often than not, this will provide some illuminating insight into why a movement might emerge in Protestantism that could not conceivably occur within Roman Catholicism. Although caution should be expressed here at choosing an aberrant and heterodox movement at this point, the (so-called) 'Health, Wealth and Prosperity' teaching provides an interesting example of how the earlier 'Protestant work ethic' (mentioned earlier, and identified by Weber) can morph into a more intense form of spirituality and polity under the right contextual conditions—in this case, capitalist-consumerist North America.

The 'Health and Wealth' movement has gained a degree of prominence and can claim some limited influence within Christian fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism and Charismatic Renewal. Strictly speaking, there is no 'health and wealth' movement *per se*. It is, rather, an ideology that can be traced to several seminal preachers and teachers, who in turn advocate and emphasise slightly different doctrines and practices that are connected with the health and wealth concerns of Christians. The range and variants of belief and practice are considerable. Some health and wealth exponents will argue that the Bible demands *tithing* (that is, individuals giving 10 percent of income). Correspondingly, those who fail to do this, it is argued, could not expect God to reward them with financial success, prosperity and good health. Put another way, 'godly giving' is the only way of ensuring that God will bless the individual.

Other health and wealth exponents have more complex and novel ideologies. Some argue that God will not only match the gifts of believers with assurance and blessing, but will actually *multiply* those gifts, and return them to the individual. Exponents of this teaching—such as Morris Cerullo—have suggested that believers can expect a 'sevenfold' increase on their gift or investment. For every one dollar that believers donate, they could expect to receive the equivalent of seven back, either through promotion at work, good fortune, or other means. Ironically, Cerullo has appealed for such generous giving from supporters in order to help him evade the deepening debt that had threatened to curtail his ministry.

A variant on this teaching would be the 'seed faith' practice of American Pentecostal minister, Oral Roberts. Believers are encouraged to make their offering, even if (or especially if) they are in financial difficulty. Only by giving will believers be able to receive—"your return, poured into your lap, will be great, pressed down and running over" (Roberts, quoted in Hadden and Shupe 1988: 31). Controversial as Roberts' teachings were, it gained considerable popularity and brought American Pentecostalism to the Christian mainstream.

Others exponents have suggested that the gospel *guarantees* health and wealth to believers who have realised their sanctified and empowered status. Thus, all the believer needs to do is have the necessary amount of faith to claim their God-given heritage—a mixture of heavenly and earthly rewards. Correspondingly, poverty is seen as the outcome of a lack of faith. The ultimate premise of the health and wealth ideology—sometimes called 'name it and claim it'—is that there is no blessing or gift that God would wish to deny [his] people, because God is a God of live, generosity and abundance. 'God does not want you to be poor' is the frequently cited mantra of the movement. Again, examples of this in practice might include Oral Roberts' advocacy of a 'Blessing Pact'; in return for donations from believers, their financial, spiritual, relational and health concerns will be addressed.

The roots of the 'Health and Wealth' movement are complex. Culturally, they can be traced to the very origins of American entrepreneurial Protestant frontier religion—the independent preacher that went from town to town, 'selling' the gospel, and establishing networks of followers who supported the ministry by purchasing tracts and subscribing to newsletters that tended to develop distinctive and novel teachings that were not found within mainstream denominations. In a sense, the 'Health and Wealth' gospel can be said to be rooted in a distinctive 'American dream' (success, prosperity, etc), though the movement is now encountered all over the world.

Besides a selective reading and interpretation of key biblical texts, other influences upon the movement have included Norman Vincent Peale ('the power of positive thinking'), whose legacy is most obviously manifest in Robert

Schuller's ministry and initial building of the startling Crystal Cathedral in California. Another obvious influence upon the movement, sociologically, is a belief in an ever-growing economy. Although exponents of health and wealth would not explicitly articulate such a view, their actual assumption about investment and return assumes a pattern of economic growth. Correspondingly, a serious economic recession tends to lead to a downturn in the fortunes of health and wealth exponents, although we should note that some individuals will try and give more during times of hardship, as they believe that this will be their best means of returning to prosperity.

Health and wealth teaching has become and enduring feature of the Protestant Evangelical and Pentecostal landscape of North America. Pat Robertson, Kenneth Copeland, William Branham and Oral Roberts are names that still command respect amongst some. Whilst Jim Bakker, Morris Cerullo and Jimmy Swaggart have suffered from financial and personal crises that have cast some doubt on the movement as a whole. The Crystal Cathedral has recently been sold to the local Roman Catholic diocese due to a steady decline in attendance; however, it is Schuller's influence and teachings that continue to inspire many new churches in Southern California. Further afield, David (formerly Paul) Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church in Seoul, South Korea, continues to offer a distinctive brand of health and wealth teaching fused to Korean culture and its newly modernised economic expectations—despite having been convicted of grave tax evasion and embezzlement in 2014. In Brazil, Edir Macedo's Universal Church of God's Kingdom claims more than six million followers spread over 85 countries. Macedo, a former sales assistant in a lottery shop, now heads a church that owns a bank, a soccer team and various media outlets (radio, TV, newspapers, etc), with the organisation having an estimated annual turnover of over $1 billion (USD).

Bruce (1990) identifies three distinctive emphases that characterise the movement. First, health and wealth teaching is linked to a revival of the Pentecostal emphasis on physical healing and well-being. Second, the teaching is linked to the 'discovery' that the Bible proclaims not only spiritual salvation for the believer, but also material and physical prosperity. Third, the teaching emphasises 'positive confession'—a crude cocktail of confidence and assertion, under the guise of faith, that claims that in order to receive healing or wealth, the individual must *first* believe and act as though the miracle has already been reified, even if all the evidence still points to the contrary. The favoured biblical text that underpins this dogma is found in Mark 11: 24: "… whatever you desire, when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and you shall have them…". It is on the basis of this last point that the health and wealth movement is dubbed 'Name it and Claim it'.

Unsurprisingly, the health and wealth exponents have had many critics within the Protestantism, and more broadly within the wider Christian tradition. Liberation theologians have attacked the movement for its absorption with material prosperity, and its capacity to exploit the poor and vulnerable in developing nations and poor communities. Others have attacked the movement for its deficient hermeneutics, and for the psychological and pastoral damage that can be done to those who fail to receive either health or wealth, and are forced to conclude that this is their own fault, due to a lack of faith. Others regard the movement as a deviant form of Christian orthopraxy that is disreputable and highly manipulative. In their defence, health and wealth exponents defend their stance as a 'daring' theology that testifies to the generosity and goodness of God. They speak of the 'universal law of divine reciprocity'. Or, as the old Pentecostal mantra puts it, 'as you sow, so shall you reap'. These points aside, the teaching of the movement continues to have a beguiling and almost mesmerising effect upon its followers. It offers a world-view—a kind of 'theological construction of reality'—that is remarkably resistant to a reckoning with any antithesis, which is in turn centred upon a world that offers promises and guarantees about health and wealth, despite evidence to the contrary. To reify their blessings, all the believer need do is 'plant the seed of faith', and give.

Like many of its heterodox and orthopraxic, pragmatic predecessors (that is, new teachings combined with a familiar liturgy), the 'Health, Wealth and Prosperity' movement holds up a revealing mirror to the face of Protestantism. The very existence and success of the movement shows that the lack of central control and governance within the broad sweep of Protestantism enables any number of enculturated and pragmatic forms of ecclesial polity to emerge. This is ensured, to some extent, by the primacy placed upon the believer before God (the 'I-Thou') as a foundation of Christian belief, and the capacity—invested in believers—to be individuals who can guided by the bible (and its interpretation) independent of any other higher power (for example, such as 'the Church'). So Protestants are, by definition, always free to protest; they do not need to yield to a higher authority. Just as America is 'one nation under God'—an extraordinarily Protestant affirmation—so are the multiple Protestant denominations 'one congregation under God'; and the foundation for this is the claim that each believer is 'one person under God'. No church or denominational hierarchy can overcome that confessional fundamental within the Protestant panoply.

Protestants—Always Protesting?

The three pulses that formed the first Protestants persist today: the right to resist central control; the right to protest; and the right to advocate reform of

the parent (or prevailing denomination). Or to leave it and re-form, should the remedial programme or reformation flounder or fail. All Protestants will claim scriptural warrant for their resistance, protests and proposed reforms; as it was in the beginning, so shall it ever be. So in this final section, it seems fitting and natural to take as our example a group that calls itself 'Reform'. In adopting this nomenclature, 'Reform' does not mean to be hubristic. Although a small grouping within the Church of England, the group exists to correct its parent denomination, as well as, by implication, critique softer forms of Protestantism within Anglicanism, which—it is deemed—may have mislaid or lost its true Protestant heritage.

One of the surprising aspects of Reform is its size. It currently has approximately fifteen hundred individual members. The number of churches that would categorically identify with the movement is probably less than fifty. It is difficult to be precise about this last statistic, as clergy who lead churches may well insist that their congregation is 'fully supportive of Reform', but hard data to back this up simply does not exist. Clergy will often assume that a congregation's support of them and their ministry amounts to their tacit agreement with his or her theological position. In fact such concord is quite rare, even in the most apparently homogenous congregations. Congregations—even those that may be content to be identified as Conservative Evangelical—are likely to be places of doctrinal divergence rather than creedal concurrence. However, statistics that seem to reveal a relatively low level of support for Reform should not be used to underestimate the scale and importance of the movement. It wields considerable national influence, and also has a significant international profile through links with the Diocese of Sydney and enjoys other liaisons in North America.

As a movement, Reform was born on 22nd February 1993. The text of the original leaflet, stating the aims and purposes of the movement, identifies its fundamental doctrinal core, before listing its major concerns:

> … for some years groups of mainstream evangelicals have met to discuss issues in the church and nation. These issues include the authority of and sufficiency of Scripture; the uniqueness and finality of Christ; the priority of the local church; the complementarity of men and women… [We are] Christians first, Evangelicals second, and Anglicans third… [we have] committed ourselves to unite for action under the authority of Scripture as God's word… Historic Anglican theology is committed to continuous Reformation of the church. We are committed to the reform of ourselves, our congregations and our world by the gospel… Reform is urgently needed… [because] the gospel is not shaping and changing our church and our society: our society seems to be shaping and changing us. A biblical

> Christian voice is heard too little in our society. The Church of England seems to have lost confidence in the truth and power of the gospel… To reverse these trends we are committed to change and growth. Such change will be costly… We do not believe this change can come from the denominational centre. The local church must take back responsibility for the denomination…
>
> D. HOLLOWAY, Reform web site, 1993

The agenda outlined is specific and direct. The leaflet identifies a particular kind of stance as being 'orthodox', and implies that the wider denomination has lapsed in its belief, confidence and responsibility. In terms of process, this inevitably leads to a call for financial realignment, and establishing the local church as the primary locus of mission and discipleship. This agenda is, in turn, driven by a broad appeal to the ongoing work of the Reformation. In effect, the leaders of Reform are doing nothing less than eliding their own identity and agenda with that of the original Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Except that this time the enemy is not the papacy: it is modernity and liberalism, which is deemed to have betrayed the historic missiological calling of a national church.

Although the precise birth date of Reform can be easily identified, the date (and process) of its conception is a little more contentious. Several recent moments in post-war English Evangelical history are worth mentioning, each of which may stake a claim to be influential upon the genesis of Reform. First, the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England to ordain women to the priesthood in November 1992 could undoubtedly be seen as the 'final straw' or 'trigger' that galvanised Evangelical leaders into action. As Ian Jones points out, those Conservative Evangelical leaders that opposed women's ordination were wholly unprepared for the Measure to be approved, and thereafter vowed to be more organised in order to address other key issues that they saw on the horizon (for example, women bishops, the ordination of homosexuals, etc.: see Ian Jones 2004).

Second, Reform also owes a partial debt to the (relatively successful) campaigning of the Rev. Tony Higton during the 1980s. Higton, the Rector or Hawkwell in Essex, launched an influential pressure group called Action for Biblical Witness to Our Nation (ABWON), which petitioned General Synod, published several tracts, and engaged in numerous high-profile public debates, most notably on sexuality and inter-faith worship. Higton, himself a member of General Synod, also edited *Sexuality and the Church: The Way Forward* (1987), which was a systematic and robust Conservative Evangelical refutation of homosexuality. Higton was a kind of middle-aged *enfant terrible* within the

General Synod, and his terrorising tactics, use of the media and strident polemical voice won him many admirers. More particularly, Higton's demonstrated that the 'liberal centre', which many assumed to be at the heart of the Church of England's governance, could be seriously challenged and called to account by some well-organised campaigning.

Third, the growing presence of Conservative Evangelicals within the Church of England can be traced, in part, to the seminal (Evangelical Congress) Keele Conference of 1967. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones had called upon 'true' Protestants (that is, Evangelicals) to leave their respective denominations and form a new church. But within the Church of England, this move was tenaciously resisted by John Stott and Jim Packer, amongst others, who eventually won the day. But this moment in modern church history set a course for Evangelicals that would lead to other kinds of conflict. Specifically, in deciding to remain within Anglicanism and to work for 'evolution within', Conservative Evangelicals quickly organised themselves into groups and networks that could maintain their identity and promote their causes.

Fourth, and in spite of the numerical strength of post-war Evangelical Anglicanism, some tensions were beginning to emerge within the movement. On the issue of women's ordination, it was increasingly apparent that many Evangelicals felt that there were no longer any clear biblical reasons that should prevent women being made priests. Evangelical identity was also successively transformed and eroded by Charismatic Renewal, which seemed, at least to its Conservative Evangelical detractors, to pay far too much attention to the realm of feelings, and not enough attention to the Bible. Furthermore, the gradual emergence of a broader and more accommodating mainstream 'Anglican-Evangelical' identity, which grew increasingly popular from the 1970s, put Conservative Evangelicals much more on the defensive, even to the point of making them appear reactionary. This is perhaps best illustrated by the debacle that surrounded the publication of *Churchman* in 1984. The editor at the time, Rev. Peter Williams, was dismissed from his post for publishing some articles about the authority and inspiration of scripture, which departed from the normal 'classic' Conservative Evangelical stance. To the non-Evangelical eye, the slight differences between the views of, say, Jim Packer and James Dunn would hardly seem to be significant, but the Trustees of *Churchman* saw it differently. The argument led to several committee members breaking away from *Churchman*, and a new journal, *Anvil* being launched. *Anvil* subsequently became the voice of those who were more inclined to call themselves Anglican-Evangelicals; *Churchman* retained the loyalty of those who preferred to call themselves Evangelical-Anglicans.

Fifth, a particular kind of elite Conservative Evangelicalism has also been influential in the genesis of Reform. Bodies such as the Church Society, Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), and its successor UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) have naturally played a significant part in forming future leaders within Evangelicalism. In the latter case, with its distinctive Articles of Faith (a ten point doctrinal schema), UCCF/IVP have been able to secure a degree of creedal homogeneity amongst Christian Union groups that has eluded other denominational affiliations and more radical groups such as the Student Christian Movement. However, what is particularly intriguing about Reform is that some of its leaders had their Christian faith formed within a relatively small cartel of elite public schools, often followed by university education at Oxford or Cambridge. The backbone of the student work will often have included some exposure to the Iwerne Minster Camps, which offered a very specific kind of programme, under the tutelage of Basher Nash and the Fletcher brothers. (These camps would include 'lady helpers', but not women speakers). Sociologically, these camps and meetings would appear to be promoting what some scholars now refer to as 'muscular Christianity': particular kinds of male bonding centred on exercise and spiritual study (Magdalinski and Chandler 2001).

Sixth, a number of other proto-Protestant pressure groups have grown up in the last 25 years in the Church of England, and have directly contributed to the genesis of Reform. Several could be named, but one of the groups most closely allied to Reform has been the Proclamation Trust, founded by the Rev. Dick Lucas, formerly Rector of St Helen's Bishopsgate. The Proclamation Trust has enjoyed a wide ministry in the Church of England, and is primarily devoted to promoting a particular kind of expository preaching, and to the promulgation of courses that teach 'Christian basics' (e.g., *Read Mark, Learn*). It should be noted, however, that Reform, in common with other Conservative Evangelicals, regard the *Alpha* course (a product of a more charismatic-evangelical mindset, and originating from Holy Trinity Brompton), as too liberal and quite unsound (Prominent Conservative-Evangelicals such as Phillip Jensen, former Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney, have consistently attacked the *Alpha* course).

Seventh, and finally, some leaders within Reform appeal directly to the early heroes of the Reformation (such as Wycliffe), or to seventeenth century Anglican thinkers who were themselves heavily influenced by Cromwellian Puritanism. In this regard, some Reform leaders are inclined to oppose the "liberal-catholic drift [which] is destroying the Church of England". The claim to be reformist is therefore to be treated with the utmost seriousness within Anglicanism. Reform leaders are not simply arguing for a particular kind of moral coherence as the basis for ecclesial communion; they are also advocating a specious form of Protestantism that will exclude the excesses of

Charismatic Renewal and the aesthetics of Anglo-Catholicism. Put another way, Reform is promoting a kind of clear, plain, morally certain and pedagogically cerebral Protestant Christianity. Conversion is achieved through intellectual persuasion; discipleship is maintained by the same, through embodying the convictions of the mind in disciplined living. There is little scope for ambiguity or difference, for the Bible is held to be clear on all matters of importance. It is a case of Trust and Obey—there is no other way.

To conclude this section, we turn to the Reform Covenant itself, and its articulation of the 'true' Protestant heritage of the Church of England. Besides identifying its fundamental life through the usual creedal formulae, it is important to understand the association as a movement of *resistance*. Throughout Reform's documents, the themes of correction, confrontation, reformation and reassertion are prominent (italics mine):

> … [we affirm]… the divine *order* of male headship, which makes the headship of women as priests-in-charge, incumbents, dignitaries and bishops *inappropriate*… the *rightness* of sexual intercourse in heterosexual marriage, and the *wrongness* of such activity both outside it and in *all* its homosexual forms… the *urgent* need for decentralisation at national, diocesan and deanery level, and the need to *radically reform* the present shape of episcopacy and *pastoral discipline*…'
>
> HOLLOWAY 1993: 1

Properly speaking, we might say that Reform exists because of concerns with money, sex and power. As an organisation, it is more focussed than its older cousin, the Church Society, an ageing and more traditional body for Conservative Evangelicals. In particular, Reform seeks to campaign on a specific range of issues, each of which is underpinned by a concern re-affirm the authority of scripture, and the priority of the local church as the primary locus for mission and evangelism. Were it not for the anxieties of Conservative Evangelicals on these matters, Reform would probably not exist. It is, in other words, a product of enculturation.

Conclusion

To conclude, we take an analogy from nature. There seems to be an almost endless variety of Protestants. Rather like dogs—the variety is so vast—that one term for such a plethora seems almost absurd. To treat the Poodle, the Alsatian and all the Collies—to name but a few—as a single canine species seems strange at first sight. Yet it is humanity—individuals, communities and

cultures—that have made the many, many different breeds we count under the term 'dogs'. Interbreeding by design, or by accident, is possible—and a reality. As with canines, so with Protestants. No individual breed should really surprise us anymore. The possibilities are infinite. Protestants, like canine breeds, or a single species of plant have yet to exhaust the possibilities.

As with Calvinists, Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans—to name but a few—the key to comprehending Protestant identity lies in the understanding what was intended by the name bestowed upon the movement. Protestants were, and are, in all their ecclesial forms, movements that upheld the rights of individuals and groups to resist, protest against ecclesiastical abuses and ultimately reform the church. In nearly all cases, such initiatives fail; and the reforming and protesting movement, to maintain its resistance, severs its connections. A new denomination is subsequently born.

Today, the 30,000 (Barrett et al. 2001) or so Protestant denominations all bear ample witness to this *sui generis*, and five hundred years on from Luther's power and symbolic act at Wittenburg, the history and ecclesiology of Protestantism—especially in relation to its phenomenal expansion and continued popularity—is largely a matter of tracing the socio-ecclesial factors that have led to such a variegated movement. From the single trunk of the Reformations of the sixteenth century, thousands upon thousands of branches have grown. These branches remain strangely untied; not by central governance or doctrinal agreement, but by a perpetual morphological similarity. Namely the right to be considered faithful Christian, under the word of God, and free to resist, protest and reform, as the Spirit moves. The strength of Protestantism remains its capacity to adapt to each and every context and develop new forms of enculturated ecclesiology in every age. This strength shows no sign of being a weakness—unless one thinks that an endless variety of forms may be problematic. But in a world of religious consumerism, in which the right of individuals to shape and choose their own form of faith is largely unchallenged, this seems unlikely. And perhaps ultimately, that is what sets Protestantism apart from Catholicism?

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CHAPTER 2

Roman Catholicism

A Communication Impasse

Angela Coco

Introduction

Vatican II (1962–1965), a key event in Roman Catholic history, aimed to achieve church renewal. Measures initiated immediately following the Council intensified many of the divisions now evident in the Catholic communion. Successive pontificates reined in Vatican II initiatives; curtailing the role of the laity, particularly that of women, and re-asserting pre-Vatican II stances on sexual and procreative issues. While there are clear positions that delineate conservative and progressive extremes in Catholic camps, the traditional edifice is kept in place by a much larger portion of the faithful managing the dialogic space between them. But those occupying the pews are ageing and young Catholics reject values promoted by external authorities, carving out personal moralities that tend to be quite different from those taught by the Church (Cornwell 2002: 112). Roman Catholicism's most deeply felt controversies concern the ways authority is exercised, the roles of women and the conduct of sexuality. They are anchored by structures and communication patterns aligned with traditional gender stereotypes and have led to what many have described as a breakdown in communications between laity and clergy.

During the second half of the twentieth century, Catholic religious practice in Europe, the United States and Australia declined markedly, a trend that continues in Australia (Dixon et al. 2013). There has been a marked growth in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Luxmoore 2013). Admissions to the all-male priesthood have declined internationally to the extent that many parishes have been incorporated into larger ones. 'Faith communities' led by lay people in the absence priests for Sunday mass have developed around the world. To address the shortage of priests, dioceses in Western countries are importing priests from 'developing' countries such as India, the Philippines and Latin America to 're-vitalise' parishes (Schreiter 2005). In Australia such imports are believed to account for around twenty-one percent of active clergy (Wilkinson 2011: 16). At the same time, the Church's rejection of the idea of admitting women to the Catholic priesthood has remained non-negotiable. While some slight gains towards gender equality in the West were made during the second half of the twentieth century, Roman Catholicism

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along with other monotheistic religions actively consolidated its identity by promoting traditional, unequal gender roles between men and women (Woodhead 2008). Kautzer (2013) sees the Church's current conservative stance as a reaction to the 'culture wars' experienced world-wide, a situation not unrelated to the changing roles of women and men.

At the time of writing, there is much speculation regarding how the actions of recently inaugurated Latin American, Pope Francis (19 March, 2013) might signal the beginnings of change.[1] The year 2013 witnessed Pope Benedict XVI's resignation, an unusual event in papal longevity as popes normally stay in office till the ends of their lives; the last resignation of a pope having occurred almost six centuries ago. There are many reports of his humility and simple lifestyle, revealing a determination to lead by example. For instance, he has chosen to live in modest quarters with other clergy rather than taking up residence in the Apostolic Palace in which popes have been dormitoried since 1903 (Agence France-Presse 2013). One could read into his reported activities attempts to send a message to the faithful that the church's established power relations are in for a shake-up.

Francis' reign comes at a time when the Catholic Church can no longer ignore criminal charges now being brought against it by secular authorities around the world. Evidence of diocesan financial mis-management in the United States and German Churches as well as in the Vatican's own financial division, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See (McElwee 2013), has emerged. Abuse charges have been mobilised internationally with some countries, notably Ireland, the United States and Australia mounting national inquiries into institutional abuse. Perhaps the Pope's statements that too much power is centred in the Vatican (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2013), and his conduct of a third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the purposes of looking at *The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization* (Synod of Bishops 2014) are indications of a meaningful response to these challenges. But some theologians, notably Joan Chittister (Chittister et al. 2013) visionary theologian and member of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, and Boston College of theology professor, Thomas Groome (Connor 2013) are sceptical as to whether such consultations will lead to action on the ground. Research is frequently commissioned by bishops' conferences, conducted by well-meaning, skilled people, reported upon at bishops' conferences and left to languish (Coco 1999). Controversial findings are

1 Exemplified by the forum, 'Pope Francis and the State of Global Catholicism', conducted at the 2013, American Academy Religion conference, Baltimore, 2013.

seldom published widely and any discussion is guided by parameters set beforehand by bishops.

This chapter will approach the matter of divisions within Roman Catholicism by examining the ways its 'gender regime' (Connell 2002) has contributed to the communications impasse between laity and the Church hierarchy. One way to identify some of the substance and inter-dependence of gender dynamics is to appreciate Catholics' actual lived experiences of conflict. These experiences illustrate how the gender regime is created and reinstated through people's interactions and communication behaviours. The discussion is based on a study which interviewed forty Australian Catholics, aged between twenty-seven to sixty-one years of age regarding their experiences of conflict with teachings and/or practices in the Church (Coco 2013). They were not a representative sample. A snowball sampling method was used to locate people in as many different lifestyles as possible, including Catholics who had left the tradition. There were lesbians, single women, single men, married men and women, people who had emigrated from other countries, priests and former priests, women and men in religious Orders, divorced and widowed people, people living in de facto relationships, mothers and fathers, and participants who represented varying combinations of the foregoing. Interviewees were asked to describe situations they had encountered and to describe their mental, emotional and physical reactions and the ways these sources of information helped or constrained their faith-integration processes. Their stories of interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogue give insights into Catholicism's gendered culture. The gender regime is examined through four inter-related dimensions; power relations, production relations, symbolic relations and emotional relations (Connell 2002).

Power Relations

'Power relations' refer to issues of authority, control and coercion. They are reinstated through interactions reflective of the social structure. Depending on one's position, power can be described negatively as the experience of restraint or positively, as; the ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, or to formulate ideals and define morality (Connell 1987). In the negative experience of power one is the object of manipulation, regulation and/or coercion. It is useful to expand Connell's model of power by using Starhawk's (1988) framework which includes a notion of collective power. Starhawk talks about power-over, power-from-within and/or power-with. Power-over is the type of power relations we

find in Connell's model. In attempting to communicate and resolve their conflicts with the Church, Catholics may use power in any of these ways and which one/s they mobilise depends on many variables including; the situation, their dispositions towards Catholicism formed early in life, their motivations and the extent to which they feel their concerns will be heard.

People's experiences of power relations and therefore the means they use to resolve issues with Catholic teachings and practices differ widely. Dervin et al. (2003), taking a communications approach, refer to power relations as situation movement states (sms). There occur at least eight types of situation movement states in the Catholic milieu (Coco 2013). For some Catholics there are barriers to be surmounted (described as a Barrier sms), for others, power relations present problems to be solved (Problem sms) or decisions to be made (Decision sms). Power relations are also often experienced as highly stressful, for example, in choices that involve maintaining tensions between belief and practice (Tight-rope sms), in situations that cause people to lose sight of the way ahead (Spin-out sms) or to lose their way altogether (Wash-out sms) at which point their religious worldview becomes meaningless. Some reach relative equanimity by leaving their Catholic practice and checking in every now and then to see if things have changed (Drifting sms); others find Catholicism to be ineffective for nurturing spiritual lives, devise new ways of nurturing their religious expression, and leave the Church (Effete sms). With such a diverse range of ways of experiencing power relations it is difficult for everyday Catholics remaining within the tradition to come to a common understanding of how they might mobilise positive change within it.

Some Catholics habitually exercise power-from-within while others come to this strength through their struggles to make sense of their situations. The latter call on their personal capacities and spiritual integrity in such matters as deciding, for instance, that they do not need the church's permission to end a marriage by pursuing the annulment process. Others come to rely on their inner authority or conscience as they work through issues, generally reporting that the solution is "between me and God" not what others tell them. A smaller number of Catholics slowly awaken in adulthood from their unquestioning interpretations of Catholic virtues, particularly those regarding charity, generosity and self-sacrifice imbibed during childhood and that later function to obscure the reality of the abusive personal relationships in which they find themselves. For Catholics recognising the abusive nature of their family relationships, it is a small step to identifying a similar patterning of abusive relations in the Catholic milieu. Such people begin developing power-from-within when their bodies become physically ill and literally serve as a wake-up call for self-preservation.

Power-with is that power mobilised amongst equals, a give and take communicative process of influence in which more equitable practices and knowledge forms can be designed (Starhawk 2002). This is the kind of power people in the twenty-first century expect, encounter and negotiate daily in their partnerships and workplaces. One can cite the example of Peter, a priest who mobilised power with his confreres in the seminary as he sought to support Australian Indigenous peoples in their struggles for justice. He was called to account for himself by the seminary rector, who, though not constraining his actions, expressed his disagreement with Peter's activities. Later, as a parish priest, Peter had a lot more difficulty leaving the normative parish priest role and following his conscience to work as a chaplain with Indigenous people. A priest has a means of moving sideways (or downwards) in the institution. Very few lay Catholics including those in Religious Orders are successful in mobilising this kind of power since they occupy positions at the bottom of the hierarchy. They tolerate the resultant tension, perform the considerable emotion work needed to maintain their Catholic associations and make internal and/or external adjustments to reduce stress.

Power-over can only take effect if resisted. Catholics describing Effete and Drifting circumstances perceived the ways power relations failed to put moral principles into practice, and removed themselves from the Catholic context; thereby no longer offering resistance against which authoritative power can be exerted. Asymmetrical power-over relations are supported symbolically by traditional nuclear family imagery in the many messages that speak about the Catholic household, connoting parent/child relationships. In familial relationships there are times when power-over is appropriate and useful and times when it is not, notably as children grow and increasingly are able to make their own informed decisions. However, Orsi (2005) argues that children experiencing strong emotion should be permitted to "talk back". It is the silencing of Catholic children and their parents that has contributed to situations where abuse has gone undetected. Catholics experiencing power-over negatively, report manipulation and coercion mobilised by individuals with vested interests and hierarchical connections, conservative Catholic groups and members of their religious Orders.

The preferred and legitimated interpretation of the Catholic household favours images and communication patterns that are authoritarian and paternalistic. Participants' explanations of the communicating behaviours they encountered revealed that they resisted the kind of 'family' relations imagery that is un-tempered by any embodied understanding of parenthood and human frailties. Catholic authoritarianism is felt in people's day-to-day lives. For instance, Monica's authority over decisions about her children's treatment in the Catholic school was challenged, she explained:

> (My son) came home with his buttocks black from the top of his waist to the top of his legs. So I didn't do anything about it with the Catholic Education Office. I realise now that I should have gone in there but I didn't want to cause waves. I was brought up that you pay and pray and never rock the boat so I didn't want to cause too many waves. So I just went up to the nun and said please don't do that again… Well from then on she just picked on him and ignored me. I'd gotten on very well with her up to that stage but she didn't like being picked up on this.
>
> So I let him stay at the school we talked about it and he decided yes he would stay there at the school and put up with whatever she had to say he could handle it. He was in year 6 at the time so he handled it right through to year 7 then he went off to high school.
>
> But I withdrew my daughter who was coming up into her class because she couldn't have handled it… The priest told me I had no right to withdraw her from the school.

Not only did the ethical import of the physical abuse of Monica's son appear not to impinge upon the nun's or priest's consciousness, but the priest claims she "has no right" over decisions about her children's welfare. A woman religious, Rebekah rejected the "father's helper" role in a parish set out for her in favour of living independently and working with the poor and disenfranchised. She was attacked verbally and psychologically by a choreographed meeting of her Order's leaders for ostensibly besmirching the Order's reputation. Josh, a parish priest, responds to letters from Catholics in a local Catholic newspaper. He came under scrutiny from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) for supposed lack of orthodoxy in his writings but was eventually cleared of wrong-doing. His reflection that the Australian bishops felt he should refrain from contributing to the paper for one year after his clearance so as not appear to be "thumbing his nose" (a child's gesture) or "being defiant" towards the CDF is telling. In these examples, participants are taking exceptions to behaviours and communications that do violence to their moral certitude. Many Catholics are disempowered by other Catholics' abusive gestures, evasive and patronising language and judgmental and critical words.

As adults, people can balance information provided by authoritative others, their own experiences and internal feelings and decide on appropriate courses of action. Adopting a normal adult stance in the broader culture involves asking information gathering questions; how, when, where or what and one can expect considered and informed responses. In the Roman Catholic environment questioning is actively discouraged, and often evaded when it occurs, thereby thwarting attempts to communicate in dialogical

ways in which there is a give and take of understanding based on mutual respect. When Audrey attempted to secure a response from the priest in charge of Catholic Education in regard to her physical assault claim against a fellow Catholic, she was met with evasions and mis-representations to which she responded with anger and frustration. In other words she was met with a response that reproduced the asymmetrical power relation between the priest's and her role in the church. Very few Catholics experiencing negative power-over them are able to see their points of view given serious attention regardless of the nature of the issue, their authentic Catholic practice, involvement in their local parishes, advanced Catholic formation, secular knowledge or their position in the hierarchy.

Production Relations

'Production relations' are about the division and allocation of types of labour; mental, physical, emotional and social. Labour relations refer to a gender-structured system of 'production', 'consumption' and 'distribution' of the institution's core business. The main work of religions involves preserving tradition, producing orthodox versions of the faith, translating these into social teachings and practices, socialising and educating followers in these tenets and practices, and monitoring their compliance. While the primary role of the Catholic Church is to 'save souls', as an organisation it nevertheless functions in all social spheres, including economic and political ones. There are nearly as many adjunct jobs supporting its work as there are in the broader society; teachers, solicitors, secretaries, gardeners, share brokers and so on. Labour is underpinned by the institution's symbolic system which encodes meanings that are translated into prescriptions about social conduct between lay people and clergy, and women and men.

Debates over legitimate sources of theologising, appropriate ecclesiology and interpretations of scripture and what is to be counted as orthodox Catholic knowledge continue to be a significant source of tension (Schneiders 2004). From the beginning of women's challenges to Catholicism, women and men have argued for the acceptance of knowledge generated from embodiment deployed in sexual relations and child rearing (for example, Ruether 1983; Johnson 2007). Gay and lesbian Catholics have also been active in theologising an identity within the tradition (Stuart 2003). Such academic challenges seldom find their ways into homilies at weekly mass where most practising Catholics learn their place in production relations and acquire their knowledge of Catholic morality and social teaching.

Labour in the Catholic Church is organised along lay-ordained, female–male, secular-religious lines with the valued emphasis going to the second term in each of these dualisms. Performing the Eucharistic is reserved exclusively for ordained men, taking up the collection for lay people. Women's and men's roles in production relations can be very different. As primary producers and socialisers of the future work force, souls to be saved and priests to be ordained, women who give birth perform the major proportion of work in 're-production relations'. They undertake the unseen and unmarked social, educational and emotional work and provide the reserve army of labour (usually in the form of volunteerism) upon which capitalist and patriarchal relations depend (Mies 1988). Women who choose not to raise children are still enmeshed in social expectations of their contribution to nurturing and support roles, as Rebekah's situation illustrated. But due to their sexually marked difference as pro-creators, all lay people are expected to support re-production relations physically, intellectually and emotionally. There is thus a feminised labour which forms the underside of Catholic social relations and lay people, both men and women, perform it. Within each type of labour are sets of symbols, norms, expectations, practices and particular patterns of communicating that reproduce the traditional gendered structure. Relational dynamics producing this structure are mobilised when Catholics approach priests or other Catholic counsellors with problems for which they are seeking spiritual direction.

Usually as a first strategy to resolve conflicted situations, Catholics seek out a priest or Catholic psychologists or counsellors. They report that often those they find often do not have the ability, interest or life experience to offer any useful support. For instance Adrian, an Order priest, discussed his loss of important female friendships due to his move from one city to another. He contacted a priest friend who was a psychologist whom he believed could be useful as a sounding board and found him to be "lacking in life experience". Such experiences stonewall Catholic's attempts to maintain psychological health and multiply and deepen their feelings of confusion and loss of identity within their Catholic communities. Many participants reported making repeated attempts, searching out different Catholic experts to get help. There is a failure in production relations to impart suitable knowledge and spiritual guidance that one legitimately could expect such Catholic experts to provide.

Troubled Catholics question both the ways that Catholic work is done, the content and inadequacies of that work and aspects of Catholic teachings. A factor common amongst Catholics is that when they fail to gain support, they find it necessary to explore options outside of the Catholic milieu. Iris and Elaine, both subject to highly abusive interpersonal relations, after visiting

several Catholic counselors eventually found help from sources outside Catholicism. Elaine, swamped by feelings of guilt and confusion from which she was unable gain relief, learned that having 'impure thoughts' was normal and not sinful. She was enjoying sexual activity outside of marriage and found it healing parts of herself that had been damaged in a physically abusive marriage. Symbolic images and accompanying language usually used to talk about the Holy Family, the Church as the Bride of Christ, biblical motifs like Christ being 'subject to his parents', self-sacrifice and charity were images that justified these women's tolerance of the abuse they had endured. Attentive and wise clergy can be very supportive and a few participants gave evidence of these, but by and large participants encountered leaders lacking the necessary emotional and intellectual skills and unable or unwilling to recognise the realities of earthly Catholic marriages and families.

Fellow Catholics' actions can be a source of conflict either due to their lack of constructive support or their cooperation in unjust, abusive and self-serving power and production relations. Participants talking about these kinds of conflicts most often did not wish to leave their faith and took steps to render their situations tolerable. For instance, people describing a Spin-out sms initially resisted other Catholics' behaviours that they experienced as unjust, but then adapted their thought patterns, value judgements and external behaviours as they rationalised their experiences. Simon felt ostracised from parish prayer meetings when parishioners supported his estranged girlfriend and ignored his pain. Through Emotions Anonymous, he found a helpful framework for making sense of what was happening to him and was able to develop a measure of equanimity in the presence of those who had hurt him and return to worshipping in his local parish. Catholics describing such situations reached a state of acceptance of their own frailties and those of other Catholics in their parishes. As individuals, these people gained in maturity spiritually and psychologically but the opportunity for group renewal at the parish level was lost and abusive dynamics enabled to continue unchallenged.

Production relations are symbolically and architecturally supported. If a priest wishes to reinforce the emphasis on obedience to papal authority and the letter of the law, the subjective import of his message is mirrored in the physical context; whether that be in the presbytery, confessional or mass. During mass the priest and his young attendants (altar servers) stand in front of the congregation in an area called the 'sanctuary' which is 'holy', separate and protected from the 'body' of the church—that is, where the lay people are. Token women may now enter this sanctuary for limited periods of time during the ceremony to perform particular duties. The positioning of types of persons

so that it is clear where the power lies, and where they are positioned in production relations is further enforced by the direction of talk when the priest delivers the moral lesson or homily during Mass. Greg described the situation thus: "… he (the priest) was ignorant. That he could actually get up in front of the congregation and sort of ah, put his word across as being gospel when everybody has to sit there and listen and ah… not being able to get up and sort of say something".

The terminological and spatial replication of the dichotomous notions of clean/unclean, spirit/body, culture/nature and masculinity/femininity are immediately obvious in the scenario above. The patterning of dominant-subordinate relations is fostered from a very early age and is embedded in all levels of personal experiencing as well as in all facets of social interaction. Rituals, the biblical stories they replay, the spatial lay-out of churches and who is positioned where, all re-invoke webs of communicative meanings (Riis and Woodhead 2010). In these contexts, the fear of divine sanction learned in childhood, and the sense of all-pervading guilt that defies location in any ethical reality is re/activated. Those Catholics who remove themselves from regular church attendance, avoid the spatial and performative patterns that so distress them and escape the insidious ways the traditional gender order is inscribed. In the Catholic communications structure, absenting oneself from conflicted situations is really the only option for attaining equanimity.

The permitted channels and methods for communication are enshrined in the Code of Canon Law (Canon Law Society of America 1983). Basically, each higher figure in the hierarchy may disregard or oppose any decisions or suggestions made by those below him. Questioning, mediation and compromise are not communicative strategies enforced in the formal Catholic Code. Contemporary Catholics' issues therefore are not resolved because there is no real infrastructural mechanism for ensuring they are addressed. Celibates may choose, but are not required, to put themselves in positions to understand, let alone really hear, the import of the concerns of those below them. They are the only persons with some bargaining power in the authority structure, though if lay men or women align with them they can access some of this power. At the same time lay persons may make direct representations to the pope regarding objections they have to behaviours of other Catholics, religious or lay. The Pope may, as he did to Josh, direct the CDF to take action on the word of local parishioners without giving the person/s so accused a hearing. This mechanism is effective as a divide and conquer strategy maintaining dominant-subordinate relations, and fostering communicative chasms between celibates and lay people, and between favoured conservative factions and those with more liberal leanings.

Men talked at length about relationships, evidencing the tendency to cultivate what Wilcox (2004) calls 'soft patriarchs' in Christian denominations. Nevertheless, while men may spend more time in communication with spouses and supporting relationships, they do not contribute more time to the housework and childcare (Baxter et al. 2008). This wider cultural pattern is reflected in Catholic production relations as lay Catholics felt that the Fathers failed to ensure that Catholic Education provided adolescents with suitable training in life skills. It would appear that the tendency to stunt Catholics' psycho-sexual development continues into the twenty-first century. In recent decades those clergy, like Josh, who openly guide parishioners in their interpretations of changes initiated by Vatican II are targeted for demotion. A recent example is the dethroning of Bishop Morris in Queensland, Australia in 2012 (Morris 2014). In Bishop Morris' 2006 Pastoral Letter where he discussed issues for the future Church, he said "we may well need to be much more open towards other options for ensuring that the Eucharist may be celebrated" and goes on to list four issues including "ordaining women" and "recognising Lutheran, Anglican and Uniting Church Orders". As such issues circulate widely locally, nationally and internationally in Catholicism, Bishop Morris concluded that "what put… (him) wrong (in their eyes) is not having said false things, but having said things they do not like to have said" and treating bishops in Rome as equals in his communications with them.

Priests are enjoined to be selective about the issues they comment on so as not to disturb "the simple faithful", words Josh quoted from the CDF. This selective filtering of essential information and guidance is a failure, and probably also an unwillingness or inability to confront the changing social conditions that impact on the faithful. From the recent Australian findings of the Victorian Family and Community Development Commission into sexual abuse in non-government institutions, Roman Catholic bishops were singled out for never having reported criminal sexual abuse offences committed by priests (Family and Community Development Commission, 2013: 170). People describing a Barrier situation learned that through parish networks subordinated men may avail themselves of clerical alliances when there is a power struggle at stake, as illustrated by Moira's experience in a small country town. As a principal of a Catholic high school, she was pressured by all manner of tactics—meeting jamming, meets at the pub, the collusion of the parish priest and outright verbal abuse—to approve the appointment of a non-qualified male for appointment as a teacher in the local school. Her parish priest's advice was to ignore these social pressures, quietly step down from her role and leave the district where her Religious Order had been active in Catholic Education for over a century.

Catholic discourse conditions people to believe that secrecy, which is enshrined in Canon Law, is legitimated by divine authority (Robinson 2007: 8). This cultural phenomenon is supported by the historical cultivation of attitudes of awe and deference towards the sacred authority of priests, silencing any thought (let alone identification) of wrong-doing or inadequacy on their part. Catholics who described a Spin-out situation also talked about how injustices and abuses were not discussed and were hidden from public view. When communication dynamics silence, evade and bully dissenters, Catholics learn that certain kinds of questions and actions are not only unacceptable but attract social ostracism as well. Traditional power and production relations are enabled to continue because in everyday life people act on learned and tacit, seldom consciously held beliefs about what should and should not be said/done. It is partly because of the hierarchy's political adeptness at managing communications and their flock's emotions in ways that obfuscate social realities and conceal their disinclination to take action that the kinds of Reform Movements studied by Kautzer (2013) have been unable to stimulate change from within the Church. Groups like Women and the Australian Church, Broken Rites and Ordination for Catholic Women in Australia share similar experiences.

Having been socialised into the practice of maintaining silence on delicate issues has its advantages, however. Many Catholics attend mass but do not hold to all tenets of faith that accompany it. At the same time they internally withdraw assent to authority figures. Consequently, what is seen at Sunday mass and other ceremonies often reflects the appearance of conformity rather than the reality of it (Winter et al. 1995; D'Antonio et al. 2007). What we see in the patterns of power and production relations is the functioning of an internal communicative logic that is unable to address social injustice (Palacios 2007). In the Catholic household relationships are failing and those performing the emotional and social labour seem to be staying 'for the sake of the children', that is to save the future church. When people experience these relations with varying degrees of obstruction to their life processes as evident in the different ways of experiencing power, and manage them in different ways, it is difficult to envisage a common basis on which enough people would agree on strategies that could prompt the Church Fathers to address the communicative impasse.

Emotional Relations

'Emotional relations', like the other three dimensions, are patterned along gender lines and have their basis in the cultural alignment of feminine and masculine characteristics with biological sex and the heterosexual patterning of

attraction and repulsion (Connell 1987). Catholics are enculturated from birth into patterns of emotional attachments and prohibited relations based on values aligned with the heterosexual norm; the attachment of a man to a woman enshrined in the sacrament of marriage, and attachment to their children as their family, modelling the 'holy family'. Priests are encouraged to transfer this pattern of desire into an attachment to their parishioners as their family but those who discuss the issue talk about the value of and their need for close personal friendships. There is pleasure as well as pain in the emotional and psychological work that goes into producing and maintaining traditional power relations which is why they can be so difficult to change. Emotional attachments include the types of friendships people make and the causes to which they commit their time and energies. Ironically, the homosexual relations the church prohibits are incited in its day-to-day practice; separate men's and women's religious Orders, all girls' and all boys' schools and an all-male priesthood and leadership.

Feelings and emotions are natural, part of the givenness of human physiology, as well as barometers of the state of our bodily integrity. They motivate us to action (Barker 2007). Damasio emphasises the role of emotions in human survival, their importance to a healthy social life and ultimate judgements about good and evil. Emotions, "… help connect homeostatic regulation and survival 'values' to numerous events and objects in our autobiographical experience. Emotions are inseparable from the idea of reward and punishment, of pleasure or pain, of approach or withdrawal, of personal advantage and disadvantage. Inevitably, emotions are inseparable from the idea of good and evil" (Damasio 2000: 54–55). Strong emotions are sources of moral power (Harrison 1985).

Catholics talk about the ways they are denied the space to express anger, are sanctioned for showing strong negative emotion or are simply met with a non-response. Evading strong emotions and therefore refusing to see the realities that give rise to them is a powerful mechanism for controlling subordinates. Monica perceived that she should not "make waves" at the Catholic primary school over treatment of her children. One person expressed anger over the non-recognition of the gravity of her situation with an extremely violent husband, another voiced her difficulties in accepting Catholic imagery of the placid Virgin Mary to make sense of her new mothering role in which her predominant feelings were disempowerment, anger and frustration. The experience of anger and frustration is overlaid with a pervasive symbolic meaning. Believers are enjoined to be godlike, 'slow to anger'; an expression found in several places in the Bible, notably *Psalms* 103.8 and 105.8 and often preached from pulpits on Sundays. Therefore, the display of anger or other disrupting behaviours on behalf of subordinates is to be judged as lacking in Christian virtues.

People who are unable to feel, draw energy and can feel renewed and alive in the presence of people who are feeling and/or displaying any kind of emotion. The duality that patterns the concepts of Catholic philosophy/theology also structures symbolic and emotional relations. Laity are to hierarchy as anger is to composure, emotion is to reason, as body is to head, as sex is to spirit, as subordinate is to dominant. Catholics I talked to told of long periods of frustration, anger and conflicted meanings. Men and women in the Drifting and Effete situations ceased making this kind of emotional investment thereby removing themselves from the emotional cycles that energise established power relations. Many in the hierarchy are believed to lack feelings and emotion and the ability to empathise with the material contingencies of everyday life (McManus 1991). It is through active listening and empathic communications that people identify shared features of their life-worlds upon which they begin to build relationships. The lack of a feeling of shared humanity between laity, religious and clergy is obscured by images and relations coded in the symbolic order which are translated into preferred interpretations of scripture, tradition and social teaching. The situation was well illustrated by the experience of the late Archbishop Bernardin in the United States. His call to search for a common communicative ground between lay Catholics and hierarchy was subverted by Episcopal peers who claimed that indeed Catholics already shared a common ground in scripture and the church's teachings (Steinfels 2003). Some authors, hoping for signs of response-ability, read echoes of Bernardin's 'Consistent ethic of life' project in Pope Francis' communications (Gibson 2013).

Symbolic Relations

'Symbolic relations' are informed by imagery in the symbolic cosmos; the triune God imaged by events in Christ's life, death and resurrection, his relationship to his Father, and the Holy Spirit who was responsible for impregnating the Virgin Mary. Virtues espoused in these narratives are models for the relations between people. They anchor historical attachments and the desires that strengthen these attachments; to other people, to their religion, and to other life projects such as rearing children. Symbolic relations appear to be 'natural' and are largely unexamined positions (Bourdieu 2001). They underpin all other dimensions of the relations of ruling and efforts to alter such relations meet with a great deal of angst for many and the expenditure of emotional, mental and physical energy. Often Catholics' health suffers because they have sought too long to live by ideals enshrined in the Catholic symbolic cosmos, from

which traditional interpretations inadequately model the limits experienced in human life.

Being beyond time/space, yet encapsulating meanings which speak to the Catholic heart, symbols re-activate early patterns of socialisation, be they life-giving or otherwise. Schneiders explains that 'root metaphors' activate experiential material and enable people to make non-literal sense of situations (2004: 46–47). One of the most favoured metaphors for the church is that of mother (aligned with related ideas of the 'body', the 'church', 'bride' of Christ). The over-determined reliance on mothering imagery as a paradigm for social relations in Catholicism is problematic due to the manner in which this trope is still supported by a stereotypical gendered understanding of social roles (Beattie 2006). The Church is often referred to as 'mother', 'the bride of Christ' and believers the children or followers. Catholics are encouraged to develop emotional attachments to the church as children to a mother; and as the parish priest is referred to as 'Father' often the relation between lay people to the parish priest is also structured as one of children to a parent; though one with androgynous qualities. Priests are seen as the bearers of the pastoring nurturing role. In one sense they receive remuneration in a similar manner to that in which wives who do not work for an income are supported by their husbands. The ideology of care and nurturance is echoed in the kind of rhetoric that talks of clerics as shepherds of their flocks which also signals notions of leadership/ownership. This layering of emotional relations patterned on the fluid applications of Cartesian dualisms in Catholic symbolic structure bears a distinct character not experienced by non-Catholics.

Motherhood, like no other symbol, provides the conceptual framework for the organisation of time that caters to emergent and developmental needs (Adam 1995: 102). It is therefore a cultural symbol that is capable of engaging the wholeness of human being, responding to personal crises and natural pressures. The Catholic organisation is referred to as Mother Church, and yet it acts like an authoritarian Father Church. There is the oft-quoted platitude, "but the people are the church" (Heaps 1998) when the rhetoric aims to valourise the roles of the faithful but without recognising in any practical way that the physical and emotional labours of this 'body' are what holds it aloft. Smith explains the gender order well when she writes, "… [a]t almost every point women mediate for men the relation between the conceptual mode of action and the actual concrete forms on which it depends" (Smith 1987: 83). In Catholicism, subordinate males also facilitate this process and together with all women they mediate for many celibates the relation between the spiritual realm and earthly activities where people encounter their human limits. Luke, a former priest echoing other priests' reflections explained:

> The priest does not really get easily in touch with people. He lives in a protected way. He lives apart… There's no interconnection between his life-style and what he earns. It's a whole lot of things that touch people that don't touch him. And there's good reasons why I guess he live that way so that he can be free, and not cluttered with other things. So that he's totally able to be available. But there's an enormous amount of life that gets missed out.
>
> … there's very often a house keeper who does the cooking, washing, cleaning. The supermarket might be to get cigarettes, but it's not to do the shopping and meld up—to meld up what is my income with what I can actually buy… There's a car. There's um a—there's a fairly large protective thing called the church.

It is this "fairly large protective thing", the idealised mother, linked as it is with individuals' personal psychology, by which structures of violence are able to be maintained (Porter 1997). Discursive practices anchored in Catholics' emotional and symbolic relations with each other conspire towards maintaining the appearance of harmony. The mothering process is visible as a spiritual ideal, but remains invisible in real time and place because in Western cultures it is not counted among those things that are measured in clock time and apportioned monetary worth. Many Catholics are no longer interested in helping to maintain the appearance of unity by managing their own and other's social and emotional relations, demanding true dialogue instead of one-way communications which miss each other on the way up or the way down the hierarchical ladder.

Conclusion

Catholics' experiences of power, production, emotional and symbolic relations reveal that the structure and habits of interaction and communications in Roman Catholicism prohibit the mobilisation of true dialogue. There is a lack of mutual interpersonal engagement between people recognised as equals which is needed to break the communications impasse between the hierarchy and lay people. Robinson (2007: 9–16) argues that clergy are unable to respond constructively to conflict due to the culture developed in their formation; "unhealthy psychological state(s)", "unhealthy ideas concerning power and sexuality" and "an unhealthy environment or community". But clergy formation is only one aspect of the resultant Catholic culture in which attitudes, values and patterns of attachment and communication have been formed

interactively between lay people and clergy. In society more broadly, available images of masculinity often support the supposed superiority of males.[2] Priests are able to maintain protected positions because laity, especially many lay women, perform the ongoing work of emotional accommodation on pain of being judged uncharitable and sinful. Finally, laity are reluctant to behave collectively in ways that would generate sufficient discomfort necessary to force authoritative men to stop and take notice.

The situation is similar to that in the broader culture where women, migrants and people in third world countries provide the flexible, under paid and/or non-recognised, piece work that provides the reserve army of labour for enabling the continuity of the imperialist and capitalist enterprise (von Werlhof 1998). This work increasingly involves a great deal of emotional and social labour, creating energy and providing the lubricant that prevents an inflexible organisation from breaking apart. A discourse of harmony supported by the culture of secrecy has led to a situation in which few can muster the response-ability to make a difference. The communications impasse, anchored by rigid dualistic and stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity continues to inform the roles of laity and clergy and alienate many who work towards church renewal from the margins. Paternalistic and gendered communications patterns maintain the gulf between laity and clergy and between conservatives and liberals. Those managing the communicative space in between are ensconced in relational patterns that perpetuate the situation in which Roman Catholicism finds itself in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

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2 Thompson and Pleck (1987: 25–36) describe the cultural norms that define the male role as; (i) a proscriptive norm against anything feminine; (ii) positive prescriptions for activity and an instrumental orientation; and (iii) cultivation of independence and self-confidence and the development of a penchant for aggressiveness.

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CHAPTER 3

Orthodox Churches in Contemporary Contexts*

Maria Hämmerli

Introduction: Organisation of the Orthodox Churches

There are today between 250 and 300 million Orthodox people worldwide (Arjakovsky 2013; Pew Research Forum 2011; Ware 1993), affiliated to a family of self-governing churches, most of which are autocephalous, i.e. free to elect their own primate without approval of other churches: the old historical Churches of Jerusalem, Constantinople (Istanbul), Alexandria (Egypt) and Antioch (originally in the Ottoman Empire, but now its headquarters are in Damascus, Syria), and the newer Churches of Russia, Georgia, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Albania. The list could include also the Orthodox Church in America, which aspires to becoming an autocephalous church,[1] but is still striving for internal unity and for external worldwide Orthodox recognition. Another category is that of autonomous churches, i.e. those which enjoy internal sovereignty but remain under the supervision of a 'sponsor' church, which needs to approve the elected primate. This is the case of the Orthodox Church in Finland, Sinai, Estonia, Ukraine, Japan and China. These churches are headed by patriarchs (primate of an autocephalous church), archbishops (bishop of a large diocese) or metropolitans (bishops of a large city).

The Orthodox organisation differs both from Roman Catholic centralised system of church authority (with a pontiff at its head) and from the Protestant independent confessions. It is based on the ecclesiological principle of the local church, i.e. the belief that each local community of Christians gathered around its bishop, who has jurisdiction over a definite territory and celebrates the Eucharist, is the local realisation of the universal Church. Notwithstanding the physical and numerical size of each local church, they are all *equal* by virtue of the fact that each of them fully epitomises the universal Church. Though remaining self-governing equal entities, the various local churches preserve

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1 Though OCA was granted autocephaly by the Moscow Patriarchate already in 1970, other Orthodox Churches have not yet. Therefore the status of this Church is still ambiguous.

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unity among themselves in liturgical, dogmatic and sacramental matters, and it is by participating in this communion that a church can be recognised as 'Orthodox'. Self-proclaimed independent churches are in a situation of "non-canonicity" (e.g. in Macedonia, Montenegro and Ukraine).

Apart from the historical Orthodox countries, Orthodoxy has spread, mainly through migration during the twentieth century, to other territories, such as Western Europe, North America and Australia. The settlement in new locations has not yet given rise to new local churches, as it could be expected according to Orthodox ecclesiology (see the case of America); instead, the newly created dioceses remain under the jurisdiction of the autocephalous mother-churches back in the migrants' country of origin. The organisation of the so-called 'Orthodox diaspora' and the right of jurisdiction over the ethnic migrant communities is the bone of contention among the Orthodox Churches at the present moment. Each of the national autocephalous churches wishes to exert a right of jurisdiction over their respective ethnic migrations in places like Western Europe, the Americas, etc. which are not their canonical territories.

Before discussing the present situation of Orthodoxy in the world, with its internal pluralism, contradictions, continuities and innovations, one needs to understand the organisation of the Orthodox Church in its historical and ecclesiological dimensions, as well as the way authority is exercised. This is what the next two sections of this chapter will deal with.

"A Global Structure of Local Churches": Unity in Plurality

According to Hann and Goltz (2010: 3), the organisation of Eastern Christianity does not evoke "the globalization of a local church", but looks rather like a "global structure of local churches". This phrase contains three elements that describe more or less appropriately the Orthodox Churches: first, one can argue that 'global' can apply only partly to the geographical span of Orthodoxy, which has remained confined to its historical heartland until recently.[2] Its spread was not due to missionary impetus that changed religious landscapes in history,[3] as in the case of Catholicism and Protestantism, but rather to political and labour migrations during the twentieth century. Further, the term

2 One of the reasons could be the fact that Orthodox countries did not have a colonial past as was the case with Western Catholic and Protestant Churches.

3 There are some exceptions in history: Russian missions brought the Orthodox faith in China, Japan and spread it also to Siberia and Alaska (which later became an American state).

'structure' does not appear appropriate to describe the network of Orthodox Churches, because it implies the existence of an overarching whole with a centre of authority that arbitrates the relations between the various parts of the structure. This contradicts the Orthodox ecclesiological principle of the local church, which presupposes, as briefly stated in the introduction to this chapter, that each local church is on its own, though in communion with all the others, the *whole* Church. Orthodox theologians insist that the fullness of the Church is not obtained by the mathematical addition of the local communities, but it exists equally at the local level and beyond it. John Zizioulas argues that Eastern Christianity does not hold an incompatible relationship between the local church (which has pre-eminence in Protestantism) and the universal church (stressed by the Catholic Church), but rather combines the two categories, which coexist and operate simultaneously: the local church epitomises the universal, and the universal is manifested locally (Zizioulas 1994).

Though the plurality of the local churches is expressed grammatically by the customary plural "Orthodox Churches", according to some theologians (e.g. Bulgakov, 1988) this could convey a misleading description of the organisation of Eastern Christianity, as it might give the wrong impression that there would be different types of Orthodoxy, similar to a denominational model, in which the *Russian* Orthodox Church would differ from the *Greek* Orthodox Church or from the *Romanian* Orthodox Church. Gregorios Papathomas argues that, in order to avoid this ambiguity, one should refer to the Orthodox Church *in Russia*, the Orthodox Church *in Greece*, etc. (Papathomas 2005). The latter designations would be more appropriate, as they would convey two fundamental Orthodox ecclesiological assumptions: first, that it is the territorial principle that is the norm of organisation and not nationality (Ware 1993) and second, that there is unity (the Church is *one*) in plurality (the *One Church* has various geographical manifestations).

Yet, if there is no super-structure to give cohesion to this plurality of local churches, no centralised way to coordinate their activity, where does the criterion of unity emanate from? Orthodox theologians (Ware 1993; Bulgakov 1988) argue that the local Churches are held together by the Orthodox faith, in sacramental unity (the Eucharist and the other sacraments), liturgical unity (they have basically the same liturgical texts and liturgical celebration patterns, but in different languages) and canonical unity (they refer to the first seven Ecumenical Councils and other local councils). Their unity is also expressed in their mutual recognition and respect of territorial jurisdiction.

Despite the principle of equality among the local churches, the idea of precedence and rank of honour is not alien to the Orthodox Church. This is suggested in the *diptychs*, a term that describes the order in which Orthodox

Churches commemorate each other at their patriarchal liturgies, and which reflects their history, the mutual recognition of this history and relations among the local churches. Because this topic was considered too sensitive and with little chances to reach agreement, it was removed from the agenda of the much-expected Pan-Orthodox Council, announced for 2016.

Many local churches became in time *de facto* national Churches, operating within the boundaries of nation-states. Their relations are not always easy and they evolve constantly, following global political frameworks and often reflecting the logic of international law, which guarantees sovereignty to states and their territories as Hovorun describes:

> Understandings of the fellowship of the Orthodox Churches change constantly, and there is no agreement on it. Some Churches consider this fellowship in terms of a utilitarian cooperation of sovereign entities, which safeguard their territorial integrity and punish any intruder, including another local Church. This philosophy reflects the logic of international law and, particularly, the idea of sovereignty of the national states. Other Churches believe the pan-Orthodox fellowship should be regarded as a confederation (or even a federation) of local Churches, with an effective and not just ritual Primus.[4]
>
> HOVORUN 2014

For a practical illustration, let us give the example of the break up of Yugoslavia and the USSR, which gave rise to the emergence of new states claiming sovereignty for their respective Churches (e.g. Abkhazia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine). This further elicited a change in the canonical territory of the mother-churches (Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) and Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)), who described this as a "fragmentation of the Church" and denounced a shift in the definition of the Church from the territorial principle to the principle of nationality.

Authority and Hierarchy in the Orthodox Church

According to Orthodox ecclesiology, since all local churches are equal, their primates are also equal among themselves. Official titles such as *patriarch*,

4 Fr Cyril Hovorun. "The Fragile Promise of the Pan-Orthodox Council." At http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3001/the_fragile_promise_of_the_panorthodox_council.asx. Accessed 04/2014.

metropolitan or *archbishop* are not ranks of a linear hierarchy, but reflect a certain "ranking of honor" (McGuckin 2011), in the sense that a patriarch may have a supervisory role over the synod of all the bishops of his country, or that a metropolitan of a city may have some degree of precedence on the bishops of his province. Yet, theoretically they are all *basically* bishops, and "equal in apostolic status" (McGuckin 2011: 28). There is thus no pontifical authority in the Orthodox Church, which recognises only Jesus Christ as its real head.

A *primacy of honour* is granted to the Ecumenical Patriarch (of Constantinople), on the account of the history of Constantinople as the capital of the ancient Byzantine Empire. Besides, it is a primacy among equals: he is called *primus inter pares*. Within the church polity, decisions are made by way of dialogue and agreement among bishops, who are expected to be in permanent dialogue and synergy with the laity. This system of governance is called *synodality* or *conciliarity*. Moreover, authority is not the prerogative uniquely of bishops, but is much more diffuse and shared by "Christ's inspired people in their various offices and duties (bishops, priests, deacons, ascetics, married couples, prophets, martyrs among them)" (McGuckin 2011: 29). This polycentric pattern of authority is considered both an asset (because it allows for flexibility in Church life management) and a shortcoming (since it makes it difficult to understand who leads concretely the Church and who speaks for it). The media often oversimplify the matter by identifying the Ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople as the homologue of the Pope in the Orthodox Church.

Recently, the Ecumenical Patriarchate published on its website[5] a paper that challenged primacy as a mere honorific designation by redefining the patriarch of Constantinople as *primus sine paribus* (first without equals). This raised more than an eyebrow in the Orthodox Church, especially among Russian theologians, who qualified this position as deviant because it would tend to introduce a centralised pattern of authority, similar to the Roman Catholic model.[6] These theological disagreements hide a tacit competition between the sees of Constantinople and Moscow in gaining recognition as representatives of the Orthodox world: the former on account of its history, the

5 Elpidophoros Lambriniadis, Metropolitan of Bursa. "First Without Eaquals." At http://www.patriarchate.org/documents/first-without-equals-elpidophoros-lambriniadis. Accessed 3/2014.

6 A Presentation by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Deparment of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate Chairman of the Synodal Biblical-Theological Commission Rector of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Postgraduate Institute. At https://mospat.ru/en/2014/03/25/news100001/. Accessed 03/2014.

latter by virtue of its size and contribution to the Orthodox theological heritage.[7] This long-established rivalry dates back to the fifteenth century, when Russia aspired to becoming the 'Third Rome' and a defender of Christendom, in a time when Constantinople (the 'Second Rome') was under siege and ended up under a four-century long Ottoman domination.

The Ancient Patriarchates

The jurisdictional organisation of the Orthodox Church, as we know it today, is the result of the principle of the local churches gathered around their bishops on a specific territory. In early Christianity local churches established in five of the most important cities of the time became important ecclesiastical centres and models of emulation for Christian communities in antiquity and thereby received the title of patriarchates: Rome,[8] Constantinople (nowadays Istanbul), Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch and Jerusalem. This fellowship known as "the pentarchy" was supposed to express an "international sense of different Christian cultures in harmony with the whole" (McGuckin 2011: 30).

In antiquity these cities were the glory of Christianity because of their vibrant theological activity, which counts the works of St Athanasius and St Cyril of Alexandria, or of the so-called *Cappadocian Fathers* (Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great and John Chrysostom). But their prestige and influence diminished slowly because of several historical circumstances: first, theological disagreements in the fifth century about Christ's dual nature (both divine and human) led to the division of Christendom, with Alexandria and part of Antioch stepping aside from the 'mainstream' Christianity and forming what today is known as the 'Non-Chalcedonian' or 'Oriental Orthodox Churches', made up of the Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Ethiopian and Indian Malabar Churches. What is known today as the Eastern (Byzantine) Orthodox Church survived in these regions, though their population was severely diminished starting with the seventh century Arab conquest and the advent of Islam.

7 The ROC is the single largest Orthodox Church in the world, with an estimate of 101,450,000 members. The most important Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century are Russian émigrés in France and the USA (A. Schmemann, J. Meyendorff, G. Florovsky, V. Lossky, N. Afanasiev, S. Bulgakov, and so on).

8 Misunderstandings between the see of Rome and the rest of the patriarchates led to the 1054 'Great schism', separating Western Christianity from its Eastern counterpart. From that moment on, the history of the Orthodox Church takes record only of the four remaining patriarchates.

In the course of the twentieth century the *Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa*, with the help of the Churches in Greece and Cyprus, developed a significant missionary activity on the African continent, reaching out to the local people in Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, etc. The patriarchate has extended its jurisdiction from 'all Egypt' to 'all Africa', a designation which reflects the fact that it serves not just the Greek minority in Egypt, but an ethnically diverse continent.

The *Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East* operates among less than half a million Syriac and Arabic speaking Christians, situated largely in Syria, the Lebanon and Iraq. It also counts a considerable diaspora in America, where it is prominent in evangelizing and mission. Apart from supporting the Church in the homeland, the American archdiocese encourages enculturation of Orthodoxy through translations of liturgical texts and prayer books and is very active in recruiting local converts and even whole parishes of formerly evangelical Christians.

Recently, the American-led intervention in Iraq against Sadam Hussein, the Arab spring in Egypt and North Africa, and the civil war in Syria were turning points for Christians (and therefore for Orthodox) in their historical places. While under former political regimes they enjoyed state recognition and some stability as a religious minority, the recent spread of jihadist and salafist ideology in these countries unleashed religious intolerance against minorities, expressed in destruction and desecration of worship places, kidnappings, forced conversions or mass killings. This gave rise to major displacement of Christians, whose numbers dropped dramatically over the last century: from 6 percent of the population in Iraq, to less than 3 percent, from 50 percent in Lebanon to 30 percent, from 50 percent in Jerusalem, to less than 10 percent (Bailey and Bailey 2003). They are the target of double suspicion: on the one hand they are being accused of backing totalitarian regimes in exchange for civil protection, but on the other hand the former totalitarian regimes suspected them of supporting Western interference in the conflicts by way of their relations with the Western-centred Christian world.

The historical Orthodox Church of Jerusalem (now known as the *Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*) became a patriarchate in the fifth century (by a provision of the council of Chalcedon in 451) in order to acknowledge the importance of this city as the birthplace of Christianity, associated with the life of Jesus and the first community of disciples. The prosperity of the place and its aura of the 'Mother-church' were also brought to an end after the Arab conquest of the region in the seventh century, when many churches and monasteries were destroyed and much of the population gradually converted to Islam. Though remaining very weak, the Christian denominational presence in

the 'holy land' started diversifying with the Crusades, which brought about the establishment of a Latin Patriarchate (under the jurisdiction of Rome, with which the Orthodox Church was no more in communion) and later other Christian groups, which wished to mark their presence in the 'holy land'.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem enjoys economic and political strength thanks to its heritage of large ownership of real estate, which makes it the second biggest landowner in the state of Israel (Katz and Kark 2007). The latter often needs to negotiate with the Patriarchate in order to obtain arrangements over property use. A crisis arose in 2003 between the Patriarchate and the state, which culminated with the demission of the patriarch Irenaios by the Holy Synod and the contested enthronement of the new one, Theophilos. Yet the economic prosperity of the Patriarchate does not reflect a vibrant Christian life in the country. On the contrary, the overall Christian population in Israel follows the general shrinking pattern as in the whole Middle East, being subject to social exclusion and discrimination (e.g. Muslims regularly boycott Christian businesses).

The most important historical Orthodox patriarchate is that of Constantinople, officially entitled *Ecumenical Patriarchate*.[9] In its heyday (tenth century), it had supervisory position over 624 dioceses and its canonical territory covered all the Balkans, all Thrace, all of Russia and Asia Minor (McGuckin 2011: 35). Its fate changed, like in the case of the other three old patriarchates, with the Ottoman conquest, which occurred much later than in Alexandria, Antioch or Jerusalem, in 1453. Despite many restrictions placed on Christians (who had the status of *dhimmis*, i.e. a minority that gets a certain degree of protection in exchange of a tax), the Ottoman rule enhanced the role and authority of the patriarch, by appointing him also civil leader of the multi-ethnic Orthodox community in the Empire. He thus became the *ethnarch* (religious and political leader) of the *Rum Millet*, i.e. the Roman nation made up of Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs, and so on. This four-century overlapping of political and religious roles, in continuation of the Byzantine system of *symphonia*, i.e. tight interdependence between Church and state, bears consequences to the present day on the way religion and politics relate to each other in modern Orthodox countries. First, it permitted the church to survive as an institution and even increased its prestige because it was an important source of education (and sometimes the only one accessible to Christians) and offered possibilities of

9 The syntagm 'ecumenical' does not refer to interfaith or inter-confessional dialogue aiming at religious unity (among Christians, for instance). It means "universal" and it refers to the multi-ethnic Byzantine Christian Empire.

social promotion. Second, the legal restrictions placed on mission gradually led to the identification of church membership with ethnic origin.

The canonical territory of the Ecumenical Patriarchate has shrunk dramatically because of successive waves of local national churches asking for independence and autocephaly: first the Russian Orthodox Church, in 1459, then in the nineteenth century, with the enthusiastic nation building in the Balkans, followed the Orthodox Church in Greece (1850), Bulgaria (1870), Serbia (1879), Romania (1885), and Albania (1937). Today, the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is reduced to an insignificant minority in Turkey and to some territories in Greece (Crete, some Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, the monastic republic on Mount Athos). Besides, the Ecumenical patriarch exercises right of jurisdiction over all the Greek diaspora (in North America, Western Europe and Australia) and some parts of former Russian diaspora (*Patriarchal Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe*). During Communism in Eastern Europe, some Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish and Albanian parishes asked the Ecumenical see for its canonical protection, in order to avoid contact with the hostile political regime in their countries.

As all the other ancient patriarchates having their headquarters in a non-Orthodox country, the Ecumenical one, based in an Istanbul neighbourhood called Phanar, lives in a very fragile balance with the local authorities. The Turkish government does not recognise the qualifier 'ecumenical' in its title, but only its role of religious authority for the Greek minority in Turkey. It also denies the Patriarchate the status of legal personality and imposes heavy restrictions on property rights. Another unresolved issue remains the prohibition to educate and train new clergy, which resulted in 1971 into the closing down of the only theological school, situated on the island of Halki. Moreover, the Turkish government requires that the patriarch be a Turkish citizen, thus reducing considerably the pool of eligible bishops.

Patriarch Bartholomew enjoys international media coverage, as an advocate of environmental issues (he was designated the 'Green Patriarch'), minority rights and Turkish European integration. He also participates in maintaining an Orthodox presence and lobby at the European institutions (e.g. the CROCEU—Committee of Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the European Union, which includes representatives from the Orthodox Church of Russia, Romania, Greece, Cyprus and the Ecumenical Patriarchate).

I conclude this section on the ancient Orthodox Patriarchates with the observation that they all lost their early glory, and are now representing a religious minority in countries where Christianity ceased to be a social and a political force. As such, they are often subject to discrimination and to state hostility or at best indifference. Though the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the

Patriarchate of Antioch are numerically more significant and more active, their voice and vigour comes from outside their traditional territories, from expatriates and converts. The historical patriarchates owe much to their Byzantine legacy, with a clear Greek domination in official designations (e.g. Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch or Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and All Africa), but also in the person of patriarchs and the liturgical language and style (in Alexandria, Jerusalem and Constantinople).

The New Patriarchates

The more 'modern' autocephalous Churches which form today the Orthodox *Commonwealth* are those who were part of, or historically connected to the Byzantine Empire and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but emerged into separate local and national churches as the Empire began to disintegrate under Ottoman rule (the Orthodox Church in Russia, recognised as autocephalous in 1589) or after the collapse of the Ottoman empire itself and the formation of new nations in the Balkans.

In the following Section I will discuss recent developments in the four largest autocephalous Orthodox Churches, namely those in Romania, Russia, Serbia and Greece. The first three share a recent history marked by several decades of Communist hostility to religion. Unlike the Orthodox Churches (and Christianity in general) in the Middle East, who enjoyed a relatively calm period as a religious group under authoritarian regimes, the religious persecution in Eastern Europe under Communism was "the greatest in extent, savagery, and duration of the whole history of the Church" (MacGuckin 2011: 53). But while the overthrow of dictatorships in the Middle East brought about persecution of Christians, post-Communist developments occasioned the 'return' of Orthodoxy at all levels of the public sphere and the rehabilitation of the Orthodox Church as an important social actor in those countries. Moreover, Romania and Greece being members of the European Union, their respective Churches are directly connected to European realities and are influenced by them.

Orthodox Churches during Communism

The advent of Communism in Russia with the October Revolution in 1917 coincided with the organisation of a crucial event for the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC): two hundred years after Tsar Peter the Great, in his reformist impetus to modernise and secularise Russia, had subordinated the Church to the monarchy by abolishing the institution of the Patriarchate and entrusting its leadership

to the 'lay procurator', the Church took advantage of the political turmoil in the country and the weakness of the Tsar in order to re-affirm its independence from the state. The All-Russian Council was convened in order to re-establish the Patriarchate and introduce a series of reforms aiming at reinvigorating parish life and restore the relationship between clergy and laity. Yet these provisions were never applied in Russia itself, because in the aftermath of the Council the new political regime targeted the Church and religion as a source of alienation which impeded the full realisation of the Revolution. While Lenin kept the anti-religious politics subordinated to other state objectives (Beeson 1974), Stalin passed the 1929 law on religious associations which allowed him to resort to most unscrupulous means to isolate and subdue the ROC, from abusively defrocking clergy, imprisoning and killing religious leaders and intelligentsia to demolishing worship places, depriving the Church of its right to religious education and clergy training, closing down monasteries and eradicating religious symbols from the public space. Any direct resistance of Church members was drastically repressed, so that in less than three decades the ROC was in a state of decay, both moral (its hierarchy and institutional bodies ended up becoming compliant to the regime) and material (in 1939 there were only 4,225 churches left in the whole of Russia compared to 80,792 in 1913 (see Lupinin, 2010)).[10] For a well field-documented and thorough description of how Soviet laws were carried in practice and the abuses perpetrated on the ROC, the reader should turn to Michael Bourdeaux's book *Patriarch and Prophets* (1969).

This repressive stage was replicated in other Orthodox countries (Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania) where Communist parties came on power after WWII. Lacking energy, proper leadership (the regime generally made sure to promote submissive bishops) and international support (Orthodox ecclesiology does not allow for interference of a Church on the canonical territory of another local church), Orthodox Churches stopped confronting the regime directly and openly. The Church as an institution reached a phase of close state control of its hierarchy and administrative bodies. Bishops understood the necessity to come to a compromise with the state in order to preserve the Church. They took refuge into a double discourse strategy: on the one hand, in formal interactions with the party they would show docility, but on the other hand they strove to keep the Church alive. For example, during their long years in office, patriarchs German of Serbia (1958–1990) and Justinian of Romania (1948–1977) adopted a pragmatic stance in relation to the political regime, which reduced tensions and allowed them to re-established church press, undertake publication

10 Different sources provide different figures: for instance, in Beeson (1974), one can find that in 1914 there were 54,174 church buildings, compared to only a few hundreds in 1939.

activity, repair and build hundreds of churches, maintain a few theological seminaries, and even receive support from state budget. This has attracted them the label of 'red patriarchs'.

The stabilisation of Church-state relations under Communism can be described as a 'marriage of convenience', in which both sides continued to pursue their goals, while pretending to cohabit. While the state went on controlling the Church, the latter tried to domesticate socialist ideology: the Romanian Orthodox Church (hereafter BOR[11]) tried to reconcile Marxist ideology with Orthodox theology, drawing a parallel between the Communist social policy and *diakonia*, the service of the Church in the world. This resulted into the concept of '*apostolatul social*' (social apostolate), which recent scholars describe as an attempt to please the regime and subordinate theology to political ideology. It was also associated with 'Sergianism'[12] in the ROC, from which I argue that it differs profoundly, in that the former looked more like an identification of the Church with the Soviet state, while the social apostolate was "a Romanian version of *symphonia*" (Stan and Turcescu 2000: 1470) and, I would argue, an attempt of producing, in the given hostile political circumstances, a Romanian version of Orthodox social doctrine. Though patriarch Justinian's concept of 'social apostolate' is often quoted as an act of distorting Orthodoxy in order to make it compliant to Marxism-Leninism, it needs to be stressed that most of the papers in 'The Social Apostolate' are generally speaking consistent with Orthodox theology. They emphasise the need for the Church to parallel its contemplative practice with social action, engaging Orthodoxy in a fruitful dialogue with science and technological achievements. Relevant analogies between some of the Communist social doctrine and the Christian doctrine are possible, as testifies the existence of Christian left-oriented parties in the West, which enjoy some popular support in their democracies.

Another example of ideological rapprochement between the Orthodox Church and Communism occurred on the field of nationalism, which became one of the sociopolitical pillars of the Communist party in Ceausescu's Romania, but which was also present in the ROC and the SOC, though with different tones. While the synthesis of nation, ethnicity and religion had been

11 BOR stands for Biserica ortodoxă română. I opted for the acronym based on the Romanian designation in order to avoid using the English corresponding acronym, ROC, which also stands for the Russian Orthodox Church.

12 Metropolitan Sergius, while locum tenens for the patriarchal throne in Russia in 1927, issued an encyclical in which he announced that "Henceforward, the joys of the Communist Soviet homeland would be the joys of the church and the sorrows of the Communist Soviet homeland would be the sorrows of the church" (in Romocea 2011). This was interpreted as an act of submission of the Church into the hands of the Soviet regime and met with harsh criticism in the Church and among the Russian diaspora.

familiar to the Orthodox Churches since the nineteenth century, nationalism became a recurrent theme in the BOR and the SOC: while the former resorted to it in order to resonate with the dictator's nationalist socialism, the latter took refuge in nationalism as a form of resistance to the artificial construction of a Yugoslav identity that was dismissive of ethnicity (but also of religion). While the Church as an institution appeared cooperative in official interactions with the state and the party, resistance to Communist ideology continued either in a more private way (*samizdat* literature, interiorised religiosity) or underground, in monasteries and through charismatic religious intellectuals (the Bogomoljci movement[13] in Serbia, Fr Nikolaj Velimirović [now a saint of the SOC], the Burning Bush movement[14] in Romania, Fr Calciu-Dumitreasa in Romania, Fr Alexander Men in Russia, etc.).

Cooperation with the regime proved effective on the one side, because it spared the Orthodox Churches of further bloodshed, yet it had a limited impact on its domestic affairs: despite a few advantages, the Orthodox Churches continued to be deprived of a public and social role, being denied access to religious care in hospitals, prisons, the military and schools and thereby reduced to their liturgical function. The strict ideological scrutiny of the state on theological schools prevented them from developing theologically and academically, with some happy exceptions in Romania (Dumitru Staniloae) and Serbia (Nikolaj Velimirović and Justin Popović). Children's and adults' catechism was equally prohibited, thus religious education and transmission of the faith lost accuracy and left the door open to superstition, popular belief and practice. Both *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy* were prejudiced.

The Churches' tacit or open obedience to the Communist states in Eastern Europe stirred strong reactions among the expatriate population: an important faction of the Russian émigrés in the West decided to separate from the hierarchy in Moscow, giving rise to two new jurisdictions: the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and another smaller group which sought canonical shelter under the Ecumenical Patriarchate (the Exarchate, see

13 Though it started as a peasant lay movement critical of the West, urban lifestyle, intelligentsia and secularization, the Bogomoljci became the backbone of the Church, providing it many seminarians and monastics with a clearly dissident force. It spread also with the mediation of the charismatic theologian monk and bishop NikolajVelimirović, whose work was continued by his disciple Archimandrite Justin Popović, around whom was raised a new generation of Orthodox intellectuals in the 1980s, ranging from students, rock-musicians, lawyers, writers, medical doctors or chemists and also a new generation of intellectual monks and bishops: Atanasije, Amfilohije, Artemije and Irinej were some of the new spiritual elite unspoiled by compromise with the regime (Aleksov 2008).

14 A spiritual and intellectual movement formed in 1945 around the Antim monastery in Bucharest.

above). The same suspicion that the state might use the Church to control the national diaspora arose among the Serbian Orthodox, who instituted the Free Church, and the Romanian Orthodox, who conceded the right of jurisdiction either to the OCA (Orthodox Church in America) or to the Ecumenical Patriarchate (in parishes in Western Europe).

The relations the Orthodox Churches developed with the Communist regimes remains until today a sensitive topic: the Churches disappointed those people expecting absolute heroism and martyrdom from the clergy. I would quote here Trevor Beeson, who wrote about this in a 1974 book, *Discretion and Valour*, after a close inspection of religious persecutions in Eastern Europe:

> … pious ideas about martyrdom should not be allowed to conceal the disastrous element in the destruction of Christian institutions and individuals. From the personal point of view some at least of the Russian church leaders might well have found martyrdom the more desirable course in the 1920s—and since. Their decisions to bend to secular authority were certainly not easy ones, for they were likely to be faced not only with the continuing assaults of the State from without, but also with the accusations and scorn of those within the Church, who believed them to have betrayed the Gospel. Yet the result of their anguish is to be seen in the existence in the Soviet Union of a Church which, though shackled and handicapped in many ways, is still alive and retains the basic character of Russian Christianity.
>
> BEESON 1974: 58–59

Located outside the Iron Curtain, the Orthodox Church of Greece (hereafter OCG) did not suffer directly from Communism, yet was haunted by its specter for many years. Being aware of the religious persecutions in the Soviet Union, immediately after WWII the OCG allied with anti-Communist forces in the country. In the political sphere, the combat against left-wing political forces led to the initiation of a military regime (the colonels' Junta) in 1967, who promoted a "Greece for Christian Greeks". This slogan points to the fusion between anti-Communist ideology, nationalism and Orthodoxy. The Junta privileged the Church because it could draw on the ideals of Orthodoxy for the "moral regeneration of the Greek nation" (Molokotos-Liederman 2003). This association of Church to the military Junta had a heavy cost for the Church, which lost the confidence of the Greek population after 1974, when democracy was restored. An even harder blow for the Church was the coming to power of a socialist government (PASOK) in 1981, who boldly aimed at the constitutional separation of Church and state and the expropriation of the Church property. Though this process was not fully carried out because of social discontent with

such radical measures, the socialist government was successful in changing the Civil Code regarding family law: civil marriage and divorce were introduced as an alternative to religious marriage and the naming of a new-born became possible without providing evidence for baptism or religious affiliation (Hirschon 2008).

Makrides (2010: 259) argues that one of the most important issues that affected the OCG during the Cold War period was "its relation to some independent semi-monastic organizations of clerics and lay people, known as the 'brotherhoods of theologians'". Some of these were critical of the Church's uncreative style of pastoring and managed to influence church affairs (e.g. taking measures to improve clergy education). This opposition brought about some "significant developments in the structure of the official church, but also in religious life and spirituality" (Makrides 2010: 261), through the revival of monasticism (especially in the Athonite community).

The OCG kept its relations to the Orthodox Churches on the other side of the Iron Curtain, though not always without frictions: these were not necessarily caused by political issues, but rather by the "historical cleavage between the Greek and the Slavic-controlled Orthodox Churches" (Makrides 2010: 262). Significant contacts were maintained in the field of theological education: Orthodox clerics or lay people from the Eastern block were able to study theology in Greece, to the extent they were granted a passport and permission from the political authorities. Many Serb clerics took advantage of the more 'liberal' form of Communism in ex-Yugoslavia and made their graduate studies in Athens and Thessalonika, some of whom later became bishops.

Post-communist Developments

Very quickly after the fall of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe, Orthodox Churches came back to the public sphere in an unexpected vigorous way, with priests and bishops blessing the beginning of political and cultural events and taking part into debates concerning economic and political decisions. Polls indicate high rates of religious identification with Orthodoxy (85.9 percent in Romania;[15] 90 percent in Greece; 53.1 percent in Russia[16]) and

15 Ministry of Administration and Interior. 2012. Tab. 8: Populatia Stabila Dupa Principalele Religii la Recensamantul Din Anul 2011—Rezultate Preliminare. At http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TS8.pdf. Accessed 06/2014.

16 Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2013. *2013 Britannica Book of the Year*. In the case of Russia, variations can be very strong, according to other sources that suggest as much as 75 percent: Eurel. 2010. Religious Affiliation in 2010. At http://www.eurel.info/spip.php?rubrique495. Accessed 06/2014.

relatively high rates of regular religious practice (43 percent of Greeks and 42 percent of Romanians attend religious services at least once a month[17]).

All these developments came as a great surprise for religious studies and political science scholars, who were busy predicting the disappearance of religion through increasing secularisation of the world, as a 'natural' consequence of modernity. Experts tried to provide several explanations to the 'religious revival' in Eastern Europe after decades of forced (and at times radical) secularisation. It was suggested, among others, that, Orthodoxy became the replacing ideology once atheism and Communism were no more in office, especially in Russia. This theory is highly problematic because it presupposes that 1) atheism was a widely embraced doctrine during Communism, and 2). Orthodoxy was dead by 1989 and resurrected in 1990.

Recent research findings point to the fact that widespread atheism in Soviet Russia was a myth, built on what Kuran calls "preference falsification", i.e. "the act of misrepresenting one's genuine wants under perceived social pressures." (Kuran 1995: 3). Though atheism benefited from all conditions to replace Orthodoxy, in that it had the monopoly on the ideological market and all the necessary financial and material means to reach out to all social classes, it failed to provide a binding spiritual alternative (Froese 2004). Despite bringing a strong blow to Orthodoxy and weakening it severely, it failed to replace it. Orthodoxy survived because it was deeply embedded in Russian culture and also as an underground identity. Since overt expression of one's religious beliefs was highly risky and pernicious at the time, believers relegated their religious identity to the most private part of their lives. Freedom of religion after 1989 simply allowed Orthodoxy to go public again, risk free. Those who identified themselves as Orthodox, even though not even baptised and thus not official members of the Church, came out as believers and triggered unprecedented emulation. To most observers this appeared as 'religious revival', while more precisely it was the end of 'preference falsification'.

Western scholars were also puzzled at the high rates of trust Orthodox Churches enjoyed in their post-Communist societies, despite the compromising stories circulating in the media and cautiously acknowledged cowardice on the side of Church officials regarding their attitude to Communist authorities. This success has been commented upon as the result of the Church's cunning use of its well-organised institutional bodies and its populist response to the collective need of post-Communist identity reconstruction. While this may

17 Loek Halman, *The European Values Study: a third Wave*. Tilburg: EVS WORC, Tilburg University, 2001. For data on Romania see: http://www.eurel.info/spip.php?rubrique472&lang=fr.

not be completely incorrect, there is definitely more to it than just manipulation: first, one needs to know that, unlike Roman Catholicism (especially in its pre-Vatican II version), Orthodox theology and Orthodox culture does not equate the Church with its hierarchy. Any defection of the bishops or clergy remains their personal failure and sin, and does not extend to the Church as the Body of Christ. A Romanian popular proverb illustrates this very wittily: "do what the priest says, not what the priest does". In other words, one needs to distinguish between the teachings of the Church and the ones who teach them, who remain contingent inconsistent human beings, subject to failure. The Church survived (1) as an institution, through the conceding collaboration of its hierarchs, and (2) as a source of spiritual inspiration, through the resistance of those who chose self-sacrifice. Collective consciousness associated rather the second category of Church people to something representative of the Orthodox Church and its capacity to provide assistance, inspiration and moral model.

Furthermore, it would be far-fetched to reduce the life of the Orthodox Churches during Communism to their hierarchs' collaboration with the regime or to assume that party propaganda was a major concern for the Orthodox Churches. The praises of the social realisations of the Communist leaders were often hypocritical façade statements, which not only the Church had to comply with, but all institutions in the country. In Romania, writers and scientists had to include a section of acknowledgements to the Communist party in their publications or at least hint to the great achievements of Communism in their field of expertise. Such statements or mandatory reports on the institutions' activity to the party representative in charge of the respective field of work are to be interpreted in the political context in which they were produced, and less as deliberate acts grounded on the genuine convictions of the doers. It was rather an empty routine ritual, whose significance the masses knew but very well, they themselves having 'collaborated' in a similar way by lifting banners in the air praising the "most beloved son of the nation" (Ceausescu) and clapping their hands at party leaders' speeches on stadiums. With this picture in mind, post-Communist relativisation of Orthodox Churches' collaboration and the trust they received from the population appears less perplexing.

Some of the first actions the BOR, the SOC and the ROC undertook once religious freedom was re-established constitutionally in the 1990s were in regard to the introduction of religious education in public schools, opening chaplaincy services in hospitals, prisons and military barracks and the return of ecclesiastical property confiscated during Communism. Despite an overstated responsiveness of states to the Orthodox Churches' demands, analysts show that it was not without some persistence that the Churches achieved

(sometimes only partly) their goals. Though religious education was introduced without much opposition in all three ex-Communist Orthodox countries, because it was considered a necessary measure for moral recovery of the society after years of destructive atheism (Turcescu and Stan 2005; Aleksov 2004), restitution of Church property was a less welcome request in Serbia, where it started only in 2006 (Aleksov 2008) and in Russia where it is still under negotiation (Papkova 2011; Richters 2012).

One important common feature of the post-Communist BOR, ROC and SOC is their rehabilitation in the public space through church construction boom. An average of 110 churches are being errected in Romania annually (Andreescu 2007) and somewhere between 100–110 churches are to be built in Northern Moscow in the next years.[18] In Serbia, a small town like Novi Sad, with only 260,000 people, 30 new churches have been built since 1990 (Aleksov 2008). This euphoric church-building has met with some criticism in domestic and international media, which mainly commented on the financing sources, including state budget and rich businessmen of doubtful morality (involved in financial scandals, war crimes or KGB). Unlike neo-protestant denominations who open missions in Eastern Europe and who hold a pragmatic approach to building worship places (which are generally plain and small size), preferring to invest money in mission and social activity, Orthodox Churches prefer rich adornment. Their approach to the church architecture and decoration is more complex, as it has to be a reflection of the kingdom of God on earth (which explains the presence of gold and rich frescoes).

By far the most contested building projects have been the three major cathedrals in the capital cities of Belgrade (St Sava Church, finalised in 2004), Bucharest (the Cathedral of the Salvation of the Nation, under construction) and Moscow (Christ the Saviour, completed in 2000). Opponents to these gigantic worship places invoked the financial effort they involved in a period of economic hardships, the lack of practical necessity (given the already high number of existing churches) and, at a more symbolic level, the statement of power the Orthodox Churches make by marking the public space. The Churches' response reads on a different discursive register: representatives of the three Churches describe their building project in terms of gift: the cathedrals honour the memory of national heroes and martyrs, whose self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation and freedom was a gift to the present generations; the cathedrals are also a precious legacy to the future generations, whom the Church takes care of by ensuring the transmission of national and sacred memory embodied architecturally.

18 At http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/71362.htm. Accessed 06/2014.

In the same vein of constructing a sacred memory of their nation, the BOR, the SOC and the ROC have undertaken the canonisation of 'new martyrs', i.e. different clergy and lay intellectuals who kept witnessing their Christian values and beliefs with the prize of being sent to prisons, gulags or labour camps (Nikolaj Velimirovic and Justin Popovic in Serbia, two thousand 'New martyrs and confessors' in Russia, 'the saints of the prisons'—a developing project of recognition in Romania).

Parallel to reinforcing the traditional bond between religion and nation, the Orthodox Churches modernise and diversify their means of channeling their Christian message: they have created their own radio and TV stations, newspapers, periodicals and journals, travel agencies organising pilgrimages to religious sites both domestic and in the Orthodox heartland (Mainly Greece, Mount Athos, Ukraine, Russia and Israel), news agencies and official websites. They seek Internet publicity (the website of the Moscow Patriarchate is available in six languages) and try to overcome the stereotypical image of a monastic-contemplative Church by showing they are involved with topics or current concern for all social categories. Their offer addresses lay people as well as clergy and monastics, children, women, youth and elderly.

Though much has been written about the Church as an appendix to the state and the Church craving to cultivate good relations with the state, recent observers describe this as a myth and notice that the Orthodox Churches have their own agenda, which they pursue independently of the state (Richters 2012; Agadjanian 2014). Moreover, this autonomy and the diversification of religious offer turns the Churches also into economic actors, which makes them very modern: besides their liturgical activities, they developed products and services that gravitate around religious practice: priestly vestments, icons, books, prayer ropes, candles, health and life insurance, travel and accommodation, health care (hospitals and clinics), care for the elderly, Orthodox schools and kindergartens, etc. One could also mention the Orthodox publishing business: in Russian and Romania the number of large and small Orthodox publishing companies try to attract customers by publishing numerous translations on Orthodox topics (Naletova 2009). In Russia, the phenomenon of Orthodox fairs creates a market for goods produced in monasteries and parish workshops. These fairs are organised in large cities all around Russia at the time of Orthodox holidays (Naletova 2006, 2009). In Bulgaria and Romania, monasteries involve also in the business of tourism, turning into popular recreational centres.

Besides, there are indications that Churches adopt a religious brand behaviour: significant numbers of conversions to neo-Protestant denominations who lead intense (and often aggressive) evangelising missions made the BOR

and the ROC aware of the importance of catechism as a means to instil theological knowledge that would make culturally Orthodox people more 'immune' to 'foreign' religious teachings. The necessity of providing theological education in a more organised and rational way and the setting up of structures and qualified personnel for that goal is also due to the renewed vision of the recently enthroned primates the in Eastern Europe: Daniel of Romania (2008), Cyril of Moscow (2009), Irenej of Serbia (2010) and Hieronymus in Greece (2008).

With the exception of Greece, where the Church could lead its *diakonia* mission freely all through the twentieth century, the other three Orthodox Churches under discussion here have initiated charity and philanthropic work, filling up an important *niche* of social assistance, which their economically weak states struggling with corruption and transition were unable to provide. The SOC has its humanitarian agency *Čovekoljublje* (Aleksov, 2010), the BOR has the *Filantropia* charity and social assistance organisation with many other smaller satellite bodies, etc. All Churches opened pastoral therapy centres, drug rehabilitation centres, shelters for the poor, for women in hardships, prolife centres, soup kitchens, etc. The economic crisis that struck Greece in 2009 revealed the importance and extent of the Church's humanitarian work: 250,000 meals were prepared and distributed daily, both to Greek citizens and immigrants (Makris and Bekridakis 2013).

Another recent achievement in the post-1990 Orthodox world is the synthesis of an Orthodox social doctrine by the Moscow Patriarchate (ROC). Published in 2000, *The Bases of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church* provides an Orthodox view on contemporary world, covering a range of various topics, from state, law and secularisation, to bioethics, ecology and sexuality. Deconstructing the stereotype of a world-rejecting Church, this document can be seen as an Orthodox response to modernity, which provides Orthodox theological principles[19] to balance dualism opposing divinity and humanity, collective and individual, state and Church, territoriality (locality) and universality (Hoppe-Kondrikova et al. 2013). The Social Concept produced mixed feelings in the Orthodox world: on the one hand some theologians manifested enthusiasm to the idea of having a somewhat systematised Orthodox reflection on modernity and today's social and political issues; on

19 The four principles are: *symphonia*—an ideal constellation of Church and state, *pometnost*—he balance between universality and locality, *sobornost*—anideal community in which the individual and the collective harmoniously interact without subordinating or supplanting one another, and *bogochelovechestvo* (gr. *theosis*) states the divine-human nature and mission of the Church.

the other hand, voices raised against the risk of *Westernization* of Orthodox thought and philosophy.

Though Orthodox Churches are flexible and adapt on a certain number of issues, in the field of public and private morality they remain on the conservative side: in all four countries, public interventions by clergy led to the cancellation or to public protests against concerts, performances, movies or exhibits considered blasphemous. The gay pride marches in Belgrade often are disturbed by parallel marches of protest and in Moscow such manifestations are forbidden in the public space. In Romania, the BOR led campaigns against the legal depenalisation of homosexuality (in 2001), against abortion and the organisation of gay prides. BOR and SOC also took resolute opposition to technological inventions that encroach on privacy, such as chipped IDs and passports.

Yet, the Churches' own internal divisions prevent them from gathering the force and numbers to dominate political and cultural life: lines of separation can be noticed in all Orthodox Churches in terms of nationalist vs. ecumenical factions, ascetical-contemplative vs. progressive-activist orientations, and a zealot-style movement, which raises its voice against the official Church in Greece, Serbia and incipiently in Romania.

Greece and Romania are full members of the European Union and Serbia is negotiating its accession. These political decisions had also an unprecedented impact on the national churches of these countries. At the beginning of European integration discussions the Orthodox Churches were rather sceptical and critical of such a political step, which they described as a threat to national and religious identity because of the European secularising values and legislation. Though literature tends to describe Orthodox Churches as obstacles to the Europeanisation process, not mentioning the influence the latter exerts on them would mean turning a blind eye to their recent efforts to keep up with political developments. When the majority of the population and the state expressed definite will to adhere to the European Union, the Churches reshaped their discourse (mainly only in official declarations by Church representatives), asserting the European identity of their nations, underlying continuities and similarities with the West. They no longer defined the Orthodox identity in tension with the European identity, but rather presented themselves as defenders of a place for Greeks and Romanians *as Orthodox*, not *against* the EU, but *within* it (Karageorgiou, 2005). The Churches adapted their own structures and organisation to this new reality and opened diplomatic offices in Brussels (CROCEU—Committee of Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the EU) with the aim to develop further relations with the European institutions. Besides developing diplomatic relations, CROCEU's stated mission is to

testify of the Christian and more specifically Orthodox position on a number of social and moral issues to which European institutions seek solutions.

The last point I would like to discuss about the post-Communist Orthodox Churches touches on the implications for their canonical territories of the disintegration of two federations, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, followed by the creation of independent national states. Political independence was paralleled by claims of ecclesiastical independence from the SOC and the ROC, and the creation of new national churches, as a means of asserting and consolidating the newly created national identity. Montenegro and Macedonia have been pushing for the recognition of their self-proclaimed Churches by the SOC, creating a schism with the mother church. In the same way, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in early 1990s brought about the formation of independent national states in the Baltic region (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), in the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and in the West (Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus), all counting various proportions of Orthodox population on their territory. The ROC insisted that the Church remain in unity despite geopolitical disintegration.[20]

Let me discuss very briefly the case of Ukraine, which is of utmost importance for the ROC, with Kiev being described as the matrix of Russian Orthodoxy and of Russian identity in general. Based on these historical considerations, the Moscow Patriarchate considers itself entitled to ecclesiastical continuity in the country. Yet after the independence of Ukraine in 1991, two factions seceded from the ROC, giving rise to the Kievan Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, two unrecognised local churches aspiring to federate the Orthodox in the country. The former puts forward its patriarchal dignity, rooted in the history of Christianity in the area; the latter places more emphasis on the idea of sovereignty, based on the identification of ethnicity/nationality with religion. The three churches have been caught in a *status quo* very difficult to solve, which might be challenged in the future, due to recent political confrontations in Ukraine, which saw increasing separatist movements in the East during the first half of 2014. These are expected to add tension in the relations among the ROC and the self-proclaimed independent churches.

The ROC repeatedly insisted that the political conflict should not be shifted to the religious level. To this effect, it initiated a dialogue with the Kievan Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, projected to provide solutions for Orthodox unity in the country. Yet the two sides hold different views on unity: while the Ukrainian churches see it as the result of their secession from Moscow

20 The ROC did not have jurisdiction on the Armenian or Georgian Churches, nor in Azerbaijian, but it had parishes with Russian ethnics.

and from the ROC, the ROC envisages unity in the breast of the mother church. Unlike the Kievan Patriarchate, which was present on the Maidan, conducting prayers and supporting pro-European protesters at the beginning of 2014, the ROC kept a low profile, refusing to take any position during the conflict and avoiding involvement with political overtones. It contented itself to issuing generic pleas for peace and reiterating the spiritual bond and the brotherhood between the Ukrainian and Russian nations. At the present moment (beginning of 2015), tensions between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church—Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), and the Ukrainian local movement for autocephaly have increased. The local project and aspiration to independence from Moscow are also politically fuelled and encouraged on the Ukrainian side. The UOC-MP reports that its church buildings are forcefully transferred to the 'schismatics' and that their priests receive death threats and are persecuted. On the other hand, the media describe the UOC-MP as a prolongation of the hand of the Kremlin, a political instrument through which Russia can exercise power in Ukraine.

The ROC's post-1990 strategy to keep its canonical territory intact resulted into a redefinition of Russian identity based on a synthesis of ethnicity and Orthodoxy. The ROC paid special attention to what it calls its 'diaspora', seeking to unite all Russian Orthodox abroad. One successful step in that direction was achieved when the ROC managed to persuade the Church in exile (ROCOR) to restore communion with the mother church. Following negotiations and consultations, ROC and ROCOR re-established communion in 2007, after almost 80 years of separation on political grounds (see the above historical account). The act of reunification was signed in the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, followed by a liturgy during which bishops from both Churches concelebrated for the first time.

Orthodoxy outside the Orthodox Heartland

Though confined primarily to their historical territories, Orthodox Churches have recently become part of the religious landscape also in the West (mostly North America and Western Europe), as a consequence of migration caused mainly by the advent and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, but also by military conflicts in the Mediterranean (the 1919–1922 Turkish-Greek war and the 1974 Turkish-Cypriot confrontations) and in former Yugoslavia (end of the 1990s).

Outside the Orthodox heartland, the Orthodox Churches maintain an organisation along ethnic lines and continue ecclesiastical dependence on the mother churches back home. This means that Romanian Orthodox migrants

established their own parishes, with Romanian-speaking priests and bishops belonging to the BOR; idem for Serbs, Russians and Greeks (under the Patriarchate of Constantinople). This leads to the ecclesiastical paradox of having two or more bishops for the same territory (in Paris there are some 7 Eastern Orthodox bishops each holding jurisdiction over his own ethnic flock).

The Orthodox presence in the West is often designated as 'Orthodox diaspora', but this term is not appropriate, neither sociologically (because these remain expatriate ethnic communities, who are not federated around the religious reference), nor theologically (because *diaspora* is a periphery in relation to a centre, and this contradicts the descentralised Orthodox ecclesiology based on the principle of equality among local churches).[21] A pan-Orthodox consciousness is emerging, due to the re-discovery of the universal vocation of Orthodoxy in a migration context. Transnational inter-ethnic Orthodox networks support this type of consciousness. Let us quote the *Fraternité orthodoxe* in France, the *Orthodox Fellowship of Saint John the Baptist* in the UK, *Association Saint Silouane*, the pan-Orthodox youth movement *Syndesmos* and other ethnic ones with pan-Orthodox vocation (*ACER*, *Nepsis*). These different forums organise annual conferences, spiritual retreats and youth camps; in addition, there are some pan-Orthodox websites.[22] All these means empower Orthodox in the West (especially converts and Western-born and raised Orthodox) with the necessary social capital for maintaining their religious identity.

As is the case with recent migrations, the Orthodox are busy with self-organisation and, in the process, with religious identity reconstruction. For Eastern Orthodox churches migration means the transition from a majority to a minority status. This implies de-territorialisation from a social, cultural, and political context which backs religious identity, and settlement in culturally and religiously alien contexts, where Orthodoxy takes on new meanings. In the face of religious otherness, Orthodox people become more aware of their religious identity and start questioning the content of their faith and thus increase their theological literacy. What was self-evident, taken for granted and culturally transmitted in the homeland, needs to be rationalised in the minority context: the meaning of sacraments (most frequent are baptism, marriage, Eucharistic communion and confession), the meaning and practice of fasting, iconography, the structure of the sacred space, the importance of monasticism, etc. Also, the question of differentiating between what is religious and what is merely cultural arises very acutely. This effort of discriminating between

21 For a complete argumentation about the inaccuracy of the term 'diaspora' for the Orthodox presence in the West, see Hämmerli (2010).

22 See, for example, www.orthodoxie.com; www.orthodoxie.ch; www.orthodoxie.be.

religion and theology on the one hand and ethnicity and culture on the other hand is visible in the work of outstanding theologians of Russian origin who lived and published in France and the USA (e.g. Georges Florovsky, Nicolai Afanasiev, Alexander Schmemann, and John Meyendorff). These figures marked not only the way Orthodoxy was practiced in the West, but had an important impact on the twentieth century Orthodox theology also in Eastern Europe.

Second, living as a minority outside an Orthodox society affects Orthodox identity in a more subtle and intimate way, because it means living outside an Orthodox *habitus*, a time and space shaped by the Church: the sequence of seasons revolves around Easter, Christmas and other feasts commemorating the Virgin Mary and the Saints (Louth 2012). Thus, migration often involves for Orthodox migrants the requirement of resituating themselves in a more secular way of organising time: no more (or only to a very small extent) in the rhythm of religious feasts, but more in line with work and school schedules, hobbies and leisure activities, social events, etc.

Third, with regard to religious practice, in traditionally Orthodox countries it is more diffuse: only a small number of believers attend services regularly, but great numbers of people enter churches any time of the day and pray, venerate the icons, light candles and even have a short talk with the priest or confess. In a minority context, though practice may become more substantiated with theological knowledge, it takes a rather Protestant model of Sunday service attendance only.

Fourth, a minority context brings about the issue of clergy authority and their relation to lay people. In Orthodox countries priests can wear the cassock or *riassa*[23] in public spaces and are thereby recognised as priests, in a social environment in which they can have substantial authority. In a migration context, priests are no more recognisable in the public space, as their habit is not socially meaningful. Therefore their sphere of authority shrinks dramatically and becomes limited to the level of the parish. And even there, this authority is being undermined by the fact that priests are employees of their parish, on a contractual basis, involving also public authorities from the host country in case of a misunderstanding.

Orthodox migrants and their religious institutions maintain transnational ties with the homeland, which helps build and strengthen religious identity, which is viewed as endangered by living in a non-Orthodox environment. Thus people and parishes organise pilgrimages and youth camps in Orthodox monasteries back in the homeland, invite spiritual charismatic figures for regular conferences, maintain close connections to a spiritual father in the home

23 A black, ankle-length clerical garment.

country, etc. This transnational circulation of Orthodox ideas, people, spiritual and material goods (books, icons, religious objects) creates what Gülfer Ihlamur calls "the transnational Orthodox space", which however often operates on an ethnic basis (Ihlamur, 2014).

Orthodoxy between Tradition and Innovation

The Orthodox Church is rarely associated with the idea of innovation, but rather with its opposite, conservatism, due to its commitment to tradition, erroneously understood as a mere repetition of the past. In fact, the Orthodox Church refers to a *sacred Tradition*, which includes a body of texts (the books of the Bible, the Creed, the liturgical texts, patristic literature, the provisions of the first seven Ecumenical Councils and other local councils), practices and experiences (spiritual experience of the saints) inherited from the Apostles and the Church Fathers and whose spirit it tries to keep and implement in different cultural, social and political contexts. Tradition means "the whole system of doctrine, Church government, worship, and art which Orthodoxy has articulated over the ages" (Ware 1993). Though not all these legacies are given equal value and pre-eminence, the Orthodox Church ascribes to Tradition a normative and authoritative value: "the Bible, the Creed, the doctrinal definitions of the Ecumenical Councils… these things the Orthodox accept as something absolute and unchanging, something which cannot be cancelled or revised" (Ware 1993). The writings of the Fathers, the experience and the teachings of the saints are considered as permanent expressions of eternal truth (Lossky 1974). Though these teachings are admittedly shaped in precise cultural and historical contexts, their spirit bears a universal dimension, which transcends culture and history and thus makes them operable in other societies and times (Meyendorff 1978). Dogmas are considered expressions of eternal truth and as such they cannot be subject to change or revision shaped by cultural contingencies. Moral norms are not understood as social constructs, but God-given instructions which are supposed to lead humanity to the restoration of its likeness with God and finally to its deification (*theosis*).

Orthodoxy's commitment to Tradition is often interpreted as something immutable and rigid and the Orthodox Church is often depicted as a monolithic institution which rejects change and is unable to adapt. Yet, recent research (Denizeau 2007; Makrides and Roudometof 2010; Willert and Molokotos-Liederman 2012) suggests that, despite a strong attachment to the legacy of the past, the Orthodox Church does innovate. However, innovation is not to be understood as from a modern and Western perspective, as originality

and radical change breaking with the past, but rather as a modality of interpreting tradition. Makrides shows that

> … since the beginning of the modern age until today people are more used to connecting innovation with novelty and originality, which is perhaps understandable in the context of a linear perspective on history and the concomitant idea of continuing progress. Yet, this was not necessarily the case with previous historical eras. For example, in Byzantium there were aesthetic preoccupations that differed from the modern sense of originality [in that] it was not coterminous with innovation and the constant look for novelties everywhere, but with an imitation (μιμησις) of the ancient originals and the copying of the prototypes.
>
> MAKRIDES 2012: 32–33

Therefore, innovation in the Orthodox Church consists in adaptations that maintain the spirit of Tradition while allowing for a 'normal' functioning in a modern world. Tradition is not a 'copy-and-paste' of the past into the present, but is highly adaptive and pliable and therefore permanently allowing for innovation: "tradition consists in a process of translation, an accurate one, despite the need to innovate–or rather precisely because of this need. Far from being a mere literal repetition, the spirit of tradition allows for creativity. Its adaptability is incompatible with a literal transmission" (Denizeau 2014: 256).

As illustrated in the previous sections of this chapter, the Orthodox Church is able to adapt to and function in highly different political and social settings (monarchy, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, democratic republics) precisely because it can innovate. Yet novelties are introduced not for the sake of change, but as a way of allowing authentic Tradition to be translated and perpetuated in new contexts. Innovation operates in the framework of Tradition and not as a break from it. Change is welcome only to the extent that it serves deepening the meaning of Tradition and not if it aims at departing from it.

Also, change in the Orthodox Churches is less striking because it happens at small scale, in response to geographically and historically restricted circumstances, as a temporary solution for a given context, an act of *economia* in a situation in which a strict application of the law (*akrivia*) would exceed the human reality of the moment. Yet the standard reference remains *akrivia* and the particular act of *economia* is neither dogmatised nor incorporated in the Church's law and official praxis. It is usually a bishop's 'creative' response to a certain state of affairs in his specific diocese and is not generalised to all local Orthodox Churches. The section on "Orthodoxy outside the Orthodox Heartland" richly illustrates this.

Drawing on the facts mentioned in this chapter and on conclusions from Willert and Molokotos-Liederman's volume on innovation in the Orthodox Church, we can say that innovation is "an inherent modality" of the Orthodox Church (Willert and Molokotos-Liederman 2012). Paradoxically, innovation works as a strategy of preserving Tradition, by adapting to different socio-political contexts, without changing the dogmatic content. The concept of *economia* allows for a plastic application of the dogma, yet maintaining *akrivia* as the norm, from which exceptions are made out of compassion for a specific human reality.

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CHAPTER 4

Global Saints

Conservative Christianity in the Early Twenty-first Century

Joseph Williams

Introduction

The global growth of conservative Christianity shows few signs of abating. While Christian observance has declined markedly over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries throughout Europe and to a lesser extent North America, a very different picture emerges in other parts of the world. In the 'Global South' in particular, which includes Africa, Latin America, and most of Asia, conservative forms of Christianity have grown exponentially since the early 1900s.

A core set of emphases frequently unites the otherwise disparate expressions of conservative Christian religiosity. Unlike their more liberal counterparts, conservative believers tend to dismiss Enlightenment-inspired approaches to the study of scripture, focusing instead on the divine inspiration of the Bible, or on the authoritative teachings and interpretation of Holy Writ provided by religious elites. Unmoved by celebrations of religious diversity, most conservative believers retain their commitment to evangelise non-Christians. Notions of salvation for these groups remain rooted in a traditional Christian narrative centred on the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. And the faithful typically condemn expansive definitions of the family and of human sexuality, by and large rejecting homosexuality and changing gender norms.

Despite traditionalists' opposition to more liberal forms of religious innovation, modernising forces have shaped conservative iterations of the faith no less than they have shaped more progressive alternatives. The story of conservative Christianity in the early twenty-first century—whether in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, or Europe—repeatedly intersects with the ever-increasing influence of globalisation, consumer capitalism, and technological advance, not to mention persistent nationalistic currents.

Of course, deep-seated divisions remain. Disparate ritual practices and theological commitments, for instance, reveal strikingly divergent conclusions regarding proper attitudes towards the poor, the desirability of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, the utility of overt political action, biblical gender

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roles, and the import of science, among other issues. The end result is a remarkably diverse set of twenty-first century Christians who, despite their disagreements, are nonetheless linked by a shared set of core convictions and by their connections to a rapidly modernising, globalised world.

Mapping Global Conservative Christianity

Considering the predominance of Catholicism throughout the world—in the early twenty-first century nearly 1.1 billion individuals identify as Catholic—it should come as no surprise that the largest contingent of conservative believers are found in the Catholic Church (Pew Forum 2011a: 21–26). Not all Catholics fit within the parameters of conservative Christianity defined above, to be sure, but the Church's fidelity to tradition on a number of issues serves as a formidable counterweight to various liberalising trends. It is telling, for instance, that Pope Francis, who was elected to lead the Catholic Church in 2013, has reset the tenor of the Church's message regarding everything from homosexuality, contraception, and to a certain degree abortion, yet nonetheless affirms Church doctrines that formally condemn such practices. Similarly, despite pressures to adopt a more egalitarian power structure, the Church continues to reserve ordination for men, preserving a male-dominated hierarchy. None of this is to deny the Catholic Church's important contributions to a variety of causes that progressives would cheer, including efforts to help the poor, or to combat the excesses of global capitalism. The legacy of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) is especially significant in this regard. That said, the conservative implications of the Church's organisational model and of many of its teachings are clear.

Whereas one out of every two Christians worldwide identifies as Catholic, Protestants account for 37 percent of the global Christian population. Like the Catholic Church, Protestants dot the entire spectrum of the liberal-conservative divide. Evangelical Christianity serves as the most visible expression of conservative Protestantism; roughly 285 million believers belong to explicitly evangelical churches, or self-identify as evangelical. Many more Protestants, however, likewise espouse a core set of a conservative evangelical emphases centred on the absolute authority of scripture, the importance of a 'born-again' conversion experience, as well as a strong missionary impulse (Bebbington 1989: 2–17; Marsden 1991: 1–6; Lewis 2004; Pew Forum 2011a: 17–18, 27–29, 69; Stanley 2013; Lewis and Pierard 2014).

The relative conservatism associated with evangelical-friendly forms of Protestantism has been bolstered over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic

churches. Here in the early twenty-first century, in fact, one out of every four Christians identifies as Pentecostal or Charismatic. Pentecostals, who first emerged on the worldwide Christian scene in the early 1900s, stand apart from other evangelicals based on their insistence that every believer should experience a subsequent work of grace following salvation, referred to as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, that is in turn accompanied by 'speaking in tongues'. The faithful are also convinced that the Spirit empowers them to prophesy regarding the future, to supernaturally know things they otherwise have no ability to know, and to watch illness retreat as they pray (Pew Forum 2011a: 17–18; Anderson 2013).

The emergence of Pentecostalism played a crucial role in the rise of the Charismatic movement, which has spread similar practices in a wide variety of non-Pentecostal churches—including many Catholic churches—beginning in the second half of the twentieth century. While Charismatics share Pentecostals' stress on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and on the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, not all adherents agree with Pentecostals' prioritisation of tongues as *the* necessary mark of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Significantly, the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic style Christianity over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has functioned as a crucial catalyst for seismic shifts in the composition of Christianity worldwide. On the one hand, a snapshot comparison of global Christianity in the year 1910 with the year 2010 seems to suggest relatively modest changes. In 1910, Christians accounted for roughly 35 percent of the world population, and in 2010 the percentage of Christians stood at 32 percent. More thorough analysis of the numbers, however, reveals just how much has changed during that one hundred year period. Europe's share of the global Christian population has plummeted from 66.3 percent in 1910 to 25.9 percent in 2010, while the proportion of believers in Asia-Pacific has jumped from 4.5 percent to 13.1 percent, and from 27.1 percent to 36.8 percent in the Americas. By far the most dramatic changes have appeared in Sub-Saharan Africa: in 1910 the region's share of the global Christian population stood at a meager 1.4 percent. By 2010, the number has skyrocketed to 23.6 percent (Pew Forum 2011a: 9–16). Not all of this growth can be attributed to the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, yet adherents' highly supernatural, experiential brand of Christianity has served as a key driver of Christianity's expansion beginning especially in the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly in the Global South.

Despite the tectonic shifts in global Christianity over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a few qualifications bear mentioning. Throughout most of the Global North, which includes North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand, the concentration of Christians relative to

the rest of the population is still higher than in the Global South. And despite the diminished status of Christianity in Europe, the majority of Europeans, 76.2 percent, still self-identify as Christian. It is also important to note the continued strength of the Orthodox Church: roughly 27 percent of all Europeans identify with various autocephalous branches of Eastern Orthodoxy, including the Russian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the Romanian Orthodox Church (Pew Forum 2011a: 47–51). As with members of Catholic and Protestant traditions, Orthodox believers endorse a variety of religious and political viewpoints. The conservative inclinations of many within these churches are nevertheless apparent in places such as Russia, where the church hierarchy has largely aligned itself with President Vladimir Putin's efforts to stamp out liberalising forces deemed threatening to 'Holy Russia' (Kishkovsky 2012; Richters 2013).

Conservative Christianity in a Global Age

Over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, various iterations of traditional Christianity have been inexorably tied to key markers of globalisation: Dense transnational networks facilitate the flow of conservative ideas and practices. Adherents effectively utilise ever-improving mass communication technologies characteristic of an increasingly inter-connected world. And the ever-expanding reach of global capitalism has forced to the fore a diverse array of responses on the part of the faithful.

One look at the various constituencies attracted to the Feast of Tabernacles event held in Jerusalem each year graphically illustrates the type of transnational networks that play a crucial role in the maintenance and transmission of conservative Christianity around the globe. Sponsored by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, the Feast of Tabernacles celebration recalls the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, and provides an exuberant outlet for believers intent on expressing their support for the Israeli state. While half of the three thousand attendees at the first large-scale celebration conducted in 1980 were from North America, the remaining 1,500 individuals hailed from thirty-three different countries. In succeeding years, the number of countries represented has grown rapidly: in 1993 four thousand individuals from 70 different countries attended, and in 2007 organisers report that more than seven thousand participants from ninety different countries travelled to participate in the festivities (Schwartz 1982: 17–21; Strang 2007: 27).

Beyond international meetings such as the annual Feast of Tabernacles event in Jerusalem, the ready availability of mass-communication technologies

likewise ensures that the faithful need not journey outside their own cities or even their own homes in order to connect with like-minded believers from around the globe. When a healing revival broke out in April 2008 at an Assemblies of God church in Lakeland, Florida, for instance, it quickly became a global event. Led by Todd Bentley, a heavily tattooed 32 year-old Canadian evangelist known for his unconventional (and on occasion physically aggressive) style, the nightly meetings quickly outgrew the host church, attracting crowds upwards of ten thousand people on the weekends. Much of the revival's success hinged on the use of mass-communication technologies, in particular the Internet, that allowed for live broadcasts of the services around the world. Viewers were frequently instructed to reach their hands toward their televisions or computer screens in order to receive God's power over the airwaves. Cell phones served a similar purpose. After three months, the pastor of the Lakeland church indicated that individuals around the world used 1.2 million unique computers to log on and view the meetings via outlets such as God.tv. By the time the revival ended, individuals from a range of countries including Argentina, Norway, Germany, Malaysia, South Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria, to name a few, had traveled to Lakeland to catch the 'fresh fire' and take it home (Ghiringhelli 2008; Hunt 2009a; Hunt 2009b).

Whereas the Lakeland revival lost steam following the summer of 2008, various broadcast networks serve as more permanent indications of the import of mass communication media in the world of conservative Christianity. The California-based Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN), for example, bills itself as the largest religious television network in the world, and can be found on eighty four satellite channels and on more than eighteen thousand television and cable affiliates. Viewers who tune into the network discover a steady stream of programming that promises biblical keys to divine health, prophetic insights into world events, not to mention the latest music produced by Christian artists.[1] For its part, the Alabama-based EWTN Global Catholic Network (EWTN), which includes substantial radio programming in addition to its television outreach, is presented as the largest religious *media* network in the world. Founded in 1981 by Mother Angelica in order to "communicate the teachings and the beauty of the Catholic Church", EWTN broadcasts in four different languages, and reaches over 140 different countries.[2]

While both TBN and EWTN underscore U.S. believers' disproportionate influence on conservative Christianity worldwide, the flow of influence and

1 "About Us," http://www.tbn.org/about-us. Accessed 19/04/2014.

2 "About EWTN," http://www.ewtn.com/general/index.asp. Accessed 19/04/2014.

ideas is hardly unidirectional. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) serves as a case in point. Founded in Nigeria in 1952 by Pastor Josiah Akindayomi, the RCCG has aggressively spread its Pentecostal-style message throughout Nigeria, Africa, and across the globe. According to reports, hundreds of thousands of individuals participate in the church's monthly prayer meetings, and the number of attendees attracted to its annual 'Holy Ghost Congress' is counted in the millions. The church's mission statement neatly captures the RCCG's expansionary vision: Parishioners are taught that their highest purpose is "to make heaven," and to "take as many people with us". In pursuit of that goal, adherents seek to "plant churches within five minutes walking distance in every city and town of developing countries and within five minutes driving distance in every city and town of developed countries."[3] Roughly sixty years after its founding, the RCCG includes approximately two thousand houses of worship, with satellite churches in sixty nations across the globe. In the U.S. alone, the movements boasted 374 churches as of 2009 (Jenkins 2002: 205–206; Rice 2009; Adogame 2013: 189–201; Miller 2013: 10).

Significantly, the RCCG's leaders condemn cultural norms prevalent in the Global North, in particular the perceived over-reliance on human reason and ingenuity, as they work to shape the identity of the movement. Such emphases "give man the impression that man is the almighty, that man can do anything", the successor of Akindayomi, Enoch Adeboye, told a reporter for the *New York Times*.

> He can go to the moon, go to Mars, perform operations with a laser beam without spilling blood. The problem, the way I see it, is that because of the advance of technology, science and investing, the Western world began to feel that they didn't need God as much as before. Whereas in Africa, we need him. We know we need him to survive.
>
> RICE 2009

As it happens, Adeboye adroitly utilises Internet technology and social media platforms to spread the RCCG message. His remarks nevertheless reveal the extent to which he and other leaders seek to define the movement in highly supernatural terms, and in opposition to emphases that they associate with the Global North.

For some in the Global South, disenchantment with developments in more modernised societies manifests as a desire for complete independence—financially and otherwise—from wealthier churches in the Global North.

3 "Mission and Vision," http://rccg.org/index.php/about-us-2/mission-and-vision/. Accessed 19/04/2014.

According to the founder of the Back to God movement in South Africa, Nicholas Bhengu, God explicitly told him during a visit to the United States, "Don't get the money from your church here. Go back home and get it from the women in your church. Teach them four things: to do something with their hands, to take good care of their families, to lead their husbands to the Lord, and to tithe" (Adogame 2013: 199). Bhengu's comments shine a bright spotlight on a key feature of conservative Christianity in the Global South: while missionaries from the Global North played—and continue to play—a crucial role in the expansion of the faith well beyond its traditional centres of power in Europe and North America, the indigenous forms of Christianity that have taken shape often directly challenge Western-centric perspectives and practices. Nowhere is this dynamic more apparent than in various iterations of liberation theology that first arose in Catholic circles in Latin America, and that seek to undermine the steady advancement of global consumer capitalism. Instead, proponents argue for social and political structures that reflect a "preferential option for the poor".

On the one hand, it is important to note that the close association between liberation theology and Marxist-inspired visions of social change has often engendered fierce opposition from more conservative believers. Following the initial emergence of 'theologies of liberation' as a powerful force among Catholics during the 1960s, for example, conservative forces in the Church sought to rein in the movement's influence. Led by then-Cardinal Ratzinger, who eventually became Pope Benedict XVI, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1984 explicitly censured theologians associated with liberation theology in large measure for their reliance on Marxist categories of thought. Church leaders were especially critical of these reform-minded theologians' perceived reliance on 'class struggle' as *the* hermeneutic key for interpreting scripture and for discerning the nature and mission of the Church (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1984).

For all the sharp divisions engendered by liberation theology, and in spite of conservative Catholics' reticence to support the radical social prescriptions advocated by its supporters, the movement has nonetheless bolstered a prioritisation of the poor in the teachings and ministry of the Church worldwide, as well as critical appraisals of the effects of global capitalism. Despite the formal rebuke of key aspects of liberation theology in 1984, in succeeding years both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI coupled qualified praise for the potential benefits of properly circumscribed free market economies with strong critiques of the materialism and inequality produced by unbridled capitalism (John Paul II 1987; John Paul II 1991; Benedict XVI 2007; Benedict XVI 2009). Pope Francis, who hails from Argentina, has gone even further than his predecessors, explicitly denouncing "trickle-down" theories of economic development. Indicative of

Francis's sympathy for key aspects of liberation theology, he has called for structural changes in society that directly redress inequality, and also invited one of the original architects of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, to a formal event held at the Vatican (Francis 2013; Winfield 2014).

Due in part to the focus on individual conversion at the heart of evangelicalism, not to mention widespread apocalyptic expectations regarding Jesus's Second Coming, conservative Protestants in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries often prove less vocal in their advocacy of systemic social and political change. One of the most popular expressions of conservative Christianity worldwide in recent decades, in fact, the so-called 'prosperity gospel', in large part reflects an unabashed endorsement of the consumer sensibilities associated with global capitalism. In the words of Kenneth Copeland, one of the most visible leaders in the movement, "Analyze your needs. Analyze your wants. Go to the Word of God that covers your needs and wants. Don't relent. Speak faith-filled words". According to the Los Angeles-based televangelist Frederick K.C. Price, "God is not telling you to be a pauper. He does not want you to be poor". Quite the contrary, God "wants all of us to be rich. There is nothing wrong in that. He is rich" (Price 1984: 49; Copeland 1985: 5–6). Whereas figures like Copeland and Price qualify their 'health and wealth' guarantees by insisting that a believer's desires must please God, the basic message remains a clear crowd-pleaser.

As it happens, prosperity gospel themes translate well across cultures, as evidenced by their explosive popularity in various African countries. Here again, the transnational dimensions of global conservative Christianity are readily apparent. In addition to U.S.-based ministries, important catalysts for the spread of the prosperity gospel throughout Africa include the German minister Reinhard Bonnke, and the South Korean David Yonggi Cho, pastor of one of the largest churches in the world. Bonnke helped jump-start the success of prosperity teachings when he gathered some four thousand delegates in 1986 from around Africa for his 'Fire Convention' in Harare, Zimbabwe. Likewise, *The Fourth Dimension* (1979), written by Cho, played a crucial role in spreading visualisation practices premised on the power of the imagination to unlock God's divine blessings (Cho 1979; Gifford 1987; Kalu 2008: 257).[4]

Whereas the prosperity gospel highlights the potential confluence of conservative evangelicalism with consumer capitalism, a growing number of

4 While the prosperity gospel is often viewed as an export from the Global North, it is also important to note its correspondence to pre-existing emphases in African forms of Christianity. In the words of the Ogbu Kalu, a historian of African Pentecostalism, the prosperity gospel's success throughout Africa was "buttressed in its resonance with African indigenous concepts of salvation, abundant life, and goals of worship" (Kalu 2008: 259).

believers seek to steer conservative Christianity in a very different direction. Examples of more progressive social action on the part of conservative Protestants at the turn of the twenty-first century emerge from around the globe. In Latin America, prominent evangelical politicians in Brazil have staked out positions on the political Left/centre-Left that challenge entrenched interests on behalf of the poor (Fonseca 2008). Observers of evangelicalism in the U.S. likewise note a growing focus on international human rights, urban renewal, and economic development among select evangelical groups and activists (Steensland and Goff 2014). In sharp contrast to widespread assumptions regarding Pentecostals' and Charismatics' relative disconnect from worldly affairs, another recent study has identified numerous progressive iterations of the faith that defy such stereotypes. In Uganda, Kampala Pentecostal Church has built a series of villages to house children who were often orphaned due to the country's AIDS crisis. In Calcutta, India, Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches provide primary and high school education for close to seventeen thousand students, most of whom are Hindus. In Singapore, City Harvest operates the City Harvest Community Service Association, with twenty-five paid workers and a volunteer army of close to six hundred individuals. Among the many programmes run by the association, it provides services to prison inmates, the elderly, the mentally disabled, as well as a tutoring program for young people (Miller and Yamamori 2007: 68–98).

Mapping Conservative Christian Diversity

Conservative believers' varied responses to the juggernaut of global capitalism illuminate the very real diversity in conservative Christian circles, despite believers' shared desire to protect Christian teachings and practices from the acids of modernity. Other significant fault lines separating the faithful extend well beyond economic issues: Conservative Christians approach interfaith relations as well as their relationships with fellow believers in strikingly different ways. They likewise espouse divergent views regarding contemporary Christians' involvement in politics, the role of women in the Church, human sexuality, and the relationship between Christian faith and modern science, to name a few prominent areas of disagreement.

Interfaith Relations

Not surprisingly, conservative Christians across the board tend to view their particular faith as the most authoritative, accurate expression of Christianity.

Most acknowledge the importance of efforts to missionise the 'unsaved', and they tend to decry interfaith endeavours meant to celebrate religious pluralism as an unmitigated good. Even so, conservative believers' relationship with and approach to religious 'others' differs greatly.

On the one hand, in various nations around the globe a number of Christian groups experience discrimination and at times brutal repression. Christians make up a small minority of the population in India, for example, with many drawn from the lower classes of society, including the so-called 'untouchables', or Dalits. In part due to historic discrimination associated with the Hindu caste system, as well as fears regarding Christian missionaries' success, Christian converts and churches in India have frequently been subject to attacks and violence (Jenkins 2002: 182–185). Similarly, in Indonesia, which boasts the largest Muslim population of any nation in the world, police and governmental officials at times do little to restrain attacks on Christians and other minority group by Islamists (Mackey 2010). Christians in the African nation of Sudan have also been subject to a variety of atrocities, including killings, lootings, and rapes (Jenkins 2002: 171–172).

Of course, conservative Christianity has served in its own right as a source of religious hatred and violence. Religious differences, for instance, helped stoke violent clashes during the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia between Croats who were largely Roman Catholic, Serbs who mostly identified as Orthodox Christian, and Bosnians, the majority of whom were Muslim. In the worst atrocity conducted on European soil since World War II, thousands of Bosnian Muslim men and boys were killed by Serbs in 1995. Christians have also often functioned as the aggressors in conflicts in African states such as Nigeria, where frequent violence between Christians and Muslims reflect a complicated admixture of religious, ethnic, tribal, and geographic divides (Jenkins 2002: 168–175).

Beyond examples of religious violence, conservative Christians' diverse approaches to interfaith endeavours have been on very public display among U.S. Christians in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks. On the one hand, virulent anti-Muslim rhetoric has been readily discernable. Following 9/11, Franklin Graham, the head of Samaritan's Purse and the son of Billy Graham, referred to Islam as a "very evil and wicked religion", while the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jerry Vine, depicted the Prophet Muhammad as a "demon-possessed pedophile". In similar fashion, the founder of Liberty University, Jerry Falwell, made his sentiment clear when he described the Prophet as a "terrorist" (though he later apologised for the statement) (Kidd 2008: 145–147).

Whereas the type of comments made by Graham, Vine, and Falwell garner significant attention in the American media and beyond—Falwell's statement, in fact, helped trigger riots among Muslims in Asia—other conservative

evangelicals have struck a decidedly different tone. George W. Bush, who consistently affirmed his embrace of traditional Christianity while president of the U.S., for instance, attracted the ire of many evangelical supporters by consistently stressing the peaceful nature of Islam, and by claiming that the God worshipped by Muslims and Christians was in fact the same God (Kidd 2008: 145–146). The evangelical theologian Timothy George similarly resists the knee-jerk demonisation of Islam evident in other conservative circles, calling instead for meaningful interfaith dialogue that openly acknowledges both the similarities and key points of distinctions separating the two faiths. Commenting on the growing number of Muslims in North American and Europe, George suggests that the "opportunities for both interfaith dialogue and Christian witness will increase. Rather than react with suspicion, fear, or apathy, Christians need to be well-informed about the Islamic religion and also to understand the distinctive teachings of their own Christian faith" (George 2002: 25–26). For their part, the founders of TBN, Jan Crouch and her late husband Paul Crouch, have sought to rein in inflammatory rhetoric regarding Islam on their network, in part to avoid jeopardising their growing presence in the Middle East. This stance in turn has led to very public confrontations with two of their most popular television hosts who vocally espoused staunch pro-Israel, anti-Muslim positions (Crouch 2002; Crouch 2006a; Crouch 2006b; Levitt 2006).

Debates over the desirability of interreligious dialogue, and in particular Christian-Muslim dialogue, are hardly exclusive to American evangelicals. Whereas the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in November of 2001 repudiated any attempt to judge Islam as a whole based on the actions of a few extremists, a few short years later Pope Benedict XVI set off a firestorm of controversy when he repeated the words of a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor, "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman" (Fisher 2006). Like Falwell, Benedict eventually apologised, but his comments reveal the salience of debates over Christian-Muslim relations well outside conservative evangelical circles.

Jewish-Christian relations engender less controversy in conservative Christian circles than Muslim-Christian dialogue, yet again, important differences remain. A crucial turning point in modern Jewish-Christian relations occurred in the early 1960s during the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council. The document *Nostra Aetate* (1965) signaled a new direction for Catholic-Jewish relations, as the Church formally condemned anti-Semitism. In subsequent years Pope John Paul II built on this sentiment, as he conducted an official papal visit to a synagogue in 1986, established diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the state of Israel in 1994, and visited the Western Wall in Jerusalem in 2000.

For many evangelical Protestants, their engagement with Jews, and especially their support for the state of Israel, often derives from particular readings of biblical prophecies. One of the most popular models of prophecy interpretation embraced by many evangelicals, pre millennial dispensationalism, originated in the nineteenth century and promotes a literal, futuristic hermeneutic. In addition to their focus on seven distinct eras or 'dispensations' in which God tests humanity's faithfulness, dispensationalists also incorporate a decidedly pessimistic appraisal of the state of the Church and world affairs. Put simply, they believe that nothing short of divine intervention in the form of Jesus's Second Coming can reverse the decline of civilisation worldwide in the current dispensation (Marsden 1991: 39–41; Noll 1994: 116–122).

Significantly, the search for literal applications of prophecy to the present day has led dispensationalists and like-minded believers to pay special attention to the fate of the Jewish people and the growing Zionist movement. Convinced that God's covenantal promises to Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures remain in effect, they view the founding of the nation of Israel in 1948 as nothing less than a direct fulfillment of scripture and a key harbinger of the 'End Times'. Not surprisingly, Israel figures prominently in the *Left Behind* novels authored by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, which offer a dispensationalist-inspired vision of future events. Indicative of the popularity of such views, the *Left Behind* series has sold over 63 million copies in 18 different languages, making it the best-selling Christian fiction series in history.[5]

Not all conservative Protestants, of course, share the same convictions regarding biblical prophecy, or express staunch support of Israel. In 2003, the same year that he assumed leadership of the U.S.-based National Association of Evangelicals, Ted Haggard bemoaned the escapist mentality that he associated with pre millenialism:

> [T]oo many believers who should have been focused on strengthening local churches, praying for and financing the expansion of God's kingdom, or attending school so they could become leaders in their field of interest made choices that altered the course of their lives based on a misunderstanding of where they are on the timeline of human history.

Haggard also took his fellow believers to task regarding the inordinate amount of attention that they paid to the nation of Israel. "Could it be that with our

5 "*Left Behind*: General FAQ," http://www.leftbehind.com/06_help_and_info/faq_general.asp. Accessed 19/04/2014.

fixation on Israel", he asked, "we've neglected the Scriptures that indicate the Second Coming is predicated on our spreading the gospel throughout the world?" Haggard concluded, "Don't get me wrong, Israel is very important, and the return of the Jewish people to Palestine is a sign; but it's not the only sign people are pointing at to support their end-times claims" (Haggard 2003: 66). Here, it is telling that Haggard felt it necessary to immediately qualify his claims regarding conservative Christians' inordinate focus on Israel.

For their part, some Jews have welcomed the attention from conservative Christians, and especially adherents' vocal support for Israeli causes, but many others remain unconvinced. Skeptics point, for example, to conservative Christians' continued efforts to convert Jews to Christianity, not to mention apocalyptic beliefs depicting God's future condemnation of Jews who ultimately refuse to embrace the message of Jesus. Such frictions notwithstanding, it is fair to say that the anti-Semitism so characteristic of Christians' interactions with Jews throughout history has receded significantly over the course of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Just as Jewish-Christian relations have experienced marked improvement in recent decades, the relationships among conservative Christians has to a significant degree taken a similar turn, especially between Catholic and Protestant groups. A number of factors have contributed to the growing cooperation between conservative Protestants and conservative Catholics. Once again, the Second Vatican Council represented a significant turning point, as the Church signaled its growing openness to ecumenical dialogue and action. The Charismatic movement's popularity in various Catholic circles has created comparable opportunities for interaction as adherents in both traditions embrace similar worship styles and rituals, and build Charismatic networks that span the Protestant-Catholic divide. In addition, shared positions on a variety of social concerns galvanise the faithful. Here, opposition to abortion stands out, but conservatives increasingly make common cause on a host of other issues as well, including homosexuality and same-sex marriage, health care reform, and support for various military endeavors, among others (Noll 2001: 111–147).

One of the most visible signs of the growing accord between conservative Protestants and Catholics emerged in 1994, when leading evangelical Protestant and conservative Catholic leaders in the U.S. joined together to produce the document "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT). The authors opened the document with a confession of "our sins against the unity that Christ intends for all his disciples". "The love of Christ compels us and we are therefore resolved", they continued, "to avoid such conflict between our communities and, where such conflict exists, to do what we can to reduce and eliminate it.

Beyond that, we are called and we are therefore resolved to explore patterns of working and witnessing together in order to advance the one mission of Christ".[6]

Though ECT hardly speaks for all evangelicals and Catholics—various evangelical leaders in particular have questioned the degree of harmony linking Catholic and Protestant theology—high-profile conservative leaders on both sides nonetheless have continued to find common cause in succeeding years. A series of headlines in the popular evangelical periodical *Christianity Today* referring to Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis capture the changed tenor of conservative Catholic-Protestant relations: "He Was My Pope, Too" (2005), "Why Evangelical Leaders Love Pope Benedict XVI (And His Resignation)" (2013), "Argentine Evangelicals Say Bergoglio as Pope Francis is 'Answer to Our Prayers'" (2013), "Why Pope Francis Excites (Most) Evangelical Leaders" (2013), "A Pope for All Christians" (2013), and "Our Francis, Too" (2013). Further indicative of the thawing relationship between conservative Catholics and Protestants, in a recent survey of evangelical leaders from around the globe, 76 percent express a favourable view of their co-religionists (Pew Forum 2011b: 15, 23).

To be sure, flashpoints of conflict remain, not the least of which involves the intense competition for adherents in various regions of the world, for example in much of Latin America (Freston 2013: 115–116). In general, however, the degree of cooperation and the positive interactions between conservative representatives of the two largest branches of Christianity has continued to increase into the early twenty-first century. Such progress in Protestant-Catholic relations would have been difficult to predict as recently as the mid-1900s, yet more and more conservative Christians on both sides of the historic Christian divide are finding ways to work together towards a variety of shared goals.

Politics

On the whole, conservative Christians around the globe affirm the importance of taking an active role in political affairs. Within the Catholic Church, Vatican II opened the door for increased engagement with a number of political issues and topics as the Church hierarchy expressed a clear affirmation of democratic norms, basic human rights, and religious freedom. Since the Council, not only have popes continued to weigh in on similar issues, but the emergence of

6 "Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." 1994. Available at http://www.firstthings.com/article/2007/01/evangelicals--catholics-together-the-christian-mission-in-the-third-millennium-2. Accessed 19/04/2014.

liberation theology—and the controversy it engendered—assured continued, robust debate within the Church regarding political activism on behalf of the poor.

In similar fashion, a Pew Forum survey of evangelical leaders who attended the Third Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization in South Africa in 2010 highlights conservative Protestants' clear engagement with political issues: 84 percent of respondents indicate that religious leaders should openly express their political views, with 56 percent suggesting that it is essential for leaders to take a stand on issues that countered their moral and religious beliefs. Another 37 percent respond that taking a stand in these matters was important but not essential (Pew Forum 2011b: 82).

Despite the widespread agreement regarding the importance of political engagement, digging deeper into the numbers illuminates two significant fault lines in conservative Christian politics. Perhaps the most significant distinction in conservative Christians' political instincts emerges in comparisons of the Global North and Global South. To a significant degree, individuals in the Global North have grown accustomed to notions associated with the separation of church and state, and the accompanying stress on freedom of religious expression. Among evangelical leaders in the Global North, only 28 percent register their desire for an explicitly Christian political order. Such ideas find sharply higher levels of support in the Global South, on the other hand, where a full 58 percent favour making the Bible the "law of the land" (Pew Forum 2011b: 82–83).

Another important divide evident in the survey results emerges between renewalists and those unaffiliated with Pentecostal or Charismatic churches. Despite Pentecostalism's relatively apolitical roots, in recent decades prominent leaders in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement from around the world have broken with tradition, boldly entering the political arena, especially in nations with a strong Pentecostal and evangelical presence. Among conservative Protestant leaders who identify as renewalists, in fact, 56 percent support a thoroughly Christian political structure; only 38 percent of non-renewalists say the same (Pew Forum 2011b: 82–83).

Gender and Sexuality

Conservative Christians differ widely in both rhetoric and practice regarding proper gender roles. Such distinctions are especially apparent when it comes to the role of female leaders in churches, and to a lesser extent regarding sexuality in conservative Christian circles.

On the most basic level, differing conceptions of authority play a crucial role in elevating or restricting the role of women in various Christian traditions. Most notably, the Vatican has shown little inclination to open up the priesthood to women, despite significant pressure from more liberal factions within the Catholic Church. Historically, conservative Protestants have similarly reserved ordination for men, though they are far from uniform on the subject. For example, the strong prioritisation of religious experience in Pentecostal and independent Charismatic churches—which is theoretically available to all—has often opened up more public leadership roles for women, though Pentecostals' and Charismatics' relative conservatism in other areas has led various observers to question just how egalitarian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches actually are (Alexander 2013; Attanasi 2013).

In a tell-tale sign of the rapidly changing global landscape regarding gender in conservative Christianity, approximately three out of every four evangelical leaders who responded to the Pew Forum survey in 2011 believe women should be able to serve as pastors. As is the case with conservative Christian politics, digging deeper into the numbers again illuminates significant variations in the responses depending on region. In the Global South, where advocacy for women's rights has been less prevalent, 67 percent of evangelical leaders confirm that a wife should always obey her husband. In the Global North, where the issue of women's rights typically garners much more attention, affirmative responses dip to 39 percent. A similar 61 percent to 43 percent divide emerges between the Global South and North respectively when respondents are asked if men should be the primary financial providers and religious leaders in their families (Pew Forum 2011b: 31, 79–81).

Another important qualification bears mentioning: solely paying attention to the formal rhetoric or authority structures in conservative churches often occludes the actual role of women in those same religious bodies. Women may find their path to ordination blocked in more conservative churches, but nevertheless exert significant influence through their roles as evangelists, worship leaders, missionaries, Sunday School workers, and so forth. Continued restrictions on religious leadership roles for women likewise often belie the degree to which conservative believers accommodate changing gender norms in other areas, including women's participation in the work force, and increased expectations regarding husbands' contribution in the home and with childrearing duties.

None of this is to deny the relative strength of traditional gender and sexual norms in conservative Christian circles when compared to their more liberal co-religionists. In a sign of the import of conservative sexual norms in defining many believers' sense of identity, conservative Christian churches and individuals have played an important role in anti-gay legislation in nations such as

Uganda and Russia (Kramer 2013; Cowell 2014). Furthermore, 84 percent of evangelical Protestant respondents to the 2011 Pew Forum survey indicate that society should discourage homosexuality, and Pope Francis made waves in the Catholic Church by seeking to recalibrate the Church's 'obsessive' focus on issues like same-sex marriage and abortion. Even here, however, the pitfalls associated with one-size-fits-all descriptions of conservative Christianity are readily apparent. In addition to comments such as the Pope's, in Europe nearly one out of every four evangelical leaders queried say that homosexuality should be accepted in society, and in Latin America this same number jumps to over 50 percent (Pew Forum 2011b: 78; Goodstein 2013).

Science

Two very different types of issues play a crucial role in defining both insiders' and outsiders' perceptions of the relationship between conservative Christianity and science. On the one hand, the faithful have developed a wide variety of responses to the perceived threat that various scientific ideas and practices pose to traditional Christian assumptions, and in particular to the authority of scripture. No one topic better illuminates the diversity of conservative Christian thought regarding such issues than their responses to modern evolutionary thought. On the one hand, a sizable group of conservative Christians embrace the basic contours of 'creation science' as they seek an alternative to the scientific mainstream. For these individuals, literal readings of the book of Genesis point to a 'young earth' that is merely 6,000 to 10,000 years old, while biblical accounts of a worldwide Noahic flood explain the fossil record and other geological changes observed by scientists (Noll 2001: 148–182; Stephens and Giberson 2011: 21–60).[7]

Whereas 'young earth' advocates—with their voluminous literature and procreation science museums—attract the lion's share of attention in evolution-creationism debates, they hardly speak for all who defend more conservative iterations of the Christian faith. Beginning with Pope Pius XII in 1950, the Catholic Church has affirmed the potential compatibility of traditional Christianity and evolutionary thought, with some of Pius' successors expressly supporting the basic features of 'theistic evolution'. Though they have not achieved the same notoriety as anti-evolutionists in their movement, various

7 See for example "Principles of Scientific Creationism." Institute for Creation Research. At http://www.icr.org/tenets/. Accessed 19/04/2014. And "The AiG Statement of Faith." Answers in Genesis. At http://www.answersingenesis.org/about/faith, Accessed 19/04/2014.

evangelical leaders concerned with the anti-intellectual legacy of early twentieth-century Christian Fundamentalism have likewise affirmed the compatibility of theistic evolution with historic expressions of the Christian faith. The 2011 Pew survey of evangelical leaders around the globe, in fact, indicates a relatively small disparity between those who reject evolution (47 percent) compared to those who embrace the idea that God guided the evolutionary process (41 percent) (Pew Forum 2011b: 47–48). This is not to mention proponents of Intelligent Design who often steer away from literal readings of Genesis but nevertheless resist the focus on natural selection in modern evolutionary thought, arguing instead that key features of life on earth can only be explained via recourse to an Intelligent Designer.

For all of the attention paid to more formal debates regarding the relationship between Christianity and modern scientific trends, for most believers such disputes ultimately matter far less than more mundane concerns, in particular concerns related to physical health and healing. As such, conservative Christians' attitudes towards modern medicine may offer a far better gauge of most individuals' approach to science than arguments surrounding evolution and the like. In this regard, only a small minority endorse absolute prohibitions against medical aid. Even so, the lack of adequate medical care throughout much of the Global South has helped propel the growth of Pentecostal-style divine healing practices, which in turn has served as a major driver of the growth of conservative Christianity throughout the late twentieth, early twenty-first centuries (Brown 2011).

Conclusion

Conservative Christians around the globe may agree on the divine inspiration of scripture, the necessity of Christian witness, and the atoning sacrifice of Christ's death, yet these common convictions have by no means led to uniform conclusions on a host of other issues: High-profile conservative Christians have not hesitated to denounce co-religionists associated with other faiths and competing branches of Christianity, while others work diligently towards meaningful dialogue with religious 'others'. Some disavow political and social action in favour of more spiritually-minded pursuits in preparation for Jesus's Second Coming. A larger number fight to transform their political and social environments and bring them into alignment with Christian principles. Most resist thoroughgoing revisions of traditional gender norms, especially as they pertain to human sexuality, but for many this relative conservatism has not prevented greater openness to female religious leaders or to conservative

Christian women in the workplace. Significant differences of opinion likewise manifest in conservative believers' approaches to everything from evolutionary thought to the possibility of divine healing.

Due in large part to the sheer diversity and adaptability evident among adherents around the world, all signs point towards the continued growth of more traditional forms of Christianity. Predicting the precise contours of this future growth, however, proves difficult. At the turn of the twentieth century few could have foreseen the rapprochement between Protestants and Catholics that has occurred in the ensuing decades, and moving forward similar surprises undoubtedly await. All of that said, two things nevertheless seem certain: The centre of gravity for global expressions of conservative Christianity will continue to shift towards the Global South into the foreseeable future. And over the course of the twenty-first century conservative believers will continue to find ways to defend their core Christian commitments and practices even as they adapt—at times in dramatic fashion—to a rapidly evolving, globally inter-connected world.

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CHAPTER 5

The Charismatic Renewal

History, Diversity, Complexity

Joshua R. Ziefle

Introduction

> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
>
> JOHN 3:8 (KJV)

In 1910, representatives of what was then considered to be 'world Christianity' gathered together at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. The conference was less a demographic reflection of the global Church than it was a picture of the power structures in place within Protestantism at that time. Of the near 1200 attendees, most were from the United Kingdom and the United States. No Roman Catholics were involved, nor was there any representation from 'native churches' in Africa, Asia, or Latin America.

Though the work of this largely Anglo-Saxon group remains tinged with the imperialism of the time, their efforts anticipated both the rise of the ecumenical movement and the explosive growth of Christianity in the next century. Yet it was not the World Missionary Conference itself that brought about the fulfillment of these potentialities, but a small sect of Christianity that by 1910 had only begun to take root in the United States and elsewhere. Pentecostalism and its inheritors in the Charismatic Renewal, whose style of faith was barely if at all acknowledged by the powerful in Edinburgh, would come to influence and change the face of worldwide Christianity more than any other. It was this revival that would lead to significant numerical growth and a deeply organic ecumenism of experience over the course of the twentieth century. Today, a large cross-section of the Church has become defined by its practices, worldview, and outlook.

In 1910 there were only about 1 million who could be classified as participants in the Charismatic Renewal (Johnson 2006: 76). Today, some estimates suggest there are over 585 million renewalists around the globe (World Christian Database 2010). Even if these numbers are—as some suspect—optimistic, miscalculated, or inflated, they still represent meteoric growth

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over the course of a century. A substantial amount of this growth has taken place in the Majority World. According to some estimates, Asia now has over 125 million, Latin America over 180 million, and Africa over 175 million practicing this form of faith. Some scholars predict that worldwide proponents of charismatic Christianity could grow to 789 million by 2025 (Johnson 2006: 76). Such growth, while explosive, is not new. Even in the 1950s, there was a growing realisation that the Church was in flux. Henry Pitney van Dusen of Union Theological Seminary wrote in 1958 that there was a "third force in Christendom" alongside Protestantism and Roman Catholicism/Eastern Orthodoxy (van Dusen 1958: 122–123). This new entity was a deeply charismatic one.

In light of the Charismatic Renewal's importance for world Christianity, this chapter will investigate three aspects of the movement. First, it will provide a historical overview of its deep roots in Church history, development in the early twentieth century, and growth over the last hundred years. Second, it will describe the various strands that have come to define the revival. Third, it will offer an analysis of the current state of the movement, the controversies that have come to define it, and the Charismatic Renewal's potential in the twenty-first century.

Some Definitions

A defining characteristic of the Charismatic Renewal is its focus upon 'experience'. This fact alone has given the movement its deepest appeal and revealed its greatest potential. As descriptive as it is unifying, a deep experience of the Holy Spirit represents the important *sine qua non* of charismatic Christianity. As theologian Keith Warrington writes, adherents "value experience-based encounters with God because they have the potential to transform believers" (Warrington 2008: 26). So too historian Allan Anderson speaks of "an ecumenical movement of people claiming a common experience rather than a common doctrine" (Anderson 2004: 60). The possibilities inherent in such an experiential faith exhibit not only the realities and possibilities for transformative growth but broad-based unity as well.

Various conflicting terms have often been used with reference to the strands of the Charismatic Renewal, and their multiplicity often causes confusion. For my purposes, it makes sense to define the movement inclusively. I therefore follow Allan Anderson's approach by focusing upon both spiritual gifts and experience(s) of the Holy Spirit (Anderson 2013: 8). As I use the term Charismatic Renewal, it encompasses classical first-generation Pentecostalism, the

Charismatic Movement in Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, later evangelical acceptance of "signs and wonders", and the vast number of indigenous Spirit-based experiential movements the world over. While this chapter is not specifically about traditional Pentecostalism, its shared history and role within the Charismatic Renewal means that both must be discussed. The porous boundaries that exist between Pentecostalism and its cousins mean that it is better to consider them together under a broader heading.

Within the revival, experience is primary. Not simply any experience, however, but a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit often accompanied by physical or mystical manifestations. The day of Pentecost is paradigmatic if not exhaustive in this respect. A corollary to experience is a secondary characteristic: power. Borrowing here from *Acts* 1:8 ("But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you", KJV), this power is manifested in many ways, such as evangelistic zeal, miracles of healing, confidence in a world of spiritual warfare, and resultant overcoming life of faith. Relatedly, the Charismatic Renewal is also characterised by a kind of 'restorationism' or 'primitivism' (Wacker 2001: 10). Renewalists seek to embrace a prime and undiluted form of Christianity, and most often look to the book of *Acts* for this picture. From this vantage point, it is not difficult to see where an emphasis upon experiences with the Holy Spirit and miraculous powers finds its roots.

Historical Roots

Experience, power, and restoration are themes that have echoed throughout the history of the Church. As elemental aspects of Christianity, their foundational role means that there has always been a charismatic presence in both the architecture and practice of the Church. This is not the same as saying that Christianity has always had a definable branch like today's Charismatic Renewal. It does, however, mean that the current revival is not out of keeping with two millennia of experience.

Recounting the history of all the charismatic nuances in Church history is the work of multiple volumes, and as such I will only provide a few key highlights. We begin, not surprisingly, in the pages of the New Testament. The book of *Acts*, long a paradigmatic starting point for charismatic believers, recounts the miraculous and transformative work on the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and beyond. *I Corinthians* and other biblical texts continue this emphasis. In the immediate post-New Testament era, history testifies to the persistence of the *charismata*. The *Didache*, a second century text, has allowances for travelling

prophets. In the same era, Montanus and his followers practiced an intense form of Christianity that involved being inhabited by the Holy Spirit and prophesying.

As time progressed and the Church began to organise and gain official state recognition, outliers like these became much more the exception. As an increasingly strong divide between clergy and laity developed, certain spiritual experiences and giftings became more reserved for saints, leaders, and mystics. Yet even then, the fact that they existed at all lends credence to the continuing role of such phenomena. One can point to any number of medieval figures here. In the East, Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) reflected deeply on the work of the Spirit and sought to have the spiritual gifts at work in his life. In the West, mystics like Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Julian of Norwich (ca. 1342–1416) testify to transformative experiences with God very much in keeping with charismatic antecedents.

Though the mainstream of the magisterial Reformation is not deeply charismatic in and of itself, for some like Luther the role of spiritual experience was vital in his transition from Roman Catholicism. The Radical Reformers displayed greater openness to matters of the Spirit, though in some cases this would spin off into increasingly fragmented or ultimately untenable groupings. The real import for the modern-day Charismatic Renewal, however, came not from the sixteenth century itself, but rather as a reaction to the era that followed. The rigid confessionalism of the era of Lutheran Orthodoxy led many to respond with Pietism, a revival movement aimed at understanding faith as trust in God and elevating the role of the heart and emotions.

Pentecostal Foundations

In his now classic work *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Walter Hollenweger described contemporary charismatic Christianity by means of diverse 'roots' (Hollenweger 1997). The complex story of the modern movement almost demands such an approach. From seventeenth century Pietism, strands of the experiential combined with the ever-present charismatic element in Christianity, eventually leading to the Charismatic Renewal as we know it today. The historical trajectory is familiar, following a path through John Wesley and the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century. Wesley's efforts and the work of others like Whitefield helped provide a transatlantic element to the burgeoning movement. In the American context (and elsewhere as mediated through the mission field, revivalist press, and

subsequent indigenisation) this emphasis upon religion of the heart contributed to the emergence of the revival culture of the United States.

Following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the search for sanctification through revival meetings opened a doorway for an understanding of additional 'blessings' in the Christian life beyond salvation proper. A growing understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in such occurrences became commonplace. Many groups of the late nineteenth century began referring to the experience of Pentecost and 'Holy Spirit baptism' as important for the Christian life (Dayton 1987; Synan 1997). Such terms plainly indicate their understanding that the New Testament era of God's miraculous power was being restored in their time.

As Spirit baptism came to be linked with the New Testament experience of *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues, what is traditionally called 'classical Pentecostalism' emerged. Denominationally separate from other revivalist churches, Pentecostalism represents the 'First Wave' of the Charismatic Renewal. This story has traditionally been told in terms of a wholly American genesis—often at the Azusa Street revival of 1906—followed by a missionary diaspora that spread the fires of Pentecost across the United States and the entire globe (Bartleman 1925; Robeck 2006). While there is much to commend about this approach, others have more recently corrected this very American-centred approach in favour of one that posits, if not independent beginnings in various locations, at least the deep and early indigenisation of the movement. When considering alternate starting places for Pentecostalism, historians sometimes point to the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 as evidence (Synan 1997: 86). The work of Pandita Ramabai at the Mukti Mission in India stands as a notable example of independent emergence and early embrace of the revival (Satyavrata 1999: 203–221). Similar claims have been made concerning "precursors of Pentecostalism" in China, Korea, and elsewhere (Anderson 2013: 11–36, 43–50). These multivariate beginnings and early indigenisation therefore constitute not only an important insight into beginnings, but serve as a portent of the worldwide phenomenon that is the Charismatic Renewal today.

Because of the deep restorationist understanding of the movement's earliest adherents and the belief that a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign of 'Latter Rain' marking the beginning of the last days, many early Pentecostals were often rhetorically and vehemently undenominational in their orientation. Convinced that the Holy Spirit was for all believers, they were quick to preach this 'Full Gospel' message wherever they went. At the same time, their rejection at the hands of those who did not endorse their experience and the growing need to organise themselves eventually led to the formation of specifically Pentecostal denominations. In the United States, the

African-American Holiness denomination the Church of God in Christ converted to Pentecostalism not long after Azusa. The Assemblies of God, a largely white group of ministers less committed to certain aspects of Holiness teaching, organised themselves in 1914. Outside the United States, Methodist efforts in Chile that transitioned to Pentecostalism under Willis Hoover coalesced in the Methodist Pentecostal Church in 1910. It soon became indigenised (Anderson 2013: 172–174). The Assemblies of God in Brazil—connected to yet largely independent from the American institution—came together in 1911.

Over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, the Pentecostal movement saw steady numerical and geographical expansion. In the American context, the Assemblies of God grew to over 500,000 members by 1960 (Assemblies of God Publication Department 1960). As a sign of their growing presence and influence, the denomination became a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942. In Europe, the Pentecostal World Fellowship was organised following the Second World War as a means of bringing unity to the diverse movements. During the same era, passionately enthusiastic derivations of Pentecostalism such as the so-called "New Order of the Latter Rain" and the rise of the Salvation-Healing revivals of the 1950s enlivened even as they diversified the revival's reach (Harrell 1975). Before long, such developments would transition into the Charismatic Movement.

The Charismatic Movement

Popular accounts of the emergence of the Charismatic Movement often begin around 1960, when stories of Pentecostal-like phenomena such as speaking in tongues started to emerge in unexpected places. Most notable in this respect is the story of Dennis Bennett, an Anglican rector in California whose experience of *glossolalia* was featured in *Newsweek* (1960: 77). Yet his subsequent visibility has often obscured the fact that the expansion of the Charismatic Renewal had been underway for some time. British Pentecostal Donald Gee's *Pentecost*, for instance, had published accounts of extra-Pentecostal activities during the 1950s (*Pentecost* 1953: 5). So too the growing reach of the burgeoning Salvation-Healing Revival provided a window into the Pentecostal style for outsiders. On a professional level, Demos Shakarian's Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International presented Pentecostalism such that its theological and experiential foreignness appeared much less pronounced (Shakarian 1975).

At the same time, ecumenical interest in the Charismatic Renewal grew. Pentecostal minister David du Plessis found himself caught up in this intrigue as he became a fixture at ecumenical meetings of the 1950s and 1960s (Du

Plessis and Slosser 1977). In his role as "Mr Pentecost", he provided an important bridge between his Pentecostal coreligionists and other Christians who were interested in the vibrant yet peculiar movement.

When non-Pentecostals like Dennis Bennett embraced Pentecostal experience in the 1960s, they were simply traversing ground that had been being cleared for a number of years. Such developments were not foundational, yet did lend prominence to the new Charismatic Movement. Adherents of this 'Second Wave', unlike their Pentecostal ancestors, did not leave their original church homes but rather expressed themselves as Spirit-filled believers in whatever tradition they called their own. Mainline Protestantism in the United States was powerfully affected by these changes. Individuals such as theologian J. Rodman Williams (Presbyterian), minister Larry Christenson (Lutheran), author John Sherrill, and others left their mark on these continuing developments of Pentecost outside Pentecostalism.

Protestantism was not alone in experiencing the changes wrought by the Charismatic Movement. Drawing both on the ancient traditions of Christianity and the new openness to the Spirit brought on by the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholics were well prepared to embrace the revival. The Charismatic Movement in Roman Catholicism began in 1967 at Dusquesne University in Pennsylvania. Not long after, the University of Notre Dame in Indiana became the revival's home. Students, faculty, and clergy embraced their new experiences within the Roman Catholic tradition. Writing during the era, Edward O'Connor noted "God is no longer a peripheral figure on their horizon; he has established himself right at the center of their lives and their thought" (O'Connor 1974: 142). This new influence within Roman Catholicism was not limited to the United States. Eventually, Cardinal Suenens of Belgium—one of the leading figures in Vatican II—became a leading proponent of the changes taking place. Not long after the revival's emergence, individuals such as Suenens, du Plessis, and others were influential in helping establish the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue for ecumenical conversations about related issues.

The Dialogue was but one sign of the enthusiasm of the times, as many of those caught up in the Charismatic Movement in mainline and Roman Catholic churches felt that it was God's plan to unite the worldwide Church. The rhetoric and optics of the era were powerful; nowhere was this more true than at the 1977 Kansas City Conference on the Charismatic Renewal (Synan 1997: 260–263). All branches of the revival were represented, including classical Pentecostals from the Assemblies of God, independent ambassadors like David du Plessis, Lutheran and Presbyterians charismatics, and leaders within Roman Catholicism. Amongst the powerful moments from the event was a message

interpreted as prophecy from God: "Come before me, with broken hearts and contrite spirits, /for the body of my son is broken… Turn from the sins of your fathers/And walk in the ways of my Son/Return to the plan of your Father" (Manuel 1977: 195).

While the talk of ecumenism was powerful during this era, history transpired such that the Charismatic Movement did not herald the end of Christian division. Natural differences in perspective and theology were apparent early on, and over time some charismatics preferred to organise within their own denominational fellowships. So too during the later 1970s and early 1980s a strongly submission-based theory of leadership called 'shepherding' led to many concerns (Moore 2003). While the concomitant rise of televangelists like Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart, and others drew significant attention to the Charismatic Renewal, their celebrity status may have distracted participants from more grassroots ecumenism even while they raised doubts about its verity. The eventual scandal and controversy some television preachers engendered further soured the movement's image. Today, Pat Robertson's media presence and the persistence of the Trinity Broadcasting Network in the United States continue to advance this tradition.

The 'Third Wave' and More

The Second Wave of the Charismatic Renewal, while ecumenically incomplete, did set the stage for a shared experience and tone throughout Christendom. Though this became increasingly diffuse in the 1980s and beyond, the effects remained. During that period, a so-called 'Third Wave' emerged within American evangelicalism. Less concerned with traditional Pentecostalism doctrines of the meaning of *glossolalia* or Spirit Baptism proper, proponents of this iteration focused their attention especially on miraculous potential inherent in the power of the Holy Spirit. As early proponent C. Peter Wagner has written, "There is church growth with signs and wonders. This is real power evangelism as I understand it, and this is where most of the action is currently found" (Wagner 1988: 89). Something like this Third Wave development within the Charismatic Renewal is a sign of the continuing reach of the revival even as it metamorphosised over time.

Yet even the idea of a Third Wave does nothing hide the reality that the history of the Charismatic Renewal is most often told from an American standpoint. Due to the fact that this larger revival has seen its most explosive growth in the Majority World, it makes sense to understand some of that history as well. Each

of the three 'waves' mentioned so far has its place, even though indigenous development is an important factor on its own.

Classical Pentecostalism provided vital missionary fervour in the initial decades of the movement and helped to spread its message across the globe. Something like the more recent "Word of Faith" movement amongst independent Pentecostals, which encourages its followers to seek God's physical or material blessing in this world, has clear ties to ministries in the United States such as those of Kenneth Hagin or Kenneth Copeland (Lovett 2002: 992–994; Bowler 2013). It has, over time, become influential in certain areas of the Majority World. In many cases its success has deep connection to indigenous concerns and spiritual worldviews rather than being a case of religious imperialism. Indeed, missionary growth through connection with Western groups has not been the only means by which the revival has spread. In some cases—as discussed earlier—classical Pentecostalism in places like India had nearly independent origins from Azusa Street. Even in those areas that had been worked by Western missionaries, a parallel rise of independent Pentecostal groups disconnected from existing denominations was not uncommon. The work of William Wade Harris and others is foundational in independent African 'churches of the Spirit', and there is significant belief that many of the untold number of churches in China "exhibit pentecostal features or have been influenced by Pentecostalism" (Anderson 2013: 197, 180–191).

The Charismatic Movement has had a powerful impact on Christianity as it has spread through Latin America. There, the pervasiveness of Roman Catholicism and persistent religious traditions provided a ready entrée for new experiential expressions, even as Church leaders sought to respond to the denominational and independent Pentecostal growth sapping their numbers. In Africa, existing missionary churches and networks from older denominations also had the opportunity to embrace the more spiritualist worldview of indigenous peoples. Speaking of the African Independent Churches (AICs) that share much in common with Pentecostalism, Cephas Omenyo says they "are known to be the first to attempt to thoroughly contextualise Christianity by making a smooth transition from primal religious expressions of faith in the African context to Christianity" (Omenyo 2009: 58). This adaptability of the charismatic ethos both defines and establishes the effects of the worldwide Charismatic Renewal. Further, if we take into consideration the pervasiveness of religious media in our global culture, many Christians in Latin America, Asia, and Africa are influenced, regardless of membership in a Pentecostal denomination or charismatic group.

In this sense, the Third Wave of the Charismatic Renewal, though in some ways derivative of American evangelicalism, is illustrative. Its focus on 'signs

and wonders' and 'power evangelism' as hallmarks of the Spirit's work resonates powerfully with traditional indigenous worldviews. As the Third Wave is itself a distillation of aspects of charismatic teaching, so too it helps explain and illustrate the growth of the revival across the globe, especially in the latter half the twentieth century.

Types of Charismatic Renewal

Each of the developmental stages of the Charismatic Renewal continues to have impact today. These strands of the movement are important, for they comprise the increasingly active and growing enterprise that is the twenty-first century Church.

Concern persists over the numbering and counting of adherents in each group. This makes sense, especially when considering the amorphous and diffuse nature of the revival. Though I contend that the entire movement can be characterised by the qualities of experience, restorationism, and power in the Spirit, these qualities do little to specifically detail its various branches. Even the experience and theology surrounding *glossolalia* and Spirit baptism, long continued to be a defining hallmark amongst its varieties, is not always as clear as one might like it to be. With these caveats in mind I will address four contemporary strands of the Charismatic Renewal.

Pentecostals

Classical Pentecostalism is historically the first branch of the Charismatic Renewal. It continues to be its most organised and easily definable strand. Shunned and rejected by both mainline churches and nascent American fundamentalism, they quickly established their own denominational structures. These groups—the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the Assemblies of God, and others—persist today in the United States and around the world.

Often but not always tied to the practice of *glossolalia*, baptism in the Holy Spirit is a sought-after initiatory rite subsequent to salvation that is embraced as a promise for all Christian believers. It is as deeply experiential as it is emotive. Though not all Pentecostals ultimately receive 'the gift', it is near universally sought. When tongues and other phenomena are evidentially tied to it, Pentecostals are also able to point to a definitive and demonstrable event in their lives that marked their entry into the revival. An endowment of power,

religious fervour, and passion for Christian witness are understood to be constituent elements of this experience. By nature of the evangelistic zeal engendered in their experiences of the Holy Spirit, as well as the structures and organisation provided by their denominational groupings, many branches of Pentecostalism are heavily involved in missionary efforts. These undertakings have had powerful consequences upon the growth and indigenisation of the movement.

Because of its primacy of place and pride in restoring the 'Full Gospel' of Pentecostal truth, this first strand of the revival did not quickly embrace the boundary shattering developments that constituted the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Ziefle 2013: 137–157). Eventually, however, Pentecostalism came to support what is perceived to be the work of the Holy Spirit in and amongst various churches. The enthusiasm of the Charismatic Movement towards what it understood to be Spirit-based ecumenism has spilled over into traditional Pentecostalism, even if the latter remains more cautious in their approach.

Charismatics

Traditional Pentecostals have doctrines that trace their roots to the revival culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Charismatics, by contrast, remain within the theological traditions of which they are a part (such as Baptist, Roman Catholic, or Episcopalian) even as they flavour them with a variety of aspects of charismatic teaching. They are much less doctrinaire on the idea of *glossolalia* as initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism, preferring to see it as initiatory to a range of spiritual gifts.

The Charismatic Movement has had especially deep influence within Roman Catholicism. As Allan Anderson has written, "some observers think that in 2010 there might have been almost twice as many Catholic Charismatics in Latin America as Pentecostals—some 73 million" (Anderson 2013: 180). In many places the Charismatic Movement has helped make the work of the Holy Spirit a ubiquitous feature of Christianity. The presence of the experiential and powerful work of the Spirit (with less emphasis on restoration here than in classical Pentecostalism) is now largely accepted or tolerated within circles in which it would have been somewhat foreign in past generations. American Presbyterianism saw increased openness to these new trends (*Minutes of the One-Hundred-Eleventh General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* 1971: 104–117). The supportive involvement and evaluations offered by Presbyterian elder statesman John Mackay, formerly president of

Princeton Seminary, also remain encouraging (Curlee and Isaac-Curlee 1994: 141–156). So too have Roman Catholic pronouncements been forthcoming. In this, Paul VI's comments from the 1975 Congress on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church stand out: "Nothing is more necessary to this more and more secularized world… than the witness of this 'spiritual renewal' that we see the Holy Spirit evoking in the most diverse regions and milieu" (Du Plessis 1977: 241). Pope Francis himself recently recanted his former rejection of the Charismatic Movement, saying "Now I think that this movement does much good for the Church, overall" (Rocca 2013).

Though it is true that the Charismatic Movement proper has experienced declension as an organised force since its heyday in the 1970s, its energies have not been spent. Charismatic activity persists powerfully around the world, especially as indigenous religious traditions and worldviews find much at home in the spiritual world the revival has to offer.

Third-Wavers

The so-called 'Third Wave' of the Charismatic Renewal is illustrative of the pervasiveness of the charismatic perspective. These formerly skeptical evangelicals embraced engaged modes of worship and stylistic choices that echoed the casual and expressive nature of the early Pentecostal and Charismatic revivals. Its participants are in many ways the most removed from traditional Pentecostal theology. Though participants embrace the use of spiritual gifts and the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst, they are not as concerned as Pentecostals and Charismatics with issues of Spirit baptism, the subsequence of tongues, or the various theological issues involved.

The Third Wave of the Charismatic Renewal is less a theological system or definable group than a kind of tone within Christianity. In this respect Wagner's claims regarding spiritual worldview make sense: "If we recognize the whole of reality, like the early Christians or like these new Christians in the Third World, we can see Jesus in a whole new way. We can also see his power at work as it did in biblical times" (Wagner 1988: 86). This appreciation for the mysterious, powerful, and experiential work of God is also becoming a pervasive feature of world Christianity, perhaps more so than at any time since its first few centuries.

The Charismatic Renewal of the Majority World

In the Majority World the Charismatic Renewal has taken hold through missionary efforts and organic development, emerging into what we will call the

World Charismatic Revival. As a fourth strand of the Charismatic Renewal, it exists not in chronological relation to the other three, but rather as a parallel track of revival that has interacted with and been influenced by each of the other three. This Christianity has heavily indigenised charismatic practice and ethos. It is not so much the work of adapting outside teaching into an existing cultural idiom as it is—especially in places like sub-Saharan Africa—the reality of two spiritualist worldviews coming together.

The natural affinities the Charismatic Renewal has with indigenous peoples has meant that, at times, very little convincing is necessary in encouraging its adoption. Considering the propensity of a movement based upon experience to be highly cross-culturally adaptable, the World Charismatic Revival has become a powerful force within Christendom. Though not a unified force, the movement and its collective influence numerically overshadows American-based Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Third-Wavers around whom the story of the revival is usually centred.

In addition to the traditional 'three-self' model inherited from missions, the reality of self-theologising is also a part of the World Charismatic Revival. Because of the decisive shift in the centre of balance within Christianity and its increasingly charismatic tone, it stands to reason that theological shifts would emerge. Sometimes this has meant embracing ideas related to the prosperity teachers of the West. Because of the exigencies of life in some parts of the Majority World, these teachings have resonated for many as a kind of need fulfillment. Though many claim undue American influence, others see a uniquely indigenous desire for change at work in these preferences (Anderson 2013: 219–223). As Cephas Omenyo notes, "Africans have shown a high propensity to adapt and accommodate new religions and religious denominations as long as they are perceived as having the resources to meet their pressing needs" (Omenyo 2009: 83). Sociologist David Martin has made similar claims for the Pentecostalism of Latin America, where the Charismatic Renewal can provide opportunities for personal and communal change (Martin 2002: 83–118).

Self-theologising in the World Charismatic Revival, while notable, has exacerbated the problems faced by statisticians tasked with determining which Christians belong in which groups. Especially in the case of African Indigenous Churches (AICs), combinations of native religious practices with Christianity raise questions concerning syncretism or religious combination. So too in places like Korea and elsewhere, questions about Pentecostalism vis-à-vis traditional religious worldviews persist (Kim 2009: 137–156).

The worldwide explosion of the Charismatic Renewal and the way in which all facets of the revival intertwine and permeate each other today makes for difficult categorisation. On the whole it is safest to say that the Charismatic Renewal is best understood as one in which experience permeates beliefs.

For the charismatic Christian, forms of worship are engaging and deeply emotive. Experiences of power and union with the Divine are regularly sought. A deep awareness of the reality of the supernatural persists throughout, often represented by efforts towards and reflection upon the idea of spiritual warfare. As the work of one common Holy Spirit, the encounters shared by participants the world over also carry with them a deep-seated and persistent ecumenism. As much as the experience of the Holy Spirit is about power and restoration of days gone by, it is also highly evocative of an at least partially realised eschatological framework (Anderson 2013: 222–223). Echoes of not only the Day of Pentecost but also the annunciation of Jesus's mission in Luke 4:18–19 continue to reverberate throughout the revival: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor… to proclaim freedom for the prisoner and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (NIV).

A Short Analysis

The Charismatic Renewal is one of the most transformative developments in the history of Christianity. The numbers alone are staggering. Even if the projections referenced by Philip Jenkins do not hold, being able to legitimately posit that there will be one billion charismatic Christians by 2050 is astounding for a movement a little over a century old (Jenkins 2002: 8). Yet even as these numbers have been utilised to great effect in both scholarly and popular circles, two warnings must be kept in mind. First is the danger of triumphalism. While for outside observers such growth understandably warrants attention, for those within the movement such admiring press may have unforeseen effects. Participants can become far too easily enamored by its success without engaging in objective reflection or critical analysis. Second, we must keep in mind that due to the amorphous and adaptable nature of the movement, it is difficult to quantify in the first place. We know there are a lot of charismatic Christians and that their numbers have grown sizably in the past decades, but determining exactly how many there are remains a hazy task (Anderson 2010: 55).

The triple themes of the Charismatic Renewal—experience, spiritual power, and restoration—resonate strongly throughout, and are considered vital for its growth. Though missions efforts may have provided the initial spark, the movement's de-emphasis on education or structure in favour of experience and the guidance of the Holy Spirit has been essential. This ability to quickly indigenise and adapt has been a hallmark of the Charismatic Renewal, aided by its

continued focus upon restoring the nascent Church of *Acts*. Believing that God can give any Christian the gifts of the Holy Spirit, revival adherents have sounded forth a new reality of the "priesthood of all believers". In Majority World cultures where the presence of the supernatural is largely taken for granted, the parallel worldview of the revival and its promises of spiritual power have made it an attractive option for many.

Shifting Centres of Power

As the twenty-first century continues, many have looked to the Charismatic Renewal as a continuing hallmark of the Church (Poewe 1994). The shift in the Church's centre of gravity towards the Majority World has been significant, and will be more pronounced over time. As the Charismatic Renewal continues to gain adherents in such places, their influence will naturally follow. Though the West continues its dominance due to economic, historical, and geopolitical factors, the sheer weight of the Charismatic Renewal guarantees that this will not be the case forever.

Allan Anderson is illustrative on these points as he describes the revival as nothing less than an "African Reformation" (2004: 104). This is not to mention the significant effect of the Charismatic Renewal upon Latin America and throughout Asia. Across the globe the revival has been and is making itself known. In the United States this has been through growth in classical Pentecostalism and the influence of both the Charismatic Movement and the 'Third Wave'. Pentecostals in the United States now comprise two of the top ten largest denominations, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ (Rainer 2013). Furthermore, the influence of the Pentecostal tone, form, and style of worship has had pervasive effects upon the ways in which American Christians of all stripes live their faith. These realities echo throughout the world, often connecting with indigenous religious perspectives that take even more seriously the revival's claims of power.

Cataloguing a Movement

Challenges posed by this new era are multiple. Terminology is one of these difficulties. Words like 'Pentecostal', 'Charismatic', and 'Spirit-filled' are used interchangeably and without clear definition. While each may be appropriate at certain times, they wreak havoc on efforts at classification and understanding. Ultimately, all of this points to an even deeper issue: definition. Though

the scholar's task is not primarily passing judgment upon their subjects, analysis of the movement requires discernment and definition. Knowing who is 'inside' and 'outside' is vital. While statistics based upon the membership rolls of Pentecostal denominations are fairly straightforward, determining which Roman Catholics are charismatic can prove problematic—especially when experience or individual religious expressions are the only categories by which we can measure. This is not even taking into account the house church movement in China or the AICs, the latter of which sometimes stand apart from even traditional Christianity.

Emerging Tensions

Regardless of how they are counted, as the Charismatic Renewal continues to expand throughout the Majority World their increasingly ubiquitous presence has two additional implications. The first of these involves increased tension with the existing Christian establishment. Because revival adherents continue to self-theologise, indigenise, and adapt Pentecostal experience and style in their own contexts, differences will continue to emerge between Western and Majority World forms. Some of this has already taken place in international church communions where conservative opinions related to homosexuality have been promulgated in the Majority World (Heneghan 2013). Looking ahead, theologies related to prosperity teaching or the like may become increasingly the mark of the Majority World Christianity, while older members of the Charismatic Renewal will be left continually pushing back against a movement it both admires and fears. The control and primacy long provided by the West is fading, and with that comes doubts amongst some about the direction in which the Church is headed.

Routinisation of the *charisma* (Poloma 1989) and secularisation persist in the West—despite protestations to the contrary—even as the experience of many in the Majority World is very much the opposite. These continuing changes are hallmarks of the emerging tensions even within the Charismatic Renewal itself. Add to this mix the complications of race, the legacy of colonialism, and the changing balance of power in Christendom, and the potential for controversy becomes all too clear. Whether the West chooses to interact with the Majority World in partnership or hierarchy will be an important indicator of how this relationship will develop.

A second implication of the growth of the Charismatic Renewal is not in its relationship to the West, but is more wholly focused upon the Majority World itself. Historically, theologically, and experientially, the religious strands

represented within the Charismatic Renewal have tended to focus on the so-called 'margins'. Whether amongst early twentieth century religious outsiders in the United States, an orphanage in India, or amongst the globally marginalised in sub-Saharan Africa, the revival has often appealed to those for whom it has so much to offer.

With its massive growth around the world, however, this formerly outcast religious group has begun to move ever closer towards the mainstream of Christianity. It is worth asking, therefore, whether the Charismatic Renewal can rightly be considered peripheral. If it is not, a host of questions about its new central place in Christendom present themselves. The dominance of the movement means that new power dynamics are emerging with radical implications for the Church. Caught in the midst of these changes will be those who were attracted to the transformation offered by the Charismatic Renewal and its potential for personal and societal change (Anderson 2013: 115–117, 222–223, 250–252). It is quite possible that the increasing 'establishment' of such religious forms may dull its oppositional stance to the world and its systems. If rising in power means becoming comfortable with, complacent about, or co-opted by other forces, the consequences of this upon the identity of Pentecostals, Charismatics, and their co-religionists the world over will be profound.

Conclusion

If the Charismatic Renewal is defined by its emphasis upon experience and to a lesser extent by the related concepts of spiritual power and New Testament restoration, its very nature makes it a prime candidate for Christian ecumenism. So convinced of this was twentieth century Pentecostal leader David du Plessis that he once said the following: "The renewal of Christianity must be both charismatic and ecumenical" (du Plessis 1981). Linking these two elements together has been a part of the deep history of the movement. The very same characteristics that have so quickly spread and indigenised are those that hold such ecumenical promise. Yet while the core conviction that the Spirit is to be "poured out on all flesh" (*Acts* 2:17, KJV) is central, a separatist strain also persists within the revival. Despite its desires for and orientation towards unity, the movement has in practice had a certain ambivalence towards ecumenism (Jacobsen 2010: 3–19). But if the ecumenism of the Charismatic Renewal is, as Cephas Omenyo claims, a kind of inadvertent one, it has nevertheless been widespread (Omenyo 2009: 70). Especially as this shared experience, style, and tone has come to dominate, the daily practice and baseline spirituality of Christians the world over has become ever more aligned. Though often taking

place on a grassroots level, there have also been official developments such as the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue and efforts by the World Council of Churches (Anderson 2013: 157–161). Whether this nascent ecumenism can hold together under the weight of the questions and diversities it contains remains the work of the revival in the twenty-first century.

The diverse indigenisation of a movement founded upon such transformative experience carries with it great promise. Numerically this has led to explosive and unheralded growth, even as it has established a kind of unity in diversity that transcends the various strands of the Charismatic Renewal. Even so, the sheer breadth of the movement leaves it open to disunity. Inasmuch as there are powerful bonds that unite the Charismatic Renewal, so too are a multitude of factors—geographical, cultural, theological, political, and otherwise—threatening this concord at every turn. Agreeing on the work of God in a person's life is one thing; asserting that because of this other factors no longer impede unity is quite another.

Ultimately, experience is the most important key to understanding the Charismatic Renewal. Though as hard to quantify as the revival is to define, it provides a clear starting point for describing its historical precedents and development, various strands, and contemporary existence. Both individual and deeply communal experiences of God, they are as post-modern in orientation as they are pre-modern in their basis. In the eschewing of the metanarratives of religion and science that defined the Modern era, Renewalism like its classical and medieval religious antecedents favours something Other. A burgeoning number of participants in the groundswell of Christianity that is the Charismatic Renewal have embraced what they understand to be God's presence in their lives. Because this presence is believed to be both divine and unitary, it makes sense that it would then become the basis upon which such an ecumenical revival movement is built.

Throughout the course of this chapter, I have attempted to make a strong case for why the Charismatic Renewal is both a significantly robust part of the Christian tradition and an important part of the contemporary religious landscape. Projections of its continued growth, especially in the Majority World, mean that students of religion and global citizens would be wise to pay attention to its development. Its core themes of restoration, power, and—above all—experience must be heeded, for they are becoming an important way that Christianity is lived out in our world.

For participants in the Charismatic Renewal, projections of growth and influence are heartening. Deeply rooted ecumenical desires and shared experiential realities carry with them the hope for Christianity to walk more of a shared path over the course of this developing century. Nevertheless,

caution, understanding, and discernment must prevail as the fires of Pentecost continue to burn brightly in ways both unexpected and at times strange. Above all, an awareness of the Christian virtue of humility must persist as we consider together the work of a movement that takes seriously the idea that the Spirit "blows where it wills" (*John* 3:8, RSV) in their lives and throughout the world.

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PART 2

Christian Institutions and Affiliation

CHAPTER 6

Religious Orders and Monastic Communities
Sociological Perspectives

Stefania Palmisano

Introduction

In approaching an analysis of religious orders and monastic communities in the Catholic context, some consideration would be useful before recalling sociological theories on the subject. Common speech mostly fails to distinguish among various aspects of consecrated life, so the world of the religious becomes a vague cloud. On the other hand, the evolution of Catholicism since the beginning of the twentieth century has rendered even more complex an already variegated situation. In accepting this evolution, the new edition of the Code of Canon Law (substituting that promulgated by Benedict XV in 1917) envisages different forms of consecrated life: from eremitism (defined on the basis of clear detachment) to Secular Institutes (which, on the contrary, specialise in total absorption into the world), by way of Orders, Congregations and Societies for Apostolic Life. As a general rule, what we usually define as religious orders are only one form of consecrated life, consisting—according with the juridical formula—in a "permanent form of life by means of which the faithful, following Christ closely through the action of the Holy Ghost, devote themselves totally to God, Whom they love above all things" (CCL, 573). Affiliates promise to observe the evangelical exhortation to poverty, chastity and obedience. The 'religious', therefore, are not comparable either to lay faithful or to diocesan priests. The 'religious', as well as the lay person, may acquire the priestly order and so carry out a sacred ministry (bishop, priest or deacon), or may remain in the lay state. In the same way, both clergy and laypeople may take vows and thus become part of some kind of consecrated life or choose to remain outside it (cf. Abbruzzese 1995).

The sociology of religious orders is quite new, even though the analyses of Durkheim, Weber and Troeltsch and, more recently, of Séguy (1971; 1984), contain valuable suggestions. We can identify its birth in the famous work *Zur Soziologie der katolischen indeenwelt und der Jesuitenorders* by G. Grundlach (1927), then followed by *Soziologie des Mönchtums und der Benediktinerregel* by A. Blazovich (1954); *Toward a Typology of Religious Orders* by E.K. Francis

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(1950); *Typologie sociologique de l'Ordre religieux* by M. Hill (1971); and two important contributions by J. Séguy, *Une Sociologie des sociétés imaginées: monachisme et utopie* (1971) and *Pour une Sociologie de l'ordre religieux* (1984).

We can schematically trace the variety of the sociology of religious orders to two main streams, one favouring integration and the other social conflict. The latter is of greater interest because, recalling Weber's and Troeltsch's intuitions, and by way of Séguy, it problematises the genesis and the outcomes of religious orders. Séguy (1984) highlights the counter-cultural spirit of a religious order by sociologically typifying it both as a sect and as a utopia. The former type emphasises a religious order's sectarian traits, representing it as an *Ecclesiola* in *Ecclesia*, with the same sectarian elements which can be found in other collective groups, both religious and non-religious. The following are the sectarian characteristics of religious orders: the voluntary nature of the organisation; 'total' and 'totalising' commitment, with more or less marked forms of control; determined, constant aspiration towards individual perfection fuelled by ethical radicalism; a spirit of elitism stressing the 'small-flock function'. Neverthless, compared with sects, religious orders present an important difference: their autonomy is limited by affiliation to the Church, that is, to the mediating structure which a sect has rather eliminated by setting itself up as the sole judge of the value of the message being transmitted (Hill 1971; Séguy 1984). In other words, a religious order possesses a protesting nature, but the protest which it represents within the Church—against the dominant culture and against society as a whole—remains limited; it is an 'internal' or 'implicit' protest, of a reformist nature rather than a 'radical' or 'explicit' revolutionary nature (Séguy 1984).

The second type emphasises the utopian traits of the religious orders. According to Séguy (1984), utopia creates an image which is alternative to continuity. More precisely, it is a model of ideological functioning which "recalls the past against the present and with a view to the future" (Séguy 1984: 332). This logic, the author continues, resides in every religious order. For example, every monastic creation presents itself at the beginning as a protest against a previous form of the monastic institution. This contestation is linked with the need for return to a primitive monastic ideal, a more authentic source which the innovators claim to be able to reach. Opponents—monastic, ecclesiastical and temporal authorities—consider the new creation as an innovation and try to block it, using against it delaying or braking tactics and, in some cases, both. They may go so far as to prevent the project from being fulfilled, rejecting the change of which it is the harbinger—which may provoke the birth of a heterodox group destined to disappear or, in any case, obstructed in its growth by persecution—or they may co-opt the innovation. In this last case the project's innovative range must make the necessary adjustments for its institutionalisation (Wittberg 2007).

What we have hitherto said clarifies that study of religious orders constitutes a privileged laboratory for sociological analysis. As we have seen, it is not limited to the religious sphere but extends to the dialectic between the society of origin and that of flight, almost as if understanding the world and how it works made sense by analysing its opposite, the alternative and the behaviour of those who have voluntarily distanced themselves from it. Thus the aim of this chapter is to grant new scientific visibility to a sociology of religious orders, particularly monasticism which, as is evidenced by studies which will be cited later, is gradually becoming stronger. In order to develop our theme, the following section will introduce theoretical notions of the sociology of monasticism. Section 3 will offer a conceptual map for the study of contemporary Catholic monasticism, whereas Section 4 dwells upon an emerging phenomenon worldwide: so-called New Monasticism. Finally, on the basis of research findings, an organisational model for the study of monasticism will be constructed.

Monasticism: Status Quaestionis

As distinct from the historians who have fully studied the monastic phenomenon—dwelling upon its role as the motor of economic and social development in mediaeval Western Europe—sociologists have hitherto practically ignored it, despite the fact that some classic works have drawn attention to it. Although the debate is acquiring substance, very few sociological studies of monasticism are available at the moment.[1] These contributions show that the semantic borders of the concept—and therefore of the phenomenon—are greatly blurred, proving once again that there is no one shared idea of what monasticism is. Thus, we should specify what we mean by monasticism in this field of studies before focussing on an analysis of contemporary monasticism.

The usual first step, when sociologists study social reality, is to carry out a critical analysis of the commonsense definitions and categories produced by the social actors. But a particular problem arises when the researchers approach monasticism: the indeterminate nature of the concept for the actors themselves.[2] Monks and nuns supply several different answers to the question "Who is a monk or a nun today?" Many of them, inspired by the Rule of Saint Benedict, state that anybody "who seeks God" is a monk; others—alluding to

1 See articles in *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion*, No. 5 (2014), edited by Isabelle Jonveaux, Enzo Pace and Stefania Palmisano devoted to "Sociology of Monasticism: Between Innovation and Tradition."

2 See Danièle Hervieu-Léger's reflections in *Tenersi fuori dal mondo* (2012). On this point see also Isabelle Jonveaux *Le monastère au Travail* (2011).

the Greek *monos*—that it is "whoever is one in the sense of united or unified"; still others that it is anybody "who has detached him/herself from the world with the aim of completing one's own spiritual perfection rather than of serving others". There is even more variety in the range of responses to the question "How do monks and nuns seek God today?" The most important dichotomy can be seen between those who separate from the world (with grilles, walls or watercourses) and those who—albeit maintaining a critical distance from the world—are incorporated into it, which is to say not taking refuge from it, rejecting the habit and enclosure and, as in urban monasticism, residing at the heart of the city. This vagueness demonstrates that 'monastic identity' is the object of very different approaches in the monastic world itself.

On the other hand, limiting our attention only to the Catholic environment, even Canon Law does not express objective criteria permitting identification (in the broadest milieu of consecrated life) of the specific subset made up of monks. In general, a monk is understood as anybody belonging to an order defined by the Catholic Church as a 'monastic order'.[3] In its turn such an order is traditionally identified as the foundation of communal life conducted in accordance with a Rule under the authority of a superior. The weakness of the discriminating power of this descriptive approach becomes immediately obvious if one recognises that it really embraces the majority of religious orders, including the mendicant ones and Congregations with an apostolic vocation. The lack of a shared definition shows up also in scientific literature, and an exploratory analysis of 'Monasticism' in some of the main dictionaries of social and religious sciences (on this topic see, among others, Keenan 2001; Kinsley 2005; Weckman 2005; Rademacher 2006) illustrates that the term, historically rooted in the Christian tradition, is often used in a general way to indicate very different phenomena, distant form one another in time and space, according to a descriptive, non-hermeneutical approach. For example, George Weckman (2005), in his entry 'Monasticism' in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, draws up a list of universal traits characterising monasticism, among which are: a distinct social status allowing a certain relational environment; life discipline; separation from ordinary existence in order to follow the path of perfection. Although this suggestion is praiseworthy for its attempt to identify a tool for transnational comparisons, it runs the risk of including in the definition of monasticism many forms of social aggregation which have nothing to do with religious and spiritual seeking.

3 In the 1917 Code of Canon Law there was a definition of nuns (Can. 488, §7), while in the 1983 Code the concept is mentioned, but its meaning is taken for granted. Cf. the distinction between the religious houses of regular canons or monks (Can. 613, § 1), or canons dedicated to–prevalently female–monasteries (Cans. 609, § 2; 614–615; 616, § 4; 630, § 3; 667, §§ 2–4).

To sum up, the sociology of monasticism is still today a narrow field whose principal limits are: Firstly, empirical research devoted to monasticism in Oriental religions (Buddhism, Taoism and Hinduism) is vastly superior to that carried out in the Christian word; secondly, in the Christian world much more research is dedicated to communities of 'active' rather than 'contemplative' life;[4] thirdly, the focus of research is mostly on the institutional aspects of monasticism, to the detriment of the monastery's internal dynamics; fourthly, most reflections on contemporary monastic life are provided by workers in the field, as is evidenced by the many periodicals (*Vie consacrée, Credere oggi, Erbe und Auftrag, Review of Religious Orders* and so on) transmitting the opinions of monks, nuns, abbots, abbesses and theologians of both sexes about changes in monasticism and future perspectives.

In the following section we shall examine post-Conciliar monasticism on the basis of an operating definition which sees monasticism as resting on four distinctive pillars: 1. (More-or-less stressed) physical separation; 2. Total involvement of daily life; 3. The existence of a Rule; 4. A contemplative-type religious-spiritual dimension.

Towards a Map of Contemporary Monasticism

It is well known that the Second Vatican Council created widespread contrast between innovative impulses and conservative reactions (Baudouin and Portier 2001, 2002; Pelletier 2002; Poulat 2003; Melloni and Ruggieri 2010; O'Malley 2012). In the context of consecrated life this conflict cannot be explained by a simplistic opposition between old and new institutions, but is more complicated: some institutions, both pre- and post-Conciliar, have instituted processes of renewal and reform experiments, whereas others have chosen more conservative directions. In the universe of monastic communities today, it is thus possible to distinguish two groups which we shall define—using conventional terminology—as 'old' and 'new' monasticism.[5]

4 This spiritual-type distinction is problematical because not only does it not give us any operative principle of differentiation between various concrete forms, but is also formally rejected by those who, in monasteries as well as in apostolic congregations, claim a vocation which is inseparably oriented towards contemplation and action. Here, however, it is used to counterpoint contemplatives (that is monks and nuns living in a monastery, often protected by enclosure) with male and female religious of an innerwordly stamp.

5 The proposed map is limited to the male monastic world. Nuns appear only when we speak about new communities born in the wake of Vatican II. The female monastic world merits a separate debate.

The former, made up of congregations and orders founded before Vatican II, reveal two clearly different orientations:

A. 'Traditional' or 'classical' communities which existed before the Council (Benedictines, Trappists and Cistercians, for instance) and have been renewed—with varying degrees of 'liberalism' in their interpretations—in line with its recommendations. To give an example, whereas the Camaldolese order adopted the Council's pronouncements literally (which explains the changeover to a totally Italian-language liturgy, the opening of monastic spaces to oecumenical and inter-religious hospitality, and abandoning the monastic habit in private), other congregations chose more prudent updating limited to superficial aspects of their monastic physiognomy while, at the same time, being careful not to take liberties with the Council's texts;

B. 'Traditionalist' or 'conservative' communities which, although they existed before the Council, reacted to its proposals by reintroducing previous liturgical forms, customs, and traditions. The Benedictine congregation will serve as an example. Starting in the 1960s, some of them set up—in France, Italy and the United States, where such experiences were most frequent—new foundations whose aim was to restore those monastic customs which, according to them, were in danger of being flooded by the wave of modernisation: ascetic practices, the Divine Office,[6] strictly enclosed life, total *fuga mundi*, the monastic habit and the tonsure. But the sociological datum which most distinguishes conservative monasticism is the preference for the liturgy according to the ancient Roman rite, including the Tridentine Mass and Gregorian Chant. Although neither Social Sciences nor History has hitherto taken much interest in this phenomenon—involving a small minority in the monastic world—it should not be neglected because statistical data on the communities' numbers and the novitiate situation reveal a rapidly-growing movement. It also needs to be emphasised that this (small) group is not internally homogeneous and undifferentiated: the 'ultra-traditionalists' counterpoint the 'traditionalists'. The most notable differences can be found in their ecclesiological position and their relationship with the heritage of Vatican II: whereas the latter are in communion with Rome and do not contest the Council's innovations, the former are in open disagreement

6 All the prayer time spread out over the monks' day: according to the Rule of Saint Benedict, it is divided into seven "hours" plus night rising.

with Rome, with the papal *magisterium* and the Council's legacy, especially with its oecumenical and liturgical changes.[7]

The second group, called new monasticism, is made up of communities which grew up after the Council and are not part of pre-existing orders, movements or congregations, although adopting, and freely adapting their rules of life. Here too, although dealing with a minority phenomenon, we need to distinguish between two contrasting orientations:

C. 'Innovative' New Monastic Communities which, in tune with the Council, renew monastic life by emphasising and radicalising the most innovative and disruptive theological aspects which they identify in its conclusions. Some curial studies in Italy, France and Spain describe these communities as attempts often—borderline—at monastic life, founded by priests, religious and laypeople who are critical of classical monasticism, bound, in their opinion, by obsolete customs and rules. The most disturbing elements of these communities are perceived in the facts that: first, they are mostly 'mixed', which is to say consisting of monks and nuns living "under the same roof"; secondly, they accept lay members, whether single, married or families, residing in private dwellings more or less close to the monastery; thirdly, they reject enclosure and *contemptus mundi*, limiting collective prayer time in order to increase that available for labour, for evangelisation and voluntary social work, often outside the monastery; finally, they are actively involved in oecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and harbour scarcely concealed sympathy with oriental religions, from which they sometimes adopt beliefs and practices. Nor is this group homogeneous: a community nucleus can be seen which goes overboard with the above-mentioned innovations. They are labelled 'ultra-innovative' because their experiments in the theological, doctrinal and liturgical fields seem, in the view of ecclesiastical authorities, so audacious and unwise as to cause anathemas and condemnation;

D. 'Traditionalist' New Monastic Communities which, born as reaction to the Council, reintroduce anterior liturgical forms, customs and traditions. Although they grew outside the pre-conciliar *ordo monasticus*, these communities imitate that organisational model with the aim of rapidly becoming institutionalised in officially-recognised canonical forms. For this reason they are mono-sexual communities, which is to say either exclusively male or exclusively female.

7 Special thanks are due to PierLuigi Zoccatelli, deputy manager of CESNUR (Centre for the Study of New Religions) Turin, for this section.

The conceptual map outlined hitherto highlights the internal conflicts regarding post-Conciliar monastic renewal and reveals quite variegated political geography, driven by opposing ideological impulses. In short, to the classical monastic tree, which can be described as moderate, may be added, on the one hand, innovative communities pregnant with hyperbolic, radical experimentation and, on the other, the traditionalist ones which look to the past as a means of resistance to and criticism of modernism. In scientific debate, there is no lack of detailed studies of classical—mostly historiographical—monasticism, but there are few or none devoted to the actors of post-Conciliar renewal. As a consequence, there is no overall organic synoptic panorama of the current monastic world. While it is true that recently-appearing actors on the scene are neglected because they do not form a critical mass, it is equally true that contemporary sociology should begin to take them into account, recognising that these actors' choices should today be interpreted rather than measured. Table 1 sums up the conceptual map of contemporary monasticism, giving some examples of the groups described here.[8]

In the next section, analysis will focus on the Innovative New Monastic Communities described above. As we shall see in Section 5, the innovations which they imply for monastic life lead us to problematise the stereotypical images of the monk and monastic life which innervate the epic monastic saga.

The New Monasticism

In spite of the fact that there is no global census supplying statistical data, some mapping shows how widespread New Monastic Communities (NMCs) are on the international stage, especially in France, the United States, Spain and Italy—revealing a more modest, steady growth up to today following the immediate post-Conciliar peak (Rocca 2010). Although NMCs have gained considerable ground in the Catholic world, the international scientific community has so far devoted limited attention to the phenomenon (Wittberg 1996; Landron 2004; Oviedo 2010) as well as to the renewal processes which they inspire in traditional orders and in the Catholic church (Wittberg 2007). In Italy, where there are about forty NMCs (Torcivia 2001), the literature on the subject consists mainly of surveys conducted in ecclesiastical circles for practical purposes, while sociological research is rare.

8 While well-known monastic orders have no geographical references because they are organised in congregations spread all over the world, single communities are located in the countries where they were born.

TABLE 6.1 *The conceptual map of contemporary monasticism*

"Ultra-innovative" NMCs	**"Innovative" NMCs**	**Traditional or classical**	**Traditionalist**	**"Ultra-traditionalist"**
Ricostruttori nella preghiera (Italy)	*Bose* (Italy) *Figli di Dio* (Italy) *La Piccola Famiglia dell'Annunziata* (Italy) *Taizé* (France) *Fraternité Monastique de Jerusalem* (France)	Benedictines Cistercians Trappists Camaldolese	*Norcia* (Italy) *Minucciano* (Italy) *Villatalla* (Italy) *Le Barroux* (France) *Randol* (France) *La Garde* (France) *Triors* (France) *Donezan* (France) *Fontgombault* (France) *Wisques* (France) *Clear Creek* (USA) *Betlemme* *Francescani dell'Immacolata* (Italy)	*Bellaigue* (France) *Nova Friburgo* (Brasil) *Santa Sofía* (Colombia) *Silver City* (USA) *Monschau* (Germany)

Two specific post-Conciliar theological principles, while influencing religious life, have competed in structuring NMCs' experience. The first is the redefinition of the Church as *Populus Dei*: while pre-Conciliar ecclesiology emphasised the difference between hierarchical levels within the Church (clergy and religious orders above, laity below), *Lumen Gentium* (Chap. 5) encourages the elimination of such differences and decrees that the call to sanctity applies to everybody. The second is opening up to the world: while for centuries the Church has presented itself as a 'perfect society'—*Civitas Dei*—in opposition to the secular world, *Gaudium et Spes* (Chap. 1) overcomes the traditional *contemptus mundi* by rehabilitating commitment to the world.

These exhortations become constitutive for NMCs, creating an organisational and institutional structure which is different from that of classical orders. More exactly, NMCs cannot be interpreted as a reform of any existing monastic order because they do not propose to take up or apply more faithfully the rule of this or that founding father—unlike, say, the Cistercians and Trappists who denounced what they perceived as deviation from the Rule of Saint Benedict. NMCs—ranging over the whole 'great monastic tradition'—rather take up the fundamental intuitions of those monks and their Oriental precursors, re-elaborating them in a consistent framework with the aim of offering exemplary witness which will be comprehensible to 'today's men and women'. On this basis I claim that NMCs are a new form of consecrated life indicating clear discontinuity in monastic history. Although they cannot be classified as new religious orders because, as it will be explained later on, they are not canonically recognised as such, they are still a radical—and from certain points of view traumatic—reinvention of monastic tradition.

NMCs can be synthesised as being based on three fundamental characteristics:

First, their genesis. They define themselves as 'new' because they deliberately collocate themselves outside the classical *ordo monasticus*, from which they take their distance in the conviction that they are different from them, if not better. The debate, therefore, does not concern a comparison of ideal types of monasticism, in Weberian terms, but the historical variants in which they present themselves today. The choice of New Monasticism profoundly implies the conviction that they are embracing a more authentic religious life as much as adopting their ideological distance from classical communities, which they characterise as 'old', 'atrophied' and 'unable to adapt to today's world'.

This is how, in fieldwork research (see Palmisano, 2013a), some monks and nuns explained their preference for the new communities:

> When, in the 1970s, I left the congregation to which I belonged to in order to embrace monastic life, I looked around but could not find the

> authenticity of life which I was looking for and this was the reason which led us to found the Fraternity (S.L.)

> We wish to establish family-style monasticism. The ideal, if we were to grow, would be a community of not more than 6 or 7 people. In our opinion a big monastery limits the authenticity of community life. On the psychological level too it is said that relations of authentic communion can be experienced by a group of maximum ten people (F.G.)

Secondly, NMCs are new in juridical-canonical terms, which is to say from the point of view of Canon Law. In contrast to classical monastic orders, which are recognised as institutions of consecrated life, NMCs are mostly recognised as (private or public) associations of the faithful. This recognition, which is in practice the responsibility of the bishop of the diocese where the community resides, canonically approves its lay character (Neri 1995; Recchi 2004). Canon lawyers point out that, considering them as associations of the faithful, from the juridical point of view it would be more correct to define NMCs as "communities of a monastic tendency" and their involvement as a "monastic lifestyle" (Paciolla 2001). Other canon lawyers add that NMCs cannot be recognised as institutions of consecrated life because they demonstrate characteristics which distinguish them radically from the consecrated life known hitherto and they are not compatible with the Canon Law in force. Mixed communities, which is to say those containing monks and nuns living "under the same roof", are the ones which suffer most from this point of view because their co-presence de-legitimises their claim to be institutions of consecrated life, unless they reform the community by dividing it into two separate and distinct branches (Rocca 2010).

Thirdly, the innovations displayed by NCMs are the result of the creative process of their accommodation with the monastic tradition. The new monks derive their thinking from the heritage of monasticism, sometimes from the vastest possible Western and Eastern religious repertoires. They accept the sources which they consider most in tune with their own spirituality, while adapting or rejecting those aspects which they consider as unsatisfactory. Moreover, they innovate by introducing new—sometimes alien—characteristics to the identity coordinates of the tradition from which they claim to draw their inspiration. To sum up, they selectively establish the measure of monasticism which guides their movements, bringing to life an original form. Traces of this operation can be found not only in their Rules of Life and liturgies, which scholars have defined as 'composite' (Landron 2004), but also in the communities' forms of government.

To use a historical analogy, the breakaway which NMCs represent in the evolution of monasticism is, at least in theory, as radical as that of the mendicant

friars in the thirteenth century. Both these friars and NMCs grew out of institutional changes in the religious field: whereas the novelty of the mendicant friars is integral to the birth of urban society with its development of mercantile and crafts bourgeoisies (Lawrence 1984), the novelty of the NMCs is a result of the process of liberalisation of religious life which was encouraged as much by the openings of Vatican II as by changes in lay society.

An Analytical Model for the Study of Contemporary Monasticism

The transformation which monasticism is undergoing today invites us to call into question the concept of a monastery as a perfect society and of monks as angelic creatures who, obliged to work, perforce favour economic activities in tune with their religious mission, or risk compromising their vocation. It is not my intention to claim that monks are no longer engaged in authentic conversion of customs, but that it is necessary to rethink the analytical frame in which to situate the study in order to draw out the portrait of more 'multi-dimensional' monks/nuns, less spiritualised and more human.

As a response to the above invitation, we propose—in order to interpret the monastic phenomenon—a conceptual model making use of organisational analysis. According to the neo-insititutionalists (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Powell and DiMaggio 1991), we live today in a society so crowded with public and private institutions that is quite normal to observe incessant, wide-spread and interwoven adaptation to the concentrated network of norms which are necessary in order to obtain recognition or success, to the extent that it is no longer possible to understand the adaptation or even the very existence of single organisation without taking environmental pressures into account. These pressures induce organisations to accommodate themselves to criteria prevalent in their fields of operation and contribute to an explanation of isomorphism processes (which drive organisations to become more and more like one another). Meyer and Rowan (1977) especially claim that organisations may be divided into two groups: those lacking their own rationality criteria who follow criteria proposed by the external environment; and those possessing their own criteria which, however, differ from those prevailing in their setting. The latter, in order to survive, develop—insofar as it is possible—a double structure: one informal and invisible to follow its own efficiency rules; the other formal and visible to adapt ceremoniously to the expectations of the institutional environment.

It is reasonable to suppose that this parallel structure, typical of lay organisations, can be found also in monastic communities—both old and

new—where a formal, visible structure (informed by monks' and nuns' narration of themselves and monastic life) counterbalances an informal, visible structure (designed to meet the monastery's practical needs). The formal structure resides at the openly-declared level and is therefore visible. Monastic narration is rhetorically inspired by categories which—forged in the crucible of historiographical, anthropological and sociological theoretical elaboration—are then borrowed by society (which, while purchasing their products online, still expect monks today to live in the same way as their mediaeval predecessors) and in this way operate—from outside—with a retrospective effect on how monks and nuns appear (Jonveaux 2011). This is the level on which the ideal prevails, the description of monastery as a religious utopia being a critique of and counterpoint to existing social, ecclesial and economic reality. In accordance with the neo-institutionalist thesis, one may suggest that monks' and nuns' self narration is influenced by society's expectations, and that the ones which enjoy greatest success are those which are most careful to accommodate themselves ceremoniously to the outside world, transforming themselves along with the evolution of spiritual and cultural demand. Here we are looking at a paradox: although monasteries are witness to an alternative style of life, marked by stability, slowness, silence, frugality and independence from money, yet they assert and borrow certain aspects of that modern consumer society which they would fain reject (Palmisano 2013b). To give an example, if today society thinks of monks mainly as "repositories of the art of living" (Hervieu-Léger 2012), if monastic tourism is the height of fashion (Jonveaux 2011; De Groot et al. 2014), and if the most-visited monasteries are those which are active online, which combine historical-architectural remains with the commercialisation of products (books and DVDs, icons, candles, creams and soups, ceramics, incense, jams and marmalade, honey, sauces, herbal infusions and sweets) and services (courses of *lectio divina*, zither-playing, ikebana, yoga, Christian meditation, massages and thermal baths), then monks and monasteries wishing to keep pace cannot help conforming with this 'folklorized' image of monasticism prevalent in society.

Parallel to this there is the informal structure safeguarding the monastery's real functioning, responding not to social standards but to monks' and nuns' practical needs: for example, financial, recruitment of novices and governance. It is also defined as an invisible, or implicit, structure because it is hidden, in the sense that interviewees are reluctant to speak about activities which regulate the 'submerged currents' (of economic, human and management resources) crucial for the life of the monastery. In other words, internal criteria of efficiency guaranteeing the monastery's survival and growth predominate at

this level. To give an example: for some monasteries the 'submerged currents' may regard economic activities; when accounting demands money under the table, when certain goods labelled 'our produce' are produced elsewhere and graced with the monastery's packaging, or when the claim 'made according to a traditional recipe' conceals untraditional ingredients and methods adapting the products to today's tastes. For other monasteries, 'submerged currents' may be a matter of recruitment: in some female convents risking closure due to a lack of vocations, recruitment strategies are kept secret because—particularly when foreign women are involved—they adopt 'trafficking' solutions which are a far cry from today's socially-legitimated ideas of the authenticity and freedom of vocational choices (Dal Piaz 2014). Other monasteries have recruitment policies which, although not so problematical, cannot be made public because of their ambiguous nature: preaching in parishes and ecclesiastical associations may furtively conceal the objective of identifying young people to replenish the monastery's ranks. In yet other cases, the submerged may be detected in the leadership's governance style, as a result of which, apart from egalitarian declarations, vertical, centralised management predominates—leading, in extreme cases, to exaggerated power of the leader, abuses and moral subjugation.

Separation of formal and informal structure may produce organisational hypocrisy (Brunsson 1989): when rhetoric and behaviour coincide more-or-less, there is a low level of hypocrisy; whereas there is a high degree of hypocrisy when rhetoric and behaviour are opposite and contradictory. If one way of minimising hypocrisy is to conform experience with declarations, another is to conform declarations with experience. Monks and nuns who criticise customs and precepts from the monastic past, insisting that today they are empty of meaning, are not afraid of publicly 'price-fixing' the monk's image and, by so doing, bringing it more in line with real behaviour. For example, Camaldolite nuns who leave the monastery, wear jeans and go to the hairdresser's roundly criticise some consubstantial elements of monastic life (starting with the enclosure and the habit) which nevertheless regulate their daily lives. The divarication between visible and invisible structure is also minimised by the rhetoric found in some New Communities based, on one hand, on demythologising the figure of the monk and communal relationships and, on the other, on recognition of the influence of contemporary society on monastic life, work and economy.

Hypocrisy is closely connected with a monastery's dimensions because, as we learn from the theory of organisation, managerial complexity and bureaucratisation—which encourage the divarication process—grow along with the organisation's growth. In the vast majority of New Communities—small,

anonymous, with limited human and financial resources, confined to a local dimension—duplicity of structures cannot be found because of the absence of organisation. Nevertheless, the two variables—hypocrisy and dimensions—are not necessarily directly proportional. Even if it is true that some communities of large dimensions (some relevant female communities could be cited) contain a high degree of hypocrisy because, as certain sociological and psychological data lead us to understand, inconsistent behaviour counterpoints very high-flown narrations. Sometimes this behaviour is debatable (as in the forementioned cases of 'enforced' recruitment), and at other times disturbed (some psychologists denounce high rates of eating and alcoholic disorders); yet in analogous communities there is a low rate of hypocrisy because abbesses are not afraid to reveal that they have loosened the rigidity of rules with which they themselves do not agree.

Conclusion

This chapter's central thesis is that the world of (particularly male) religious orders is a privileged perspective from which to examine contemporaneousness. This may seem counter-instinctual because monasticism is defined as separation from the world and this withdrawal may suggest an element of conflict with the world (Hervieu-Léger 2012). But our analysis hitherto demonstrates that is not possible to examine monasticism in isolation from the surrounding society because the latter helps to define monastic forms and practices themselves (for instance, the changes brought about in cloistered life by the advent of work, economics, hospitality, internet and new generations). On the other hand, studying monasticism may be useful for understanding the society from which it springs. Moreover, analysis of the ways New Monasticism has renewed traditional monastic life suggests two conclusions which may constitute a useful launching-pad for future sociological research on relations between monasticism and modernity.

The first is that NMCs reveal a shift of the barycentre from monastic institutions to the subjects. Empirical data collected show different characteristics appertaining to new and traditional monks. Both have a Rule of Life lived under a superior, assiduous prayer, more-or-less radical separation from the world, and vows. What distinguishes new monks in sociological terms is that, whereas in classical monasticism the management of these aspects is entrusted to an institution guaranteeing respect for tradition, in NMCs they are controlled by the founder and his/her followers, who elaborate them creatively, inspired by the tradition furnishing their legitimation.

The second conclusion is that NMCs reinterpret the meaning of monastic archetypes with the aim of preserving and reassessing them in the light of a concept of cloistered life which, according to the new monks, is a more suitable response to the needs of the times. The interviewees reply to the detractors of new monasticism that their invention does not deprive monasticism of its authenticity; on the contrary, it allows it to preserve cultural and spiritual relevance for twenty-first century pilgrims who find in the NMCs a spiritual offer which is, to quote one interviewee, "rendered comprehensible for men and women of our time", not usually available in classical monasteries. These detractors criticise NMCs for their "monastic commodification", that is to say, their widespread involvement in more-or-less commercial activities—*lectio divina* courses as well as cooking, music and yoga; spiritual retreats; art exhibitions; concerts and performances—capable of attracting a large public. But NMCs' efforts to sell goods and services reflect their awareness that to continue to exist in a secularised consumer society, where believers professing a faith—no longer the majority faith—are on the wane, and where fewer visitors to monasteries are seeking only eschatological salvation, monasteries increase their chances of survival if, alongside their religious mission, they manufacture a cultural one and agree to work as dispensers of services to different publics.

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CHAPTER 7

Revolutionary Monasticism?

Franciscanism and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy as a Hermeneutic Dilemma of Contemporary Catholicism

Giulia Marotta

Introduction

It is certainly no surprise that Franciscanism, despite being a peculiar product of medieval Europe, finds a place of its own in such a comprehensive volume on contemporary Christianity. Indeed, Franciscan charism and its problematic relation to ecclesiastical hierarchy have never been so much in the spotlight as they are today.

Almost one-third of the speech that the current Roman Pontiff addressed to the media representatives on 16 March 2013, just three days after his election, was devoted to clarifying the choice of his name. Having explained the particular circumstances which recalled to his mind Francis of Assisi, he took care to point out the special features which distinguished him not merely as an admirable figure in the history of Christianity, greatly, but also generically, attractive. Rather, Pope Francis emphasised that the real relevance of the message of his celebrated namesake was its extreme pertinence to the major problems of our own time. He then built up a challenging picture of his inspiring character, describing him as "the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation" (Pope Francis 2013), the man whose life was a model of virtue for contemporary Christianity in all its forms, even for its supreme head. In other words, Bergoglio's choice of the papal name 'Francis', carrying a great deal of ideological and programmatic charge, surely represents an influential impulse to reflection and discussion about Franciscanism, even if it is not the sole one.

In effect, some months later, in July 2013, Pope Francis' order (Miller 2013) restricting the use of the pre-Vatican II Latin Mass in the communities of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate (henceforth FFI), while responding "to specific problems and tensions created in that congregation" (Wooden 2013), raised new and intensely controversial questions about the most complex issue of Christianity as a whole, that is the inexorable dialectical tension between tradition, continuity and unity, on the one hand, and innovation, discontinuity and autonomous developments, on the other hand.

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Accordingly, the intervention of the Holy See in FFI's liturgical practice represents a further element which underlines the interest of a re-evaluation of Franciscanism in the light of its complex and shifting relationship with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Surely, this issue is still far from being satisfactorily accounted for, although, as we shall see, the contrasting tendencies illustrated by these recent facts are only the latest manifestation of a phenomenon inscribed in the *longue durée* of the history of the Franciscan Order.

In the following paragraphs I will first discuss some general issues involved in the uneasy evolution of Franciscan historiography, and then rapidly review existing approaches in this field. Secondly, I will turn to the particular historical factors which have shaped Franciscanism as an officially sanctioned Catholic religious community, thereby focusing on the first stages of the development of the Order of Friars Minors. Although the history of the Franciscans also includes a Second Order of cloistered nuns and a Third Order of lay followers of Francis of Assisi, in the present study, I will speak of the Franciscan Order intending to refer to the sole Order of Friars Minors, whose relationship with ecclesiastical hierarchy has been of far greater historical impact than that entertained by the other branches. Finally, I will conclude with a brief presentation of my own hypothesis concerning the possibility to explain in terms of revolutionary propensity the problematic nature of the relationship of the Franciscans with the Roman hierarchical system.

The State of the Art: Origins and Aftermaths of the 'Franciscan Question'

Francis of Assisi (1181/2–1226) is undoubtedly one of the saints and one of the medieval figures most frequently represented in scientific and non-scientific literature, as well as in all forms of art. His great popularity stimulated the composition of some biographical accounts already during his life-time and shortly after his death. In principle, however partial and defective they may be, the innumerable records at our disposal should be sufficient to provide a plausible and meaningful narrative of his thoughts and actions. Indeed, it is quite the opposite, since the richness of the sources concerning Francis did not make of him one of the best known personalities of his age, but rather one of the most controversial of all time, insofar as his story fostered a large and highly varied amount of interpretation.

Precisely because, since the beginning, different biographies—the *Vita prima* of Thomas of Celano (1228–1229), the *Vita seconda* (1246–1247) by the same author, and the *Legenda maior* of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1260–1263)—overlapped with several tales, legends and writings of various genres

about, or attributed to, the saint (Brooke 2006: 2), philological obstacles are one of the most distinctive element of our subject of inquiry.

It is not by chance that in 1266, the account provided by Bonaventure was declared, at the General Chapter (a periodical meeting of representative friars from all parts of the world) held in Paris, the only authentic and authorised biography of Francis. Less than forty years after his death, the controversy over his life became so heated and widespread that it was deemed necessary to choose one single version, and to call for the destruction of all earlier documents (da Campagnola 1974: 19). It is still less an accident that, notwithstanding the promulgation of this decree, a lively opposition to its execution, together with the existence of a steady oral tradition, allowed a number of previous accounts to come to us. Anyway, the canonical biography of Saint Francis by Bonaventure managed to impose itself as the most reliable text for many centuries, during which, at least on paper, the debate was settled.

It is just at the end of this long period of apparent peace, namely during the last decades of the nineteenth century, that what is commonly known as the 'Franciscan question' exploded, following two distinct phenomena which hitherto have not been related to each other. The universally acknowledged factor which triggered the Franciscan philological controversy was the discovery of a series of documents and fragments of manuscripts which had survived the censorship decreed in 1266. The research of scholars such as von Görres, Ozanam, Renan, and more specifically Henry Thode and Karl Müller, forms the hinge between the first modern editions of the newly discovered medieval sources—(Rinaldi 1806; Melchiorri 1856; Frati Quaracchi 1885)—and the final *casus belli*, that is the publication, in 1894, of the *Vie de Saint François d'Assise* by Paul Sabatier.

In this text, the French historian proposed the first attempt to reassess the documentary material concerning the life of the saint and to offer an innovative image of the latter, with which he intended to break the mold and lead the way for a more realistic approach. That is why, despite the not negligible results achieved by analysis conducted during the eighteenth century, as well as by the work of the above-mentioned scholars, it was Sabatier's interpretation that, provoking the rise of two opposing parties, officially inaugurated the 'Franciscan question'.

Its leading idea was that the founder of the Franciscan Order was not at all a traditional monk or a conventional churchman. In Sabatier's biography, Francis appeared as an outsider, whose views were so distant from the mainstream ecclesiastical discourse that it was all the more easy to draw from them heretical conclusions. Nonetheless, being overwhelmed by the circumstances,– so Sabatier's narrarative goes, he gave in to the pressure of Cardinal Hugolino (the future Pope Gregory IX)—later appointed Protector of the Franciscan

Order by Honorius III—and, against his will, he was compelled to found an institutionalised monastic order. So, Francis' intentions, in Sabatier's view, would have been to a great extent frustrated, and his project, devoid of its original features, would have been soon transformed in a mere instrument of ecclesiastical discipline. According to Sabatier, the Catholic Church, acting as a sect, misappropriated his charisma and falsified his message for its own ideological purposes, while such a great figure, belonging to the whole of mankind, could not be arrogated by a single narrow community. With these words, the French scholar expresses this fundamental thesis: "*Quand on parvient à ces hauteurs, on n'appartient plus à une secte, on appartient à l'humanité, on est comme ces merveilles de la nature que le hasard des circonstances place sur le territoire de tel ou tel peuple, mais qui appartiennent à tout le monde* ..." (Sabatier 1894: XVI). Beyond his clear-cut Calvinist convictions, which are most likely to be involved in this judgement, a major part of Sabatier's understanding of Franciscanism as a reality essentially disconnected from the Catholic Church and dragooned into being a part of it, was grounded in the assumption that the *Speculum perfectionis*—a text discovered some years after the first edition of his *La Vie de S. François* and which corroborated his hypothesis—was the earliest document on Francis' life, and should therefore be considered, almost automatically, as more authentic and less problematic.

Later scholarship showed that he was in error since the text, rather than being written by Brother Leo, one of the saint's most intimate companions, as early as in 1227, was in fact a fourteenth century compilation (Boase 1968: 16). But putting aside this misreading, Sabatier's confidence in the trustworthiness of a document whose only added value was its supposed antiquity, brings us back to the second, less studied, factor which generated the 'Franciscan question', that is the unfinished professionalisation of historical studies. Essentially, it was not before the 1870s that the tradition of 'amateur' historical writing directed at a general audience gave way to 'scientific' history, a discipline with its own proper method, and therefore clearly distinguished from the historical novel as well as from epic, hagiography, and biography (Levine 1986).

When Sabatier set about to write his masterpiece, this disciplinary transition was still ongoing, and the intertwining between methodological and stylistic models of sacred literature and of historical scholarship was far from being an obsolete remnant survived just in mediocre historiography. Here is one of the basic reasons for which the work of Sabatier—still characterised by quite biased motivations and assumptions, and, above all, by a low degree of critical distance from sources—has been able to arouse the 'Franciscan question'. Sabatier was particularly suspicious of such a late text as that of Bonaventure, which, furthermore, in his eyes was even more unreliable given that it had been

authoritatively imposed; but he did not apply this same skepticism also to the earlier, or supposed earlier, manuscripts he discovered, and hence his conclusions were quite vitiated by a naive use of the materials (Lambert 1961: 5).

I cannot enter into the details of the debate which followed the initially favourable reception of Sabatier's work, in which the main critics were François van Ortroy and Michele Faloci Pulignani (Dalarun 2002: 35). My purpose here is instead to stress that the issue raised in the 1890s, to which we proprerly refer as the 'Franciscan question', even though representing the first important step towards a conscious historicisation of the fortunes of Francis of Assisi, directly inherited medieval topics and themes, and scholars often continued to deal with them with the same philological frenzy of medieval and Renaissance erudites. Rather than proceeding to a truly historical use of the sources, animated by a specific concern for their significance in the *longue durée*, even later historiography has insisted on certain narrow questions, concerning the identification of the most ancient text, its connections with the posterior ones, the real identity of their authors, and so on. Thus, also professional historians of the nineteenth and twentieth century spent considerable time seeking out the ultimate understanding of Franciscanism through relentless attempts to establish a hierarchy of the biographies of its founder.

And while trying to distance itself from hagiography, modern historiography remained embroiled in its same *aporiae,* leaving in shadow the real historical meaning of the figure of Francis, the effective impact of his preaching, that is the long chain of events linked to the Franciscan Order, from its formation up to the present day.

Now, in this chapter, while not denying the legitimacy of investigating the life of a single individual, I shall pass to the examination of the genesis and development of the Franciscan Order, which, because of its persistence across the centuries, shaped long-term historical trends the relevance of which to understanding past and present Catholicism is hardly questionable.

The Genesis and Development of the Franciscan Order: A Manifold Process

For reasons of space, I cannot deal extensively with the relationship between Franciscanism and the Holy See from its origins in 1209 to the present day, and therefore, I do not pretend to provide an exhaustive survey of the history of the Order. I will rather concentrate on those episodes that reveal its key features, paying particular attention to the earliest phases of its development, which marked in a special way the role it played in the whole history of the Church.

The first date which stands out for its major impact is 1209–1210, the years in which Francis finished writing an incipient rule for his followers, and travelled to Rome to receive from Innocent III the approval for him and his brothers to preach. Scholars disagree about the exact date (1209 or 1210) and, above all, about the effective relevance of this meeting. For some of them it is a pivotal moment in which the Pope committed to a clarified, indulgent line of action in regard to the Franciscan movement. Others tend to diminish the scope of the event, pointing out that Innocent III, doubtless particularly busy at the time, offhandedly gave his mere verbal and temporary consent to Francis and his followers for penitential preaching (Cardini 1989: 118; Polidoro 1996: 66). Even so, there is a limited but significant amount of evidence which remains relatively uncontroversial. Firstly, sometime in 1209 or 1210 Francis of Assisi wrote a simple rule based on poverty, chastity and obedience, known as *Formula Vitae*, and went to Rome, with twelve of his companions, to seek approval from Pope Innocent III. Secondly, such a meeting actually took place around those years (Thompson 2012: 196). Thirdly, its outcome was positive for both parties; Francis promised obedience to Innocent III and his successors and received an at least informal approval to preach according to the submitted rule.

Thus, after a short period of spontaneous and disorganised activity, the small community formed around Francis, felt the need to be acknowledged as a legitimate, and especially as a non-heretical, congregation of faithful Christians. In order to obtain such a legitimation they turned to the Pope, well knowing that this would have required their preliminary submission not so much to his own personal authority as, through the promise of loyalty extended to his successors, to the Church as such, as an institutionalised form of authority. In the official Catholic view, this was the sole possible concretisation of Francis' intention of deeply renewing the religious life of his time (Pope Benedict XVI, 2010). But some scholars viewed the same event from a critical perspective, considering the establishment of a direct link with the papacy as a failure or a betrayal of the original ideals which animated Francis' preaching (Boff 2006: 68). Nonetheless, it is precisely this episode that marks the beginning of Franciscan monasticism as an order, and it is precisely Franciscan monasticism as an order that played a paramount role in the history of Catholic Christianity, and not Franciscanism as a way of life, a social practice, or a protest movement of lay people.

Moreover, the essential trait of this turning point of 1209–1210, in which an alternative and de-institutionalised community and a highly formalised and hierarchical society found a common ground of interest and reliance, can be also regarded as the essential feature of the whole Franciscan history. I shall explain how the co-existence, or even the commingling, of different forces

whose dialectical interaction provides a mechanism for their mutual reinforcement, is probably a structural attribute of Franciscanism, its common thread which repeatedly comes to light, and which indeed is still observable in present times. But before developing this argument, let us go back to the sketch of the early stages of Franciscan history.

The second date that deserves a special mention is 1223, the year in which this distinctive contrasting dynamics revealed itself in all its depth, translating itself in an explicit confrontation, and in a consecutive arrangement, between competing ideologies. In this crucial phase, the Franciscan ideal was codified in a Rule officially approved by Pope Honorius III with the Bull *Solet annuere* (1223). This 'Bulled Rule' (*Regula bullata*) had been inspired by an earlier text, in its turn drawn up as a reworked version of the very first draft of 1209, and elaborated on the occasion of the General Chapter of 1221, but later lost. The revised Rule of 1223 became the definitive emblem of the Franciscan Order, the officially promulgated epitome of its principles and aims, and as such it also came to be one of the most problematic aspects of its history. Was the text of the Rule to be taken literally, word by word and in every situation, or rather, taking into account the outstanding numerical growth and geographical spread of the Order, was it meant to change according to place and time? And in what relationship did it stand to Francis' last exhortation contained in the testament he dictated shortly before his death? Was the latter's authority just as binding as that of the official Rule of 1223?

Certainly, all these questions show that the redaction of a rule endowed with a clearer juridical form, rather than settle internal conflicts, intensify them. But Francis' wish to withdraw from leadership, and the growing discontent with the impracticability of his precepts, had made evident the necessity of a radical reorganisation. The community he founded called for a revised regulation, a shorter and more precise one, reformulated in a less poetic and more pragmatic and usable form. In brief, they demanded a rule quite similar to that of all other monastic orders, able to bring about uniformity and cohesion as fixed once and for all and officially approved by a papal Bull.

The Composition of the Regula Bullata (1223): A Striking and Emblematic Compromise

Quite interestingly, the circumstances in which the 'Bulled Rule' was compiled, just as those of the meeting occurred around 1209 between Francis and Pope Innocent III, reveal that Franciscanism had been neither an evangelical

programme steadily developed in substantial antagonism with the Catholic hierarchy, nor a heterodox movement which the latter managed to tame and use for its own purposes. Rather it was, and it is still, an arena of confrontation and negotiation between hierarchical and charismatic authority, both active forces within the context of the Catholic Church. As a phenomenon embodying conflicting principles, Franciscan monasticism could never evolve in any linear sense, and that is why even the formalised Rule of 1223 proved to be a further stumbling block, giving rise to the development of an ever more subtle hermeneutic discourse, which, as we shall see, would end up developing into an increasingly sophisticated questioning on the issue of poverty. But let us look at the process of composition of the text in order to highlight its intrinsic dialectical character.

In this case too, historians approached the subject from different perspectives, conveying positive or negative connotations about the facts; but it is undoubted that the Rule submitted to Honorius III was the outcome of an intricate process, rather than the result of some abstract design. It was not a unitary project conceived and implemented by the same individual, but one involving a plurality of actors whose understandings, contradictory to each other on numerous points, could only generate a free-for-all source of contesting interpretations.

Indeed, even the comprehensive Benedictine Rule and the less voluminous but equally systematic Augustinian Rule—which together with that of Bernard of Clairvaux became the major point of reference for most medieval monastic communities—are the product of a complex history of composition, mainly characterised by authors' ability in taking extracts from various sources and arranging them into a coherent framework. But notwithstanding the literary and ideological stratification underlying the 'letter' of these texts, the Franciscan rule, with its explicitly multiple authorship integrating and articulating rational-legal and charismatic authority, reflects a far more ambiguous—and therefore, in some respects, more interesting—stance.

In effect, between the end of 1222 and the beginning of 1223, Francis met Cardinal Hugolino, and they discussed the question of a new Rule; he then moved to the hermitage of Fonte Colombo, where with the help of two friars, Leo of Assisi and Bonizzo of Bologna, he wrote his Rule for the Friars Minor; during this period of retreat, several brother ministers, after having solicited the support of Brother Elias, vicar of Francis, decided to reach him at Fonte Colombo in order to urge him to relax the rigour of the earlier rule; the Pentecost Chapter held on June 11, 1223 discussed and approved the new rule, written by Francis but heavily revised by Brother Bonizzo, Cardinal Hugolino and even Pope Honorius III; on November 29, 1223 Honorius III issued the Bull

of approbation *Solet annuere*, which definitively made the Franciscan Rule an official document of the Church.

This quick series of events has been depicted as an undisguised papal intrusion into Franciscan life, gradually swallowed up by the juridical and bureaucratic apparatus of the Church. So, for instance, Jacques Le Goff (2004: 40) affirms: "In the decisions taken from 1221 to 1223 on the reorganisation of his movement, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between what Saint Francis wanted and what was imposed on him". And shortly after he states: "Francis, with death in his soul, accepted this deformed Rule" (Le Goff 2004: 42). These words hint clearly enough that the position of the recently deceased French historian is not too far from that of Sabatier: Francis, the rebel and the antagonist of the hierarchical church model, would have found himself defeated by the oppressive Curia Romana, so that, at the time of *Solet annuere*, his community, victim of the manoeuvres of clerical management, had already lost sight of the authentic purpose for which it had been founded.

I think however that in point of fact, the very way in which this view is expressed by Le Goff suggests that the unceasing curial interference in the process of stabilisation of the Franciscan Order did not result in the predominance of a certain form of religious ideology over another one. A confrontation between two different ideals actually took place, and, also in terms of formalisation, diverse priorities were at stake. All this determined the peculiarly twofold character of a text containing at the same time "what Saint Francis wanted and what was imposed on him", and that he eventually accepted, however deformed it might seem with respect to his original inspiration. In fact, the Franciscan Rule of 1223 could never be defined as the pure result of a papal initiative, no more that it can be described as the direct enactment of Francis' will.

The *Regula Bullata* was instead an out-and-out compromise, containing perhaps not equivalent, but fairly comparable, mutual concessions: how could we neglect the concessions made by Francis to the friars calling for a milder and more realistic discipline, as well as to the ecclesiastical authority which required him to give a clear, legal structure to his idea of poverty as unifying principle of a communal life? On the other hand, what kind of historical account can we give of Franciscanism, aside from a very inadequate one, if we underestimate the extent of the privileges accorded by the Catholic Church to the followers of Francis? Admittedly, the special rights granted to the community implied in return the possibility to channel potentially heretical forces in directions favourable to the Establishment. But nevertheless this in no way detracts from the momentousness of the measures, that I shall discuss shortly, adopted by the ecclesiastical hierarchy with respect to the movement and later to the Order. The Franciscan project, if I may so call it, was and remains a *sui*

generis phenomenon in the history of Catholicism; it marked an unprecedented shift in the way of conceiving and practicing monastic life, and it was not at all obvious that such a nonconformist scheme would have been endorsed by the Church.

The Struggle against Heresy and the Franciscan Exception

By 1210, when Francis and his first companions obtained the oral permission of Innocent III for their preaching and way of life, the clerical establishment had already been abundantly put to the test by many pauperistic movements, sometimes characterised by radical sectarianism and directly accused of doctrinal heresy—as in the case of the followers of Fra' Dolcino of Novara (c. 1250–1307)—and sometimes apparently agreeable and manageable within ecclesiastical jurisdiction, like the movement of Peter Waldo (c. 1140–c. 1218). His followers, named Waldensians, at first solemnly authorised to preach their views by the Third Council of the Lateran (1179), ended up being excommunicated (Leff 1999: 449) just five years later (1184). The Holy See had therefore accumulated considerable experience not only in terms of intransigence and repression, but also of encounter and negotiation with the twelfth-century pauperism, ultimately facing the practical impossibility to keep within its boundaries this particular kind of worldview and spirituality. That is why the meeting between Francis and Innocent III acquires an additional significance. Franciscanism is virtually the only medieval movement of pauperistic-evangelical inspiration which survived the pressure of the anti-heretical fury of its time. But that is not all. It is also the only monastic community founded after the Fourth Council of the Lateran which was allowed to adopt its own original rule, and it is even the only mendicant order which, while engendering and embracing in its bosom extremist fringes, was preserved from the clean-up operation decreed by the Second Council of Lyons (1274).

From this point of view the comparison with the contemporaneous Dominican Order is particularly illuminating. When in 1215 Dominic of Guzman decided to establish a new religious order, and moved to Rome to obtain approval from the same Innocent III who few years before had conceded it to Francis, the Fourth Council of the Lateran was taking place. The bishops, seeing the uncontrolled proliferation of monastic orders as an usurpation of their authority in preaching and imposing penance, called for a restrictive legislation on religious rules. So with its canon 13, titled *On the prohibition against new religious orders*, the Council prohibited the formation of any new order by declaring that every religious community had to follow an already sanctioned

rule. Hence Dominic did not receive the authorisation for the foundation of his Order of Preachers until, in 1216, he chose to adopt the Rule of Saint Augustine. Accordingly, Francis underwent considerable pressure to accept an existing rule, but his intention was to reproduce, without the filter of earlier tradition, that apostolic life which Christ initiated (Coccia 2013: 170), and Honorius III finally decided, in 1223, to allow his followers to embrace a rule which beyond any doubt was a freshly written one, but which could claim, by means of a rather quibbling argument, to have already obtained papal approval, although only orally, as early as in 1209–1210, and therefore prior to the Council of 1215.

Yet, the containment measures taken by the latter were not the only challenge that the Franciscan Order had to overcome. About sixty years later, in 1274, another ecumenical council, the above-mentioned Second Council of Lyons, established, reflecting a very tense situation, that all mendicant orders, even if founded with papal approbation, should have been abolished. Facing this threat, the then Minister General of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (ca. 1217–1274) elaborated a common strategy with the Dominicans, and thanks to this and to papal support, the two orders founded by Francis and Dominic were omitted from the decree of suppression (Emery 1953: 257–271).

Such an equality of treatment should not mislead us into thinking that the two groups were equal in their significance and impact. What they really shared, and what distinguished them from other monastic orders, was their focus on preaching in the secular world, and not anymore exclusively within the cloister. Even so, this worldly mission was conceived and carried out in the most diverse manner. The relationship with heresy and the intellectual training of the friars probably constitute the domain in which the discrepancy was most evident. While the Dominican Order had been directly inspired by the resolution to defend the Church's teaching against heretics, Franciscans started being 'recruited' for this centuries-old campaign only at a second stage, when Cardinal Hugolino had grasped their great potentialities in this domain. And while since the beginning, Dominican spirituality had been inseparable from intellectual discipline and high-level scholarly activities, Francis' attitude towards these had initially been reticent and even diffident, although in a more advanced phase also his Order came to assume a prominent role in various theoretical controversies and in university circles. Moreover, once developed, Franciscan scholarship was embedded in the voluntarist theology—advocating, to put it in extremely simplified terms, the primacy of willing over knowing, and of the good over the true—which was in strong polemical opposition to the intellectualist Dominican doctrine (Tillich 1968: 180–191). In sum, during the central centuries of the Middle Ages, the legacies of Francis and Dominic ended up being two somewhat antagonistic poles: on the one side there were "the

speculative, enthusiastic, often democratic Franciscans", and on the other side there were "the sternly orthodox, authority-loving, persecuting Dominicans" (Rashdall 1895: II, 527). These pictures are fairly caricatured and misleading, but they reveal the real nature of the two orders in terms of public perception, and this was clearly a pivotal factor which ecclesiastical authorities could not fail to take into account. Consequently, one cannot attribute a univocal meaning to the fact that the Second Council of Lyons spared both the Franciscan and the Dominican Order. Not only their premises were conceptually incommensurable but, quite predictably, they also produced different effects.

Indeed, Franciscanism had not been invalidated by the adoption of the legal standards imposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy notably for the drafting of the Rule of 1223. Far from it, this encounter between the Franciscan cadre and the clerical establishment enhanced the impact of the former's peculiarities. The very analysis of the Rule shows the lack of foundation for the hypothesis defended by Sabatier in the late 1800s and subsequently revised and elaborated upon by scholars like Chiara Frugoni (1998) and Jacques Le Goff (2004). According to this approach, in one way or another, the true charism of Francis and his teaching were trapped and ultimately annihilated by the bureaucratic machine of the Church.

I think, on the contrary, that the Rule, and the entire successive history of the Franciscan Order, prove that, while being urged to find a common ground with respect to the regulatory demands of the Church, the Franciscan charism has not been absorbed by these bureaucratic requirements. To stress the ability of the ecclesiastical institutions to take advantage of an agreement with a pauperistic movement kept within the limits of orthodoxy is definitely a tautological operation, and *de facto* the hierarchy related itself with Franciscanism always keeping in mind and profiting from its instrumental value. Yet the clerical elite continued to clash with a subject retaining all its alterity, and characterised by a series of tensions and dynamics which were sometimes favourable to it and sometimes unfavourable, and which, incidentally, are nowadays still present and unresolved. But let us concentrate our attention once more on the 1223 Rule, in order to bring to light how the coexistence of different points of view and aspirations, integrated in a single textual framework, did not result in the predominance of one element over the other which, as a consequence, would find itself nullified.

The Juridical Paradox of the Franciscan Rule

In a recent article, focused on the singularity of the Franciscan Rule, Emanuele Coccia highlighted the deliberate pursuit of novelty which constitutes its

background, and described it in terms of "juridical paradox" or "juridical void" (Coccia 2013: 174–175, 207). Indeed, the rules ascribed to Augustine, Benedict or Bernard of Clairvaux, are certainly entitled to stake a claim to originality—and that is why they marked a milestone in the history of Christianity—but they reveal, and even overtly proclaim, to have gleaned their definitions from a continuous tradition rooted in apostolic teaching and enriched by patristic writings. The Franciscan Rule appears to be completely disinterested in any appeal to continuity of doctrine, and it not only carried out an unprecedented experiment in the governance of monastic communities, but also one which was the exact opposite of the previous ones.

Independently from their specific contents and contexts, the purpose of these previous rules had always been to establish a juridical framework in which to embed and manage not so much a particular set of actual cases and controversies—and then, as in ordinary legal systems, a series of questions *per se* problematic—as the very simplest aspects of existence, or, one could say, life itself. A monastic rule is usually the attempt to create a legally rationalised way of life, and then to bring law within a sphere, that of the daily private activities carried out in unproblematic conditions, which is normally preserved from it. The essence of the Franciscan one was instead to put the life of monks outside the law as a whole, insofar as its salient feature, that is absolute, unconditional poverty, demands their exclusion from the realm of *in rem* rights, those personal rights exercised 'in relation to the thing', including first and foremost the right of property.

One could object that poverty is an essential element of monastic rules and spiritual treaties for all time. But while in all earlier texts poverty was simply part of a general pattern of detachment from worldly goods and desires, and "a tool for evangelization" (Ginther 2009: 126), the Franciscan rejection of positive rights to temporal goods was the very cornerstone of the rule of life of the community. Hence, appearances aside, the legalisation of the Franciscan Order occurred in 1223 through the *Regula Bullata*, did not merely introduce a more rigorous form of monastic poverty, but created a radically new understanding of it. Franciscan Friars were no longer simply to follow a sober lifestyle and to accept that food and clothing, and all other necessary things which they used, belonged to the common goods of the monastery. They had to renounce all ownership, both private and corporate. A Franciscan monastery, unlike a Benedictine or a Dominican one, could not be the legal owner of lands, buildings and supplies. Thus, the Rule of 1223 generated a legal device which placed the Order outside the rule of law and which can be described as a "juridical paradox", insofar as it created a "juridical void"—"a form of life which has the right to exile itself from all forms of law, namely, that life which has the right to

live outside the law [translated by me]" (Coccia 2013: 208)—by means of a juridical provision.

Now, the contrast between the high substantive and formal rationality of canon law (Weber 1978: 828–829) and the creation of such a paradoxical status shows the untenable character of any categorical judgement on the supposed vulnerability of the Franciscan discourse to the overwhelming sway of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The former effectively agreed to reshape its originally unregulated structure according to the procedures of the latter, but did not at all yield a passive subjection to these. In effect, even if Franciscanism was not precisely born as a defiance of ecclesiastical authority, the Church had to make a great effort of conciliation to allow Franciscanism's peculiar all-encompassing application of the ideal of evangelical poverty to develop within its bosom. After all, the events which followed the writing of the 1223 Rule are enough to show the uneasy nature of this encounter for both parties and hence to testify that their relationship was not merely one of dominance-submission, but rather one of dialogue and mutual accommodation, with tensions and overt confrontations periodically arising.

Indeed, at Francis' death in 1226 the arena of his followers split into two groups, whose basic arguments were the following. On the one hand, an appeal to the radical adherence to both the Rule and Francis' testament *sine glossa*, that is without any interpretative gloss aimed at adapting the texts to changing times, and essentially at relaxing the strict regulation concerning poverty; on the other hand, the claim that the testament was lacking in juridical validity, and that the pope was entitled to provide official explanations and clarifications of the Rule, and to de-absolutise it by means of dispensations. For some decades these currents coexisted relatively peacefully, but in the 1270s—with the end of the long and energetic leadership (1257–1274) of Bonaventure, and with the increasing spread of the thesis of Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202) about the imminent coming of an age of the Holy Spirit in which the very structures of the Church would have become 'spiritualised' (Burr 2001: 40)—the rift between the two factions flared into a lively quarrel over apostolic poverty. And the extreme views of the rigourist wing, known as Zealots or Spirituals, did not affected merely those of the moderate one, which acquired the name of Conventuals.

In fact, the Spirituals, advocating that Christ and his apostles had nothing, individually or in common, demanded, more or less explicitly, absolute poverty also for the Catholic Church as a whole. Besides, their claims were more and more enhanced by the intensification of the conflict between popes and emperors. The interests of the pro-imperial party and of the enemies of the papacy *tout court* became entwined with those of this influential

branch of the Franciscan Order, and so the ideal of apostolic poverty became a far-reaching critical argument, able to concretely undermine ecclesiastical power.

The pontificate of John XXII (1316–1334) represents the peak of the poverty controversy, but even when they did not turn to open rebellion, the tensions about this issue never really subsided, from the foundation of the Order up to the present day. The attitude and the effective measures adopted by Pope John XXII were only the most glaring and striking repercussions of the potentially pernicious implications of the Franciscan concept of poverty. In 1317, after asking Michael of Cesena, the then Minister General of the Franciscan Order, to extirpate the Spiritual faction, John XXII issued the Bull *Quorundam exigit*, which regularised the storage of clothing and provisions in convents, putting an end to the system based only on day-to-day charity. The Spirituals, also called 'Fraticelli', expressed fierce opposition to this resolution, and for this reason, in 1318, they were excommunicated, while four particularly intransigent exponents of the group were burned at the stake as heretics. Nonetheless, the General Chapter held in Perugia in 1322 reasserted the doctrine of Christ's absolute poverty, thus provoking the reaction of the Pope, who responded with the Bull *Ad conditorem canonum* stating the inseparability of the right of use in consumable goods from the right of property. Such a provision was in sharp contrast to, and actually revoked, the Bull *Exiit qui seminat* of Nicholas III (1279), which too had been issued as a means of reconciling the conflicting parties of the Order, and which, sanctioning the "juridical paradox" of the 1223 Rule, proclaimed that the pope was the ultimate owner of the property available to the Friars, while they enjoyed just its tenure for use. A year later, the doctrine advocated by the Chapter of Perugia, according to which Christ and the apostles had renounced both individual and communal property, was declared heretical with the Bull *Cum inter nonnullos* (1323). Finally, between 1328 and 1329, John XXII excommunicated Michael of Cesena, while Gerald Odonis, an opponent of the Spirituals, took his place as Minister General of the Franciscans.

Thanks to this severe reaction, the poverty dispute seemed to have calmed down once and for all. The Spirituals were removed from the Order, and the Conventuals, who followed the more traditional cloistered lifestyle and were more favourable to the papacy and to the secular clergy, increased in numbers. But soon the problematic nature of the relationship between Franciscanism and ecclesiastical authority became once again evident, revealing that irreducible challenging character of the Order which, from medieval to modern times, constitutes a dilemma for historical understanding.

The Franciscan Anti-materialistic Revolution as a Legitimising Force for Ecclesiastical Authority

The pontificate of John XXII marked the end of Franciscan debates about poverty just and only at the level of its explicit thematisation, while in fact the struggle continued to be fought with other terms and concepts. A further school of thought, named the 'Regular Observance', based on the observance of the original Rule, developed within the Order since 1334, and while remaining officially orthodox, engaged in vehement criticism against the Conventual Friars and their relaxed and liberal interpretation of the vow of poverty. And unexpectedly, the fact that the Order as a whole had been submitted to a process of intellectualisation and ecclesiastical rationalisation did nothing but exacerbate the problematic, by creating the conditions for even subtler and more radical questionings.

Thus, during the fifteenth century, the Holy See was faced with a new, vast controversy, to be arbitrated in a quite difficult terrain, that of the definition of the kind of worship to be paid to the blood of Christ separated from his body before his burial. As early as in 1351 the disagreement about this question arose between Franciscans and Dominicans, and continued until Pius II (Bull *Ineffabilis summi Providentia*, 1464), considering the difficulty, even the impossibility, to reach a settlement, simply forbade to debate about it as a matter of heresy. Anyway, the Franciscans maintained that the blood fallen from Jesus' body during the passion did not retain its divinity, and was therefore not worthy of adoration.

Poverty was not directly at stake, but the theological controversy concerning the shed blood of Christ was nothing more than the resurgence, in a highly theoretised form, of the very same polemic about ownership begun in the 1270s. It was another version of the questioning about the articulation between the physical and earthly reality and the spiritual and heavenly one, which, through the devaluation of the material realm, brought into question the very existence of the Church as outward and visible body endowed with an institutional hierarchical structure, needing to acquire, retain and administrate temporal goods. If, from the Franciscan point of view, the blood of Christ taken in its pure materiality was subjected to transience and decay, and could not therefore be seen as a relic to be worshipped, should the earthly structure of the Church be considered, in a similarly way, as something not worthy of devotion and faith?

Even during the hottest phases of the confrontation, Franciscanism did not give a direct answer to this question, but with its continuous dissensions and criticisms, it has been an inherently challenging force, which acted as a thorn in the side of ecclesiastical authorities throughout all its history, consequently

demanding periodic regulatory efforts. After the Bull of 1464, the most forceful interventions were made in 1517 (with the Bull *Ite vos* of Leo X, dividing the Order into two separate branches, the Observants and the Conventuals), and in 1897 (with the Bull *Felicitate Quadam* of Leo XIII, uniting under a uniform constitution various groups, namely Observants, Riformati, Alcantarines and Recollects, from that moment on known with the single denomination of Order of the Friars Minor).

These diametrically opposite measures witness the difficulties that the Holy See experienced in dealing with a phenomenon requiring a timely reassessment of its problematics and a constant renewal of the strategies aimed at its rationalisation. After all, the most recent topics which recalled public attention to Franciscanism—the explicit reference to the Franciscan message made by the newly elected Pope, and his vigorous intervention concerning the FFI to nip in the bud any defiance of papal authority in matters of liturgical practice—are part of this long-term, and perhaps even permanent, process of stabilisation and regulation. In this sense, the hermeneutic dilemma concerning the history of the relationship between Franciscanism and ecclesiastical hierarchy—sometimes seen as the linear execution of a successful program of repression and subjugation, and sometimes as an harmonious partnership—is not at all an anachronistic curiosity, since it directly reflects some wider interpretative concerns related to the most current questions facing contemporary Catholicism.

Especially in the post-Vatican II era, the difficult articulation between spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence, and then, also eternity and history, has become a priority issue assuming the form of an historiographical battle concerning continuity and discontinuity of Church tradition, and the history of the Franciscan Order exemplarily embodies this contention. In fact, on the one hand it is a form of consecrated life which, making appeal to the rigorous practices of poverty, may be associated with theological conservatism, by virtue of its attachment to the gospel ideals. On the other hand, just on the basis of this evangelical zeal, it has acted as an agent of change and renewal, exerting a relentless, and sometimes even threatening, pressure on ecclesiastical authorities.

At first glance, the basic trait which both conservative and progressive aspects of Franciscanism have in common is that virtuoso religiosity of which Max Weber spoke in *The Social Psychology of the World Religions* (1915). This attitude entails simultaneously an ascetic elitism which "every hierocratic and official authority of a 'church'" is somewhat obliged to fight to make "the sacred values generally accessible" (Weber 1991: 288), and a religious zest whose charm can be transformed into an instrument of control. Nonetheless, a more careful look demonstrates that such an interpretation would be at least insufficient.

Conclusion

In fact, the resilience of the Franciscan Order is not simply due to its intrinsic exploitability for satisfying those ideal demands of the masses usually neglected in bureaucratised religious contexts, such as that of the Catholic Church. It is rather rooted in a close relation of interdependence between that Church and its *enfant terrible*. By means of its striking, and in some cases unorthodox and rebellious attitudes, the Order played a surprisingly structuring and legitimising role for the centralised power of the Church. Insofar as it called upon continuous actions of control to be undertaken by a skillful institutionalised sacred authority, the function of Franciscanism has practically been to postulate the existence of an ineradicable irrationality occurring within the very bosom of the Holy Roman Church, thereby justified in consolidating its institutional apparatus. An overall assessment of the long history of contrasts and convergences that I have outlined shows that, while all various forms of monastic life have someway been manifestations of Weber's concept of virtuoso religion, Franciscan monasticism, by directly requiring ecclesiastical hierarchy to settle its incessant disputes, has also worked as a sort of functional element of disorder, a source of irrational motion quite serviceable in emphasising the need of a system responsible for maintaining the order.

In this sense, we could conclude that if the term 'revolutionary' is probably inappropriate to define a phenomenon which acted as a legitimising, and, in the last analysis, conservative, force within a given system, it is nonetheless extremely problematic to claim that the imposition of the structure of an Order on the Franciscan movement hindered the realisation of the original intention of the founder "to create a society on a completely original model" (Le Goff 2004: 91). On the contrary, I argue that precisely since 1223, when Franciscanism became a religious actor endowed with a formalised regulation and a standardised system of governance, "a completely original model" of communal life actually arose; but its singularity lays not so much in its absolute antithesis to the ecclesiastical machine, as in its capability to durably embrace conflicting, and even paradoxical, tendencies without ever expunging or reconciling them in a univocal and conclusive manner.

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CHAPTER 8

Liturgy, Text, Performance

From Pamphlet to Powerpoint in the Practise of Christian Worship

Martin Stringer

Introduction

Having been born in 1962, I have lived through what has probably been the most dramatic fifty years of change in Christian worship in its two thousand year history (Stringer 2005a). Throughout the 1970s I attended a small Anglican church in South Yorkshire, UK. The parish priest at the time was very interested in the contemporary developments in liturgy and so through the decade we moved from *Alternative Services Second Series* (*Series Two*), to *Alternative Services Series Three* (*Series Three*) and, into the early 1980s, to the *Alternative Services Book* (*ASB*). Both *Series Two* and *Series Three* came in small pamphlets rather than larger prayer books. My father, who was headmaster of the church primary school and choirmaster, was also interested in contemporary developments in hymnody and introduced the congregation to new hymns through the production of a small pamphlet sized hymnal reproduced on the school's Gestetner. Finally, there was considerable debate about which translation of the Bible would be used in worship and discussion around whether or not the church should buy copies of individual Gospels prepared in the *Good News* version of the Bible, also as pamphlets, deliberately designed to look and feel like newsprint.

At the end of the 1970s I remember my sister, who had joined a Pentecostal church in her final years at school, introducing me to the *New International Version* (*NIV*) of the Bible and the novel idea of the overhead projector as a permanent feature of the worship space. The debates in our home church around the introduction of the *ASB* asked whether the congregation could cope with a book of 1,291 pages. My own devotional life at University, from 1980 onwards, was largely mediated through the *ASB* and the *NIV*, both far more substantial books than those I had been used to. It was also clear that the setting and forms of worship were changing much more dramatically than a simple change in the format of the publications being used. By the 1990s things had moved on considerably. *Series One*, *Series Two*, the *Good News Bible*, and my father's own self-produced pamphlet of modern hymns had all been forgotten. The introduction of the service sheet, photocopying, the overhead projector and subsequently

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the internet, online publishing and powerpoint all had their impact on the worshipping, and wider devotional, life of many if not all Christians, not just those from the Anglican tradition and not just those in the UK.

All of this change in worship also existed at a time of very rapid change in society and, more significantly for this story, in technology. In the second half of the twentieth century we witnessed significant changes in the economic and political basis of the world, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of China and other economic powers, the increased migration across the world and the whole process that is usually referred to as 'globalisation'. Culturally, and intellectually, scholars have pointed to this period as one that was characterised by 'post-modernity' following the modernity of the previous hundred or so years. It was the growth in information technology, however, that perhaps had the greatest impact, both on the economic developments and the changes in culture, with the growth of the personal computer, the internet and the mobile phone dramatically reshaping the way humanity understood itself and communicated between its members. Worship was inevitably going to be effected by all of these radical changes in society and culture.

I recount this story at the beginning of this chapter primarily to give a sense of what might be described as the 'materiality of the text' within worship and how a particular format, whether of prayer book, hymnbook or scripture, can have a significant impact on how we understand our worship, our wider devotional life, or, I am going to suggest, our understanding of authority and freedom in worship. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to set out the histories of the text within the three fields of worship books, hymn books and biblical texts. I cannot claim to be comprehensive given the space available. However, in each case I want to highlight both the main staging posts and the kinds of discussion that have arisen as the churches have moved from fixed texts, to more unstable texts, to alternative texts, to hypertexts. I will draw on examples from across the world, although with an emphasis on the UK and the Anglican tradition. Within each of the three histories I will highlight a different theoretical issue that is raised by this changing landscape. I will then aim to draw this discussion together in my final section to ask what this change in the materiality of the text has meant in relation to changing understandings of authority and performance.

The Prayer Book

The history of the development of the liturgy in various churches throughout the twentieth century has been told many times, mainly from the perspective of individual denominations (Finn and Schellman 1990; Fenwick and Spinks

1995; Westerfield Tucker 1996; Spinks and Torrance 1999). Much of this analysis focuses on the structure of the rites or on the language used within them. Very little has concentrated on the material form of the books, or other formats, that contain the rites. However, from the middle of the century, and in tandem with significant changes in structure and language, the books of the liturgy have undergone a radical transformation. I am talking here primarily of those books, pamphlets and bits of paper that are put into the hands of the congregation. There has been an equivalent, and in some cases related, change in the books that have been used by the clergy and other ministers, but these are not directly my concern within this chapter.

The Anglican 1928 *Book of Common Prayer*, probably the first entirely 'new' production of the twentieth century, was in many ways a re-presentation of the older 1662 book. It had the same feel, much the same content, and was expected to be used in very much the same way. The *Shorter Book of Offices* of the Methodist Church published in 1936, on the other hand, had an entirely different feel. This was produced following the reunification of a number of British Methodist churches in 1932 and was clearly a compromise production. Some traditions of Methodism had continued to use the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* or a revised version of it. Others rejected the very idea of a printed service book and called for entirely extemporary worship. The 1932 *Book of Offices* contained a version of the Lord's Supper and Morning Prayer familiar from the prayer book tradition but also outline services for those who rejected formal liturgy. The *Shorter Book of Offices* contained only a few elements of the full book, primarily for the use of the congregation, and so the size of the book was greatly reduced. This led, in turn, to its publication in pamphlet form.

When the Anglicans got permission to revise their worship in the 1960s they chose to begin with a series of experimental services that could be tried out in the churches. As these did not have the formal status of an approved rite, and as each service was revised at a different rate, the format of these books (*Series One*, *Two* and *Three*) was that of the pamphlet, following the Methodist precedent. It was these that I was familiar with growing up in the 1970s. While these experimental texts were being produced, however, the Roman Catholic Church was undertaking a radical reform of its own. There were two features in particular that changed both the practice of practically all Catholic churches and the nature of worship in many other denominations. The first was the use of the vernacular, and particularly the contemporary vernacular. The other was the introduction of alternative texts at significant points in the liturgy.

The use of alternative texts was not entirely new. The Methodist *Book of Offices* provided alternative forms of entire services to meet the needs of a

uniting church. Elements of the liturgy within the Roman *Missal*, as in the Anglican prayer book and other forms of liturgical service, had always changed with the seasons, and the books offered the range of alternatives for each day or season as part of the single volume. These changes were either clearly defined (as with the collect), and related to the changes in readings, or they were relatively minor. What is also clear is that none of these changes really affected the congregation. In the new *Missal* of 1970, however, there was a significant change. Here there were alternative eucharistic prayers, and the choice of prayer was in the hands of celebrant. There were also alternative sections for the congregation even at the heart of the eucharistic rite.

There was something about this change that was found to be attractive far beyond the Roman Catholic Church. This appealed to the twin focus on 'variety' and 'participation' that a number of commentators of the time saw as the way forward in churches that were rejecting old and 'irrelevant' liturgies (Davies 1973). Interestingly another, equally vocal, group was saying that it was exactly this emphasis on variety that was among the main difficulties with the new rites and the reason they were being rejected by the congregations. It was no longer possible, the argument went, for the members of the congregation to identify with specific texts that they had learnt and internalised through constant repetition week after week since childhood (Martin 1980).

The *ASB*, published in 1980, probably epitomises this emphasis on choice more than any other text. The principle issue of controversy with the *ASB* was the number of possible variations within the rites. This led many at the time to object that the book was unwieldy and could not be used as a congregational text (Shepherd 1981). It also raised significant theological points about the nature of freedom and authority within the liturgy (Stevenson 1978). The wide variations within the *ASB*, however, should also be seen within a wider context where many within the Church of England were failing even to use the authorised texts at all. This had been an issue within the Anglo-Catholic wing of the church for many years, with a number of churches choosing to use English translations of the Roman *Missal*, or other variations on Catholic rites, since the beginning of the twentieth century (Dalby 1998). In the 1970s and 80s, however, the growth of the Charismatic movement and other Evangelical traditions, as well as the growth of alternative texts from more liberal sources such as Iona, a radical Church of Scotland community that rebuilt the island abbey on Iona and developed a Celtic inspired spiritual tradition, or those concerned with inclusive language, meant that in practice many different sources were being used, even within the principle rites of the church. While this was limited to the texts that were used by the celebrant there was little problem, but the rise of the photocopier and cheaper printing in the early 1980s meant that

congregations could prepare their own individualised service booklets from a range of different sources and therefore put alternative, and non-authorised, texts into the hands of the congregation.

The Church of England responded to this challenge in a number of different ways. There was a call for an increased variety of material for different times of the year that led to the production of *Lent, Holy Week and Easter* in 1986 and *The Promise of His Glory* in 1991. *Lent, Holy Week and Easter* was a relatively conservative volume, but *The Promise of His Glory* made other significant changes, including a number of new service structures, and even entirely new services. More significant, however, were the debates around another proposed service books; *Patterns for Worship*. This took the question of authority and freedom almost to the limit of what was possible within the Church of England at the time.

The roots of *Patterns for Worship* came from a number of different sources, most significantly the call for all age worship and the inclusion of children in worship, and also the discussions that derived from the report on *Faith in the City* published in 1985 and the call for worship that was suitable for people from inner-urban areas (Liturgical Commission 1989). In linguistic terms this led to an emphasis on concrete imagery and an increasingly paired down style. This also led, however, to the proposal that the Church could offer a framework for an act of worship, even eucharistic worship, that could be filled out by the celebrant, or the worship committee of the individual churches, with their own texts. The idea of a framework for worship was not new. The reformed church tradition had worked with a framework for worship for many centuries and the idea was developed in the Methodist *Book of Offices* as well as in all the books produced by the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Church in the middle of the twentieth century. For the Anglican Church, however, this was a new concept and one that acknowledged the growing practice by which local clergy would put together services from the material they had available and print off a specific service sheet for a specific service.

It was not just the Church of England that was developing a more open, selective approach to worship in the early 1990s. The British Methodist Church in its revisions, published in 1999, presented the possibility of a range of services with specific forms for each of the seasons of the year (Dixon 2003). This was a creative and complex proposal that never fully caught the congregational imagination, largely because by the time it was finally published the technology had moved on and a different approach was being called for. Equally significant, and again probably too late to be used widely, were the texts for funerals produced by the Liturgical Committee of the Roman Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. The committee prepared a wide range of

texts that were interchangeable and which could be used to meet very specific circumstances within the context of death and mourning. This text was widely welcomed within the Catholic Church, and beyond, but came just as the authorities in Rome were looking to reign in what they felt to be undesirable freedom in worship through the call for a new translation of the Roman Rite.

Patterns for Worship was also out of its time. It never gained full acceptance by the General Synod and other authorities within the Church of England, and the final official text was very different from the radical proposals that were contained in the original draft. The text, however, was developed as the internet grew in popularity and the format of the book, as originally planned, was ideally designed for the way in which the net was increasingly becoming used within the churches. While in the early 1990s it was assumed that some kind of desktop publishing would have allowed the person designing the worship to bring together different elements, from different sources, into a format that was to be used for a range of services, increasingly having the material available on the web, alongside the hymns and easily accessible readings, allowed each congregation to construct their own complete service sheet for each and every act of worship. This effectively did away with books, with pamphlets and with the constant juggling between many different texts as the worship progressed. How widespread this practice is among those who have access to the web to design their worship I am not sure, probably not as widespread as it might be. The Church of England did, after all, go on to publish a further complete book, *Common Worship*, in 2000 and that book is still used comparatively widely within the church.

Before leaving worship, however, I do need to reference one further development that sits at the edge of the wider development of worship towards the end of the twentieth century, but which might, in some shape of form, come more into the mainstream as the possibilities of the internet grow over the coming decades. The birth of the Alternative Worship scene is usually associated with the Nine O'Clock Service in St Thomas Crooks, Sheffield, UK (Howard 1996). This service emerged as an experiment aimed at bringing young people into worship. All the usual trappings of Anglican worship were rejected and the feel and structure of the worship followed that of the raves and rock festivals that were common at the time. At the heart of this rethinking was technology. The church was stripped out and screens, lights and sound systems were brought in to provide the context for the worship, with specially constructed shows using sound, music, words and imagery on many different screens. The Nine O'Clock Service itself ended in a scandal involving the priest who had led the initiative, but the principles were developed in a number of different directions.

The freedom of form, assisted by contemporary technological innovation, formed the basis for practically all Alternative Worship that followed (Guest 2002). In the early years of the new millennia Fresh Expressions also began to develop within the Anglican and Methodist churches in the UK and some of the bodies associated with this developed the experimental side of Alternative Worship (Percy and Nelstrop 2008). Meanwhile some of the franchised forms of Evangelical churches, such as Hillsong from Sydney in Australia, developed the technological side, situating their worship within the space, and the cultural context, of the theatre and the rock concert (Döll 2013). In all these cases the internet proved invaluable, both as a source of imagery in order to develop content, but also as a medium through which to advertise and develop the concept.

Hymns

In 2010 I visited a postgraduate student, Mikie Roberts, in his field site in the US Virgin Islands and he took me along to the Pentecostal congregation where he was studying the way congregational singing formed the identity of the congregation. St Thomas Assemblies of God was a purpose built church with an open hall, a stage where the worship group and the pastor stood, a space for the musicians and, to either side of the stage, two screens onto which the words of the bible texts and hymns or choruses used during the worship were projected, along with a video projection of the pastor delivering his sermon. Some of the hymns and choruses had been chosen in advance, but the pastor could also begin to sing a hymn or chorus that came to him before, during or after his sermon and it was only a matter of seconds before the words of these inspired renditions also appeared on the screen. Those behind the projector clearly had access to a large catalogue of hymns and choruses that they could search and project practically instantaneously.

Part of my student's research looked at the way in which the changes in technology affected the way the hymns and choruses were understood and the impact the technology had on issues such as identity, memory, authority and the canon of hymnody used by the church (Roberts 2014). In talking to members of the congregation at different ages Roberts was able to identify the way in which different generations engaged with individual hymns and with the hymnbook. Another of my students, Jennie Smith, had already undertaken fieldwork with a majority black congregation in north Birmingham, UK, and noted the importance of the hymn book as a basis for devotion among this particular group of older Caribbean women (Smith 2006). It is as much the materiality of

the book as the knowledge and meaning of the hymns that it contains, that mattered for these women, and each woman had her own copy, brought with her from her home Island and still treasured despite being battered and worn, or perhaps because of that lifetime of wear and companionship.

It is possible to provide a historical record of the changes in hymnody and hymnbooks within worship over the last fifty years to match that of the worship books that I explored in the first section of this chapter. With hymnbooks, however, there is much greater diversity and variety, both between the many different denominations and between different countries. I will therefore highlight only two examples of what I would suggest is a general trend. The first will track my own experiences within the Anglican church in the UK and the second will reference what has become known as the 'worship wars' and focus on the kind of traditions that lead, in one form or another, to the practice of St Thomas Assemblies of God in the US Virgin Islands.

By the middle of the twentieth century the hymnbook that was present within a particular Anglican church said a great deal about the kind of churchmanship held within that church. *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was used by many middle of the road congregations, *The English Hymnal* was reserved for those with a more high-church approach, and so on. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, a new series of hymns were being produced and made available through a number of different channels. The hymns that my father brought together in his little home produced pamphlet were unashamedly modern and included works by Sydney Carter ('Lord of the Dance'), Fred Kaan ('New Magnificat') and Richard Jones' 'God of Concrete, God of Steel'. My father was introduced to many of the hymns through BBC Worship for Schools and the various publications that had been produced to accompany their worship.

Another series of publications that were being developed at the same time, and which began to be used within our church and others, were *Sound of Living Waters* and its sequels. This created a folk based tradition that was to be accompanied by guitars and other instruments rather than the traditional organ. The structure and form of these songs was very different to the traditional hymn (Ward 2005). The musical traditions of Taizé and Iona were also emerging at the same time and becoming part of a very eclectic mixture of hymns, songs, choruses and chants in those churches that were open to such developments.

In the UK it was the production of *Mission Praise*, designed to support Billy Graham's 1984 Mission England campaign and widely used in the Decade of Evangelism in the 1990s, which brought a range of songs from the Evangelical tradition into the mainline churches. This book was one of the first 'hymnbooks' to become widely used ecumenically as the particular choice of hymns, songs and choruses was not seen as belonging to any particular denomination.

It was the 'modern', 'youth' feel of *Mission Praise* that made it popular across the board. However, *Mission Praise* seldom ended up being the sole hymnbook of any one congregation. Congregations would have access to two or more hymnbooks and service leaders would either have to choose which hymnbook to use, or to assume that the congregation had a pile of books in front of them and could be directed to exactly where the next hymn or prayer originated. It is not surprising that the overhead projector was seen as one means to reduce the range of books and increase the variety of hymns sung at one and the same time.

The next step in this particular story follows that of the worship books that I have already talked about. The move from a pile of books to single service sheets seemed natural as the new printing technology made this possible, and then, as the texts became more readily available through the internet, an ever wider range of hymns, songs and choruses became available to the congregation, at least in theory. The only real difference with the hymnody comes in the use of overhead projectors and other screens, and more recently, with the question of copyright.

The story I have told above relates primarily to the Anglican Church in the UK, but the pattern is familiar for many liturgical churches across the developed world. Another narrative is possible if we focus less on the liturgical tradition and look more to the development of Reformed, Free Church and Evangelical denominations and the growth of Pentecostal musical traditions. Here the starting point was once again monolithic, denominational hymnbooks (apart from those few churches which still objected to any kind of singing). In many of these churches, however, the identity of the congregation, and the devotion of the individual worshippers were closely tied into the hymnbook. Where service books did not exist, and an extemporary form of worship was prized, the hymnbook, sitting alongside the Bible, was the primary source of personal devotion. Many of the family prayer books produced by these denominations from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century were no longer in use and the hymnbook was often the only non-scriptural devotional text available. These hymns were sung either unaccompanied or supported by an organ, harmonium or piano depending on the context.

In the 1960s a new wave of Christian music began to emerge. This originated in youth traditions and mimicked, more or less, contemporary popular styles of music, complete with guitars, drum sets and other instruments. The influence of Gospel music from the Black Churches in the United States is also a significant element of the mix. The Charismatic and Pentecostal traditions popularised this music to a great extent and the newer church traditions emerged in a context where this was accepted as normal. Older Reformed, Free

Church and Evangelical denominations, however, found this very difficult and so the 'worship wars' developed, particularly in America (York 2003). These pitted the new forms of music against the old, worship bands against the organ or harmonium, choruses against hymns, and, to a large extent, charismatic or Pentecostal theology against an older form of evangelicalism. In some traditions the wars were very bitter with clergy being dismissed or called depending on their position in relation to these issues. Over time, however, it was the worship band, the chorus and the more open charismatic traditions that have won out almost universally.

In these wars the place of the hymnbook was central. At no point was there any real attempt to bring together into one place the songs and choruses of the newer traditions. There was something ephemeral about these productions, written through inspiration and spread from church to church through Evangelical music festivals such as Greenbelt and the mutual visiting by individuals, or whole worship groups, between churches. This enabled the music to flourish and spread surprisingly quickly without ever being fully written out or published. Alongside the worship group itself, the guitar, drum kit, electronic keyboard, and other instruments that were needed to support these songs, the overhead projector became a key piece of equipment. The ability to select a slide and project it on a screen as the Spirit moved, or as the worship leader began a particular song, was essential. New songs or choruses could be added to the pile of acetates very quickly and old ones gradually fell to the bottom of the pile, as they were unused and eventually forgotten. Powerpoint and computer projection only accelerated this process. This enabled a very vibrant, constantly renewable, musical tradition, but it offered nothing to replace the personal devotion that had traditionally been associated with the hymnbook, something that comes through very clearly in Roberts' work in St Thomas (Roberts 2014).

My final comment in relation to hymnody raises the question of copyright. If hymns, like worship texts, are readily available on the internet, and if people are subsequently failing to buy hymnbooks, then the question of copyright becomes very important, especially for the authors and musicians behind the hymns. This is not an area that is confined to hymnody. Copyright questions have dogged the internet and relate to all music and text that have been uploaded and made available to the general public. Copyright, however, is not a topic that worship leaders have really had to think about until relatively recently. It is in relation to hymns in particular, however, that the issue has come to the fore. It is required, at least under British law, to acknowledge the source of each text within a printed service sheet and there are strict guidelines for the use of hymn texts and, where used, the use of downloads of the

music to accompany the hymns. This is a new field but probably one that will continue to develop over the next few years as people get used to the various implications and consequences of the process.

The Bible

It is important, for the sake of completeness, to include the development of biblical texts alongside those of worship and hymnody in this chapter. This is primarily because the development over the last thirty or so years has closely followed (and occasionally led) that of worship texts and hymnody, but also because reference to scriptural texts raises other, far more interesting, questions of authority and authenticity that are not raised by the other kinds of text. From an individual point of view, in terms of personal devotion, and from the perspective of the worship leader, the history of the biblical text has followed a very similar pattern from the end of the 1970s to worship texts and hymnody. It has moved clearly from a definitive form of printed text towards a more open and flexible text available on the web. What is clear with the biblical text, however, is that this jump was much more dramatic and the 'do it yourself' phase, whether of locally printed service sheets or the use of the overhead projector, has been largely overlooked.

As suggested in my opening section the burning question of biblical texts in the 1970s and 1980s was one of which version to use. Since the 1940s there had been serious attempts to bring the Biblical text into modern English and to sell the subsequent versions to a mass audience. By the end of the 1970s there were a number of significant versions available and if a church decided that it wanted to provide biblical texts for its members then it had a series of serious choices to make. The question was essentially one of accuracy and/or accessibility. The *Revised Standard Version* (RSV) was the first widely accepted modern version and the scholarship behind it promised a text that was faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek. The *Good News Version*, as I have suggested, went for a different approach and placed the emphasis on accessibility, perhaps at the expense of strict accuracy with reference to the original documents. The *New International Version* (NIV) aimed to provide a balance between accuracy and accessibility and was widely welcomed. Other versions offered more or less accuracy and/or accessibility (Metzger 2001).

Many lectionaries developed in the 1970s and 1980s felt they had to make a choice, to identify one version that they would adopt across the lectionary and so demonstrate consistency of style amongst other benefits. A few chose to develop entirely new texts, especially those like the Anglican Church of Canada

who placed a high priority on inclusive language in their worship. The Church of England, in producing the lectionary for *ASB* made a different decision. They decided to choose from a list of authorised versions that translation that made best sense for each passage and so compromised on the consistency of style to emphasise meaning and understandability (Jasper and Bradshaw 1986: 312).

It was the internet, however, that radically changed the way in which many ordinary Christians engaged with the biblical text, especially in worship. With each of the versions being uploaded and made available with instant search tools, the texts, in multiple different forms, became easily available to each and every internet user. Different versions could be compared and the most appropriate version chosen for the task in hand. This took the *ASB* approach to multiple versions in the lectionary one stage further with each person who puts together their own service sheet having the option of dropping into the sheet the appropriate text, from whatever version they feel brings out the points they wish to make. The text of the Bible has ceased, in many cases, to be a fixed object, it has begun to take on different forms for different purposes and can be interrogated and manipulated for many different contexts. This has, I would suggest, radically changed the way many Christians engage with the text itself.

Scholarship, however, has taken this whole process one stage further. The Institute for Textual Study and Electronic Editing (ITSEE), under the leadership of David Parker, has made available electronic editions of every manuscript from the early church and given access for the average Christian to all the different readings of the various texts. Where the *RSV* and the *NIV* aimed for accuracy and authenticity, that is a closeness to some supposed 'original version' in Greek or Hebrew, what ITSEE has made publically available is the fact that there is no such thing as an 'original version' (Parker 1997). There are in most cases many different readings of individual texts and a range of different textual readings. If the availability of differing versions in English has led to the sense of a moving, or moveable text, then the recovery, and making available of, the many different readings in ancient manuscripts has left us with a text that has few, if any, definitive points of stability at all. This has potentially changed the way in which the text is viewed and understood within many churches and among many Christians.

Authority

There are two possible ways of understanding the kind of histories that I have been outlining in this chapter, and they relate very closely to the way people understand the impact or power of the internet. The first is to talk of a 'crisis of

authority'. The other is to talk in terms of 'freedom of expression' or the 'democratisation of knowledge'. It is not surprising to see these issues raised both in the development of the internet and in our understanding of religious texts in the internet age. As we have seen, the internet, and the possibilities opened up by the internet, played a central role in the development of the religious texts that we have been looking at. In this concluding section, therefore, I will explore this question of authority and freedom in more detail in relation to each of the texts explored within the chapter.

The issue in relation to texts for worship is perhaps that of localisation, or we might want to say congregationalisation. This is not something new for many in the Reformed or Evangelical traditions. It is seen much more starkly, however, in the traditionally liturgical churches. Having moved into the Catholic Church in the 1990s, I currently attend the Oratory in Birmingham, UK, where they celebrate a high mass each Sunday according to the 1962 *Extraordinary Form*. This is done with full pre-Vatican II ceremonial, suitable vestments for all concerned, and a full choir that can offer mass settings from the 1500s to the present day. When I am in New York I tend to worship at the Jesuit church on Madison Avenue. Here the worship is very informal and relaxed, only the celebrant wears vestments and on occasion only an alb and a stole, the worship group is accompanied by guitars and flutes, and the clergy feel free to adapt the texts to local circumstances abandoning the written text on a regular basis. These are both Catholic churches that have an obligation to follow a formal textual tradition. The clergy at the Oratory would say that they are being particularly true to that tradition and are following the text with minute detail, but both are making choices. I am also making choices; neither church is local, either to where I live outside Birmingham, or to my usual hotel in New York. I choose to go because I have the freedom to choose and because there is something special about each liturgy that I personally find rewarding. There is, therefore, a level of congregationalism even within the Catholic Church and it is clear that this has been growing steadily since Vatican II, with the permission to use the *Extraordinary Form* only adding to that trend.

This trend, however, has an impact beyond the congregational level. If congregationalism is growing then what is happening to denominational identities? I can remember in the mid-1980s, after a return from nine months working for the Anglican Church in Tanzania, being asked by the then Head of the Anglican Communion what I thought it was that defined 'Anglican identity' (Stringer 2005b). Even at that time the growth of local liturgical revisions in each of the provinces of the Anglican Communion meant that the traditional Anglican answer, rooted in the 1662 prayer book tradition, no longer made any sense. Since the 1980s the question of Anglican, as well as Methodist, Reformed

and even Catholic identity has been strongly debated. To talk of a single global identity in the face of widespread liturgical diversity no longer appears to make sense. Even the Pentecostal tradition, where the level of intercommunication and travel appeared to suggest that globalisation had taken root, is, according to Allan Anderson (2013), decisively local. Of course, most recent theories of globalisation within the social sciences are keen to emphasise the balance between the global and the local, but there is still work to be done on the investigation of these processes on liturgical practice across the world, and across the churches.

It is not only at a congregational, or denominational level, that questions of freedom and authority have been affected by the growth of textual traditions on the internet. If I turn to my second example, that of hymnody, then we have to turn to the position of the individual. I have suggested that there was a time, especially within the Reformed and Free Church traditions, that individual spirituality was rooted in the use of the hymnbook as a source of spiritual poetry. This provided something of a common language among those who shared knowledge of the popular hymns. One example of the way this has been eroded, however, can be seen in England if we look at the practice of funerals. There has been a gradual move away from church based funerals, to rites held at the local crematorium. Alongside this has gone a gradual change in the form and content of the service itself. Where memories of school days and attendance at occasional events within the local church had once left the majority of the Christian or non-religious population of England with a common core of religious poetry in the form of popular hymns, in today's crematorium based funeral the only common poetic and musical language appears to be the individual's favourite version of 'My Way'.

The situation in Wales and Scotland is undoubtedly very different from that in England, with the possibility of a stronger, and more persistent tradition of hymn singing, if only at rugby matches. Other countries around the world will have other kinds of tradition. It is impossible to generalise in this area. However, in England the hymn has been confined to certain very specific occasions, such as the use of 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Jerusalem' at the Last Night of the Proms, and does not have any continuing roots in popular consciousness, or by implication, popular spirituality. The recent death of John Tavener has shown just how long the memory of his music, played at the funeral for Princess Diana, has had within the public consciousness, and while his music is seen as 'spiritual' this does not have the same kind of devotional position as the old hymnbooks.

A recent paper at a conference on religious music showed another way in which the development of technology had impacted on the way people

engaged with hymns. In this case the study was of advertisements that aimed to sell Christian music (Nekola 2013). It was noted that all the adverts showed a single individual, usually a woman, and often with headphones, listening to the music. The music was not being sold for public events; it was being sold as part of an individual, private, spirituality. One advert in particular captured the mood of the genre in showing the inside of a luxury car with the words, 'Now every place can be your sanctuary' or words to that effect. Here the listener was encouraged to worship, alone and through the music, in any and every private space and in all those times that sit between other activities within the day. Is this the new devotional use of hymnody, mediated through the download rather than the hymnbook? If so, then what might be the implications for the future?

The third strand of this chapter has been the biblical text. Here the challenge is perhaps more fundamental than that of the worship book or the hymnbook. As I have suggested, through the work of Parker, what is being challenged here is the very understanding of a definitive text, the book as the basis of truth. Perhaps, in practice, this has had the least impact, primarily I would suggest because many of those using online biblical sources are not using them for the kind of detailed textual criticism that Parker and other scholars are concerned with. There has not been the democratisation of knowledge in this field that some of the advocates of the internet promised. People will look up particular passages, check out on line search engines instead of the old fashioned concordance, but beyond that the question of a definitive text, or the roots of the text in the earliest Greek and Hebrew manuscripts is not something that most users will usually be concerned about. The many challenges to the text of the Bible over the last century and a half have never really impacted on those who choose to believe. What we need to remember, therefore, is that the internet is a tool. We cannot predict, from the form of the tool, how the text will be read, used and engaged with; there is no determinism at work here. In the case of the biblical text, however, this is perhaps something that we need to watch as the implications of the decentering of authority might become clearer over time.

Susan White, in a book on the relationship between liturgy and technology, identifies a series of technological revolutions that, over time, have had an impact on the text of Christian worship and have changed the way church authorities and ordinary people have seen that text (White 1994). In most of these technological revolutions the consequence has been an increased centralising tendency within the church and a more consistent and authoritative text, whether this be Charlemagne's use of the monastic scriptoriums to provide exact copies of liturgy throughout his Empire, or the impact of the printing

press on the churches of the Reformation and on the outcome of the Council of Trent. The impact of home production (whether through local printing and the overhead projector, or more recently through the internet) may be the first of these technological revolutions that has led the churches in the opposite direction, towards greater local variation, more diversity and less control from the centre, and if this is the case then we are clearly in entirely new waters and it remains to be seen how things will develop in the future.

Brian Spinks uses the image of the Worship Mall to suggest a kind of contemporary pick and mix approach to worship where many different products, either individual items or whole lifestyle choices, are on sale and it is for the local church to make its own choices within the market (Spinks 2010). This is an interesting metaphor, but perhaps fails to capture the truly radical nature of the changes that have taken place over the last fifty years. At a recent conference one of the speakers referred to the situation around the revision of the liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church as a 'car crash'. This was something that spoke of utter destruction, accidents waiting to happen, and a radical change from which there was no return. The image was deliberately negative, something to be utterly regretted so far as the speaker was concerned. If we accept, however, the metaphor of the 'car crash' (and I make no judgement on whether it is an accurate description of the reality) then that leaves us with three possible choices. The first is to desperately try and reconstruct the car, hoping that the various parts are not too damaged and that people will not see the joins. The second is to follow Lyotard (1984) and other post-modern thinkers and simply to enjoy playing in the ruins of the crash, playfully experimenting, trying out a hub cap as a steering wheel, or a cam shaft as a gear lever, or whatever. The third is actually to take advantage of the crash to see the full complexity of that which has been smashed, to begin to learn about the history of suspension systems, or why the door latch on this particular model is so well suited to its purpose, and then to build something entirely new out of the traditions of the past. This is what the internet, the democratisation of knowledge, allows us to do for worship, for hymnbooks, and perhaps even for biblical texts, and this, I would suggest, is something we should celebrate.

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CHAPTER 9

Affiliation, Practice, Belief, Attitude, and Orientation

Leslie J. Francis

Introduction

This chapter has been shaped by a scientific approach to conceptualising and to operationalising an appreciation and evaluation of individual differences between Christians and the personal and social correlates of such differences. This scientific approach reflects current research and scholarship refined by three academic traditions: empirical theology, social scientific study of religion, and psychology of individual differences.

Quantitative research in empirical theology has its roots in the 1970s and was shaped by theologians working with methods and theories informed by the social sciences. Empirical theology was conceived in the Netherlands by van der Ven as an interdisciplinary activity whereby the tools of the social sciences were taken into theology and tested by the theological academy. Empirical theology was conceived in England and Wales by Francis as an interdisciplinary activity whereby the practitioners of empirical theology sought to have their work tested both by the theological academy and by social scientists. The debate between these two perspectives was well captured by Cartledge (1999). This developing discipline was stimulated by the *Journal of Empirical Theology*, founded in 1987 and subsequently by the International Society for Empirical Research in Theology. The discipline has also been stimulated by Brill in their series of books on Empirical Studies in Theology.

Quantitative research in the social scientific study of religion has a much longer history as demonstrated by the two flagship journals, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (which published volume 53 in 2014) and *Review of Religious Research* (which published volume 56 in 2014). More recently the year book, *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion* (which published volume 25 in 2014) has confirmed expanding interest in the field. Within the social scientific study of religion the two disciplines that have contributed most to refining conceptualisation and operationalisation in the field are sociology and psychology. In this context the sociology of religion is displayed in journals like

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Social Compass and *Sociology of Religion*. The psychology of religion is displayed in journals like *Archive for the Psychology of Religion; International Journal for Psychology of Religion; Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, and *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. Quantitative research in the psychology of individual differences provides a somewhat broader theoretical framework within which both empirical theology and the social scientific study of religion can be located. It is this broader framework that helps to sharpen conceptualisation and to refine operationalisation by aligning measures of religiosity alongside other indices of individual differences. This broader perspective is well displayed through journals like *Personality and Individual Differences*.

This scientific approach concerned with conceptualising and operationalising individual differences between Christians and with mapping the personal and social correlates of such differences has recognised the contemporary complexity of the broad notion of being Christian. Thus, empirical research that is concerned with understanding what it means to be Christian has explored that notion as a multi-dimensional construct. Mapping this construct has involved distinguishing between at least five distinct but interrelated areas conceptualised as affiliation, practice, belief, attitude, and orientation. Each of these five constructs will be reviewed in turn. Since original research in these areas has been conducted by the author of this chapter largely in a British context, it is from this context that evidence will be mainly drawn to illustrate the significance of the five constructs.

Christian Affiliation

In one sense self-assigned Christian affiliation is the most obvious indicator employed in social research. To claim the identity of Christian clearly distinguishes such claimants from other religious categories. Christian is, for example, a category included in the decadal census for England and Wales in 2001 and 2011. Choosing this category differentiates individuals from the other seven listed categories: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, none, and other (specify). A more sophisticated census question may invite those who select the Christian category to subdivide themselves into recognised denominational categories, like Anglican, Catholic, or Protestant. An even more sophisticated census question may invite subdivision of the Protestant category, recognising that Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists may be shaped by quite distinctive theological and ecclesiological considerations, and that Pentecostal Christians may be shaped by quite different considerations compared with non-Pentecostal Christians.

The great strength of concentrating on self-assigned religious affiliation in sociological surveys, like the decadal census, is that it is acceptable to ask questions about religious affiliation in the public square. While matters of religious practice and matters of religious belief are regarded generally as private issues of personal concern properly to be protected from public gaze, religious affiliation tends to be regarded as a proper matter of public concern. Religious affiliation serves as a legitimate marker of social identity, serving the same public function as sex and ethnicity. It is, however, precisely this aspect of religious affiliation that is most problematic. The academic debate concerns the extent to which self-assigned religious affiliation really is a valid indicator of religiosity or whether it serves as a better proxy for cultural identity (Voas and Bruce 2004).

The debate about the usefulness of religious affiliation as an indicator in social research and social planning was brought into prominence in England and Wales in the six-year period prior to the 2001 national census when the introduction of a religious question into the census was seriously debated for the first time (Francis 2003; Weller 2004; Sherif 2011). At that point a powerful attempt to rehabilitate religious affiliation as a theoretically coherent and socially significant indicator was advanced by Fane (1999), drawing on Bouma's (1992: 110) sociological theory of religious 'identification' and on Bibby's (1985, 1987) theory of religious 'encasement'. Drawing on his empirical surveys of religion in Canada, Bibby maintains that Canadian Christians are 'encased' within the Christian tradition that retains a strong influential hold over both its active and latent members and from which affiliates find it difficult to extricate themselves. Contrary to the view that low levels of church attendance are indicative of the erosion of the social significance of religion, Bibby argued that this trend manifests a re-packaging of religion in the context of consumer-orientated society, where consumers are free to accept 'fragments' of faith.

The British Social Attitudes Survey which has been conducted almost every year since 1983 (excluding 1988 and 1992), provided an interesting opportunity to test the thesis that religious affiliation functions as a significant predictor of attitudes and values that are of personal or social import. A close search of the literature reveals that these data have informed a number of studies. The following examples from recent editions of the annual reports published by the British Social Attitudes Survey team illustrate the kind of information available from this source.

Stratford et al. (2001) found that Catholics were more opposed to abortion than was the case among other religious and non-religious groups. Gould and Stratford (2002) found that religious affiliates were less likely than non-affiliates to have ever used cannabis. Park and Surridge (2003) found that

non-religious affiliates were the most likely group to espouse libertarian values, while Anglicans were the most likely group to espouse authoritarian values. Sturgis et al. (2004) found that religious groups were less accepting of therapeutic cloning than was the case among non-affiliates. Clery et al. (2007) found the highest acceptance of euthanasia among non-affiliates, followed by Anglicans, Roman Catholics, other Christians and non-Christian groups. Barlow et al. (2008) found that cohabitation was highest among non-affiliates (17 percent), followed by Catholics (11 percent), other Christians (8 percent), and Anglicans (6 percent). Park and Rhead (2013) found that in 2012 just 2 percent of non-affiliates considered premarital sex as always or mostly wrong, followed by Anglicans (10 percent), Roman Catholics (11 percent), other Christians (21 percent) and non-Christian religions (54 percent).

A major limitation with the British Social Attitudes Survey, however, concerns the relatively small number of participants interviewed each year and the consequent invisibility of religious minorities within such samples. The Teenage Religion and Values Survey was designed in the 1990s to develop a database of sufficient size to bring religious minorities into clear visibility (34,000 cases). The project concentrated on 13- to 15-year-old students for two reasons: one pragmatic and one strategic. Pragmatically, it was possible to generate a representative sample of this age group through schools at relatively low cost. Strategically, it was argued that the effects of secularity would be seen most visibly among young people who had been shaped within the current largely secular culture. In order to explore the connection specifically between denominational identity and attitudes and values that are of personal and social import, Francis (2008a, 2008b) focused exclusively on the female respondents to the survey (in order to avoid contamination by sex differences) and compared the responses of the young females who self-identified as Anglicans (4,996), Baptists (438), Jehovah's Witnesses (91), Methodists (480), Pentecostals (120), Presbyterians (119), and Roman Catholics (1,698), alongside those who owned no religious affiliation.

In the first of these two papers, Francis (2008a) profiled the association between denominational affiliation and seven areas: personal well-being, worries, counselling, school, social concern, religious beliefs, and paranormal beliefs. For example, in terms of personal well-being, 50 percent of the non-affiliates felt that their life has a sense of purpose. The proportions rose to 58 percent among Anglicans, 59 percent among Presbyterians, 63 percent among Roman Catholics, 64 percent among Methodists, 65 percent among Baptists, 73 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses, and 75 percent among Pentecostals. In terms of school-related attitudes, 40 percent of the non-affiliates considered that teachers do a good job. The proportions rose to 48 percent among Anglicans,

48 percent among Roman Catholics, 53 percent among Baptists, 55 percent among Methodists, 55 percent among Presbyterians, 56 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses, and 60 percent among Pentecostals. In terms of social concern, environmental issues were evaluated differently by different Christian denominations. While 60 percent of the non-affiliates were concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment, the proportions rose to 67 percent among Roman Catholics, 71 percent among Anglicans, 71 percent among Pentecostals, 72 percent among Baptists, 78 percent among Methodists, 80 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses, and 83 percent among Presbyterians. In terms of religious beliefs, creationist doctrines were taken more seriously by some Christian denominations than by others. While 16 percent of Roman Catholics believed that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, the proportions rose to 22 percent among Anglicans, 33 percent among Methodists, 37 percent among Presbyterians, 49 percent among Baptists, 67 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses, and 83 percent among Pentecostals.

In the second paper pursuing this theme, Francis (2008b) took an in-depth view of the association between denominational affiliation and attitudes toward sex and substances. Highly significant differences emerged in both fields. For example, in terms of attitudes toward sex, strong differences emerged between the denominations. While 9 percent of the non-affiliates maintained that it is wrong to have sexual intercourse outside marriage, the proportions rose to 12 percent among Anglicans, 12 percent among Presbyterians, 14 percent among Roman Catholics, 16 percent among Methodists, 23 percent among Baptists, 54 percent among Pentecostals, and 70 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses. The view that homosexuality is wrong was taken by 20 percent of non-affiliates, 18 percent of Presbyterians, 19 percent of Anglicans, 20 percent of Roman Catholics, and 21 percent of Methodists, but rose to 27 percent among Baptists, 59 percent among Pentecostals, and 81 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses. The view that abortion is wrong was taken by 38 percent of non-affiliates, 34 percent of Anglicans, 36 percent of Presbyterians, and 37 percent of Methodists, but rose to 45 percent among Baptists, 53 percent among Roman Catholics, 68 percent among Pentecostals, and 38 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses. In terms of attitudes toward substances, while 35 percent of non-affiliates and 35 percent of Roman Catholics maintained that it is wrong to smoke cigarettes, the proportions rose to 40 percent among Anglicans, 43 percent among Baptists, 47 percent among Methodists, 52 percent among Presbyterians, 54 percent among Pentecostals, and 78 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 15 percent of non-affiliates, 17 percent of Roman Catholics, and 18 percent of Anglicans maintained that it is wrong to become drunk, the proportions rose to 24 percent among Methodists, 29 percent among Baptists,

32 percent among Presbyterians, 47 percent among Pentecostals, and 59 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses. While 49 percent of non-affiliates and 52 percent of Roman Catholics maintained that it is wrong to use marijuana, the proportions rose to 54 percent among Baptists, 58 percent among Anglicans, 59 percent among Methodists, 69 percent among Presbyterians, 69 percent among Pentecostals, and 76 percent among Jehovah's Witnesses.

Religious Practice

Public religious practice, in the sense of frequency of worship attendance, is the second most obvious indicator employed in social surveys. Like religious affiliation this indicator has also been routinely included in the British Social Attitudes Survey. The most sustained use of these data was provided by Gill (1999) in his book *Churchgoing and Christian Ethics*. In particular Gill concentrated on the relationship between church attendance and the three themes of faith, moral order and love. Each of these three themes will be reviewed in order.

First, drawing on the 1991 database in respect of faith, Gill found that 21 percent of non-churchgoers believed that there is a God who concerns himself personally with every human being, compared with 84 percent of weekly churchgoers. A quarter (27 percent) of non-churchgoers believed that right and wrong should be based on God's law, compared with 77 percent of weekly churchgoers. One in eight (12 percent) of non-churchgoers believed that the course of our life is decided by God, compared with 53 percent of weekly churchgoers.

Regarding traditional tenets of Christian belief, belief in life after death was held by 83 percent of weekly churchgoers and 39 percent of non-churchgoers; 89 percent of weekly churchgoers believed in heaven and 62 percent believed in hell, compared with 45 percent of non-churchgoers who believed in heaven and 9 percent who believed in hell. Belief in religious miracles was held by 81 percent of weekly churchgoers and 28 percent of non-churchgoers. Regarding wider issues of belief in the supernatural, non-churchgoers were more likely to be believers than churchgoers. For example, 28 percent of non-churchgoers believed that a person's star sign at birth, or horoscope, can affect the course of that person's future, compared with 19 percent of weekly churchgoers. Two-fifths (41 percent) of non-churchgoers believed that some fortune-tellers can really foresee the future, compared with 33 percent of weekly churchgoers.

Second, in respect of moral order, Gill combined data from the 1983 and 1984 surveys to examine how churchgoers and non-churchgoers would respond

to the following question: "In general would you say that people should obey the law without exception, or are there exceptional occasions on which people should follow their own conscience even if it means breaking the law?" He found that 57 percent of weekly churchgoers agreed that people should obey the law without exception, compared with 44 percent of non-churchgoers. Asking the same question of the 1994 database, Gill found that the gap had widened (51 percent and 31 percent).

Drawing on the 1994 database to examine the relationship between church attendance and political activity, Gill found that 68 percent of weekly churchgoers said that they would contact their MP if they thought a law being considered for Parliament was really unjust and harmful, compared with 54 percent of non-churchgoers. Gill also found that in 1989 and 1991 twice as many weekly churchgoers (32 percent) as non-churchgoers (15 percent) said that they had actually taken action of this kind.

On the question of people who avoid paying income tax in full, according to the 1983 database, 86 percent of weekly churchgoers agreed that they should not be allowed to get away with it, compared with 64 percent of non-churchgoers. According to the 1991 database, 56 percent of weekly churchgoers argued that it was wrong to pay a plumber cash to avoid VAT, compared with 38 percent of non-churchgoers.

On the question of sexual morality, according to the combined 1983 and 1984 surveys, 64 percent of weekly churchgoers believed that it is always or mostly wrong if a man and a woman have sexual relations before marriage, compared with 26 percent of non-churchgoers. In the 1994 database this difference remained, although both groups had become somewhat more liberal. According to the 1994 database, 87 percent of weekly churchgoers agreed that people who want children ought to get married, compared with 74 percent of non-churchgoers. The combined 1983 and 1984 surveys showed that 79 percent of weekly churchgoers judged homosexuality to be always or mostly wrong, compared with 66 percent of non-churchgoers. In the 1993 database the figures stood at 80 percent and 69 percent. According to the combined 1983 and 1984 survey, 61 percent of weekly churchgoers and 60 percent of non-churchgoers considered that homosexuals should not be allowed to teach in schools. In the 1993 database the figures stood at 42 percent and 44 percent.

Third, in respect of love, Gill derived three distinct tests of altruism from the British Social Attitudes database. The first test of altruism examined whether churchgoers were more involved in voluntary service to the community. Using the 1994 database, Gill found that 15 percent of weekly churchgoers were members of a community or voluntary group, compared with 3 percent of non-churchgoers.

The second test of altruism examined whether churchgoers were particularly concerned about the vulnerable and needy. Using the 1989 database, Gill found that 28 percent of weekly churchgoers cited "to help others" as the most important factor in choosing a new job, compared with 6 percent of non-churchgoers. In the 1983 database, 55 percent of weekly churchgoers agreed that children should look after aged parents, compared with 39 percent of non-churchgoers. In the combined 1983, 1984 and 1985 databases, churchgoers showed themselves to be less in favour of capital punishment than non-churchgoers. For example, 58 percent of weekly churchgoers favoured capital punishment for police murder, compared with 76 percent of non-churchgoers. In the 1993 and 1994 database, the comparable figures stood at 63 percent and 74 percent. Finally, in the combined 1983–87 surveys churchgoers showed themselves to be less prejudiced than non-churchgoers. For example, 76 percent of weekly churchgoers described themselves as not prejudiced at all against people of other races, compared with 58 percent of non-churchgoers.

The third test of altruism contained a mixture of attitudes and behaviours. According to the 1993 database, weekly churchgoers took the needs of the poor overseas more seriously than did other people. Thus, 67 percent of weekly churchgoers gave a high priority to such charitable causes, compared with 32 percent of non-churchgoers. According to the 1994 survey, churchgoers showed greater support for national lottery money helping overseas causes and less support for animal causes at home. Thus, 22 percent of weekly churchgoers considered that it was not good to spend lottery money on those starving overseas, compared with 54 percent of non-churchgoers. At the same time, 35 percent of weekly churchgoers considered that it was not good to spend lottery money on preventing cruelty to animals in Britain, compared with 14 percent of non-churchgoers. According to the combined 1991 and 1993 database, 60 percent of weekly churchgoers agreed that they cannot refuse when someone comes to the door with a collecting tin, compared with 51 percent of non-churchgoers.

Religious Belief

Christian belief can be considered in relatively simple terms in social surveys or in much more complex and sophisticated terms in scientific studies. At a simple level, a number of studies have assessed belief in God in terms of response to the question "I believe in God", rated on five-point Likert scale (agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly). Agree strongly and agree responses have been interpreted to identify theists, the not

certain response to identify agnostics, and disagree and disagree strongly to identify atheists. One recent analysis employing this categorisation is reported by Francis et al. (2014) who make a direct comparison between the attitudes of 417 young male atheists and 394 young male theists between the ages of 13 and 15 attending schools in Wales. This study was particularly concerned with mapping the connection between religious belief and attitudes toward living in religiously diverse societies as assessed across four main areas.

The first area concerned cultural and religious diversity and the data demonstrated that, compared with young atheists, young theists held a more open attitude. In terms of cultural diversity, 51 percent of young theists agreed that people who come from different countries make their school or college an interesting place, compared with 25 percent of young atheists; 44 percent of young theists agreed that people who come from different countries make where they live an interesting place, compared with 28 percent of young atheists. In terms of religious diversity, 56 percent of young theists agreed that people from different religious backgrounds make their school or college an interesting place, compared with 31 percent of young atheists; 40 percent of young theists agree that people from different religious backgrounds make where they live an interesting place, compared with 25 percent of young atheists.

The second area concerned living with cultural diversity and the data demonstrated that young theists held a more positive view of the impact of cultural and religious pluralism on their local community. Thus, 58 percent of young theists agreed that, where they live, people who come from different countries get on well together, compared with 42 percent of young atheists; and 55 percent of young theists agreed that, where they live, people from different religious backgrounds get on well together compared with 37 percent of young atheists. Similarly, 50 percent of young theists agreed that where they live people respect religious differences, compared with 32 percent of young atheists.

The third area concerned respect for religion and the data demonstrated that young theists are more supportive of religious pluralism that young atheists. Thus, 77 percent of young theists maintained that we must respect all religions, compared with 49 percent of young atheists. Similarly, 66 percent of young theists maintained that all religious groups in Britain should have equal rights, compared with 48 percent of young atheists. On the other hand, young theists were not significantly less critical than young atheists of the negative effects of religion on society. Thus, 56 percent of young atheists criticised religion for bringing more conflict than peace, as did 51 percent of young theists. Similarly, 38 percent of young atheists criticised religious people as often intolerant of others, as did 34 percent of young theists.

The fourth area concerned the acceptance of religious clothing and the data demonstrated that young theists were significantly more accepting of wearing religious symbols and religious clothing in schools than young atheists across the religious traditions. For example, 66 percent of young theists agreed that Christians should be allowed to wear crosses in school, compared with 40 percent of atheists; 50 percent of young theists agreed that Muslims should be allowed to wear the Burka in school, compared with 34 percent of young atheists; 57 percent of young theists agreed that Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Turban in school, compared with 38 percent of young atheists; 53 percent of young theists agreed that Jews should be allowed to wear the Kippah or Yarmulke in school, compared with 38 percent of young atheists; and 55 percent of young theists agreed that Hindus should be allowed to wear the Bindi in school, compared with 37 percent of young atheists.

At a more complex level, considerable scientific attention has been given to distinguishing between and measuring a variety of different ways in which Christian belief may be formulated or held. The simple question concerning belief in God may disguise a range of ways in which such belief may be held, and a considerable variety within the content of that belief. In an early analysis of this problem Francis (1984) argued that the core content of Christian belief is concerned with beliefs about God and about God's modes of revelation and communication with men and women. In this analysis the core content of Christian belief is characterised by propositions about 15 primary areas: the divinity of Jesus, the Holy Trinity, life after death, the virgin birth of Jesus, heaven and hell, the salvation of men and women, salvation through Jesus, creation, revelation, the Bible, Bible reading, prayer, praying, the Church, and church attendance. The case was made that there are four primary stands that an individual can take in respect of each of the 15 content areas (conservative belief, liberal belief, agnosticism or uncertainty, atheism or unbelief) and two primary styles or intensities with which these stands may be endorsed (open or dogmatic). Each of the stands is open to both of the styles. In other words, it is a mistake to conflate dogmatism with conservative belief (as may sometimes happen). Liberal beliefs may be held in a dogmatic way, agnostic beliefs may be held in a dogmatic way, and unbelief may be held in a dogmatic way. Francis (1984) set out to provide independent measures of these different belief positions.

Another classic attempt to distinguish between different styles of Christian believing was provided through the LAM Scales by Hunt (1972). Hunt recognises that individuals who reject a literal interpretation of the Bible may not agree to *reject* the Bible but rather adopt a different mode of interpreting the material. Hunt, therefore, distinguishes between three belief positions in the

LAM Scales: literal, mythological, and rejection. Loman and Francis (2006) built on the idea of the LAM Scales to produce the Loman Index of Biblical Interpretation (LIBI), distinguishing between literal, symbolic, and rejecting modes of biblical interpretation.

Religious Attitude

Religious affiliation, religious practice and religious belief all appear to be relatively obvious and accessible indicators of Christian religiosity within social scientific research. In a pioneering study published in the late 1970s, Francis (1978) argued that a clear measure of an individual's religion could be accessed through the attitudinal dimension of religion. Reflecting on thirty years of research building on that foundation paper Francis (2009) consolidated the case for maintaining that the attitudinal dimension (the affective component) gets closest to the heart of an individual's religion. Attitude toward Christianity is concerned with how individuals feel (negatively and positively) toward Christianity. Francis (2009) argued in favour of the attitudinal dimension on the following grounds.

First, although affiliation has been shown to be of conceptual and empirical value within both theology and the social sciences, there are significant limitations for this construct within the individual differences approach. The level of measurement achieved is only that of discrete categories with individuals located either within one category or another. Moreover, affiliation categories take on significantly different meanings within different denominational groups. While nominalism is high, say, among Anglicans; in another group, say among Baptists, nominalism is low.

Second, although practice may be easy to conceptualise and to measure on ordinal or (possibly) interval scales, the actual meaning of practice may vary according to a range of constraints. For example, an irreligious young person may attend church because of family pressures, while a highly religious elderly person may stay away from church because of health-related problems. Moreover, practice may convey different significances within different denominational environments.

Third, although belief may be open to clear conceptualisation and (in some senses) refined measurement on (probably) interval scales, the formulation of indices of religious belief are conceptually complex (both theologically and psychologically). It is this formulation of measures of belief which may distinguish one denominational group from another, the theologically educated from the theologically naïve, and so on. While such issues are of central importance

to certain fields of theological enquiry, they may simply provide distraction to the broader individual differences approach concerned with comparative research dealing with the personal and social correlates of religion.

As a deep-seated underlying construct concerned with affective response (favourably toward or negatively against) religion, a well-developed attitude scale is able to calibrate individual differences in religiosity across age groups and across denominational divides. It is for this reason that Francis (1978) developed an instrument which has become known as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity and invited colleagues to join in building up a secure basis of empirical information regarding the correlates, consequences and antecedents of a positive attitude toward Christianity. By agreeing on the use of the same measure colleagues could be clear that their independent studies fitted together to build an integrated tapestry of research concerning the contributions being made to individual lives of the form of religiosity being accessed by the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity.

The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity comprised 24 items concerned with affective responses to five aspects of the Christian tradition that transcend denominational divisions, namely God, Jesus, bible, church and prayer. The scientific basis for confidence is the assertion that studies conducted in different contexts could be joined together rested on the demonstration that the instrument functioned with comparable degrees of reliability and validity among different age groups, among different denominational groups and in different countries. This programme of establishing the reliability and validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity began in English-speaking contexts.

Initially the tapestry of research constructed by means of studies agreeing on the use of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was restricted by the English-speaking world. The second generation of studies conducted within this tradition began to explore the performance of the instrument in translation. In this way it becomes possible to test whether the correlates, antecedents and consequences of individual differences in attitude toward Christianity established in an English-speaking context remain consistent within other linguistic communities.

The advantages and difficulties of translating psychometric instruments across languages are now well discussed in the literature. It is recognised, for example, how the change of a single word within a psychometric instrument in one language may change the pattern of responding to that one item and consequently disturb the pattern of correlations between the items. Translation of a whole instrument may prove to be so much more disruptive. The first general principle in translating psychometric instruments is the conceptual task

of ensuring that the concepts expressed in one language are adequately expressed in another language. This is much more complex than simply offering a word-for-word translation, although it may be relatively straightforward if the original instrument is itself expressed simply and in a clear manner. The process of translation is then followed by back-translation into the original language. Discrepancies between the original wording and the back-translation draw attention to potential problems with the translation.

The second general principle in translating psychometric instruments is the empirical task of examining whether the instrument displays comparable psychometric properties in the translated form to those established in the original form. Factor analyses and reliability analyses are able to examine whether the individual items perform in similar ways in translation. A family of studies has now reported on the satisfactory psychometric properties of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity translated into, for example, Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish and Welsh. As a consequence of these studies, the horizons for comparative research in the correlates, consequences and antecedents of individual differences connected with the Christian tradition have been enlarged against the background of a common religious heritage and an instrument that has the capability of operationalising the construct of attitude toward Christianity in a variety of languages.

More recently the research tradition initiated by the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity has been extended into other faith contexts through the Sahin-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Islam (Sahin and Francis 2002), the Katz-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Judaism (Francis and Katz 2007), and the Santosh-Francis Scale of Attitude toward Hinduism (Francis et al. 2008). These instruments have enabled theories developed about the connection between the attitudinal dimension of religion and other constructs established within a Christian context to be confirmed within other faith contexts.

Since the late 1970s a considerable literature has developed mapping the connection between individual differences in attitude toward Christianity and a very wide range of issues including abortion attitudes, alcohol attitudes, altruism, attendance at church schools, conservatism, creationism and evolutionary theory, cultural stereotype of the effects of religion on mental health, denominational differences, dissociation, dogmatism, gender orientation, general health, happiness, intelligence, just world beliefs, life satisfaction, mental health values, motivation to study religion, obsessionality, operational thinking, paranormal belief, premarital sex, prosocial values, psychological adjustment, psychological distress, psychological health, psychological type,

psychological well-being, purpose in life, religious experience, religious orientation, schizotypal traits, science attitudes, social desirability, substances attitudes, suicidal ideation, and studying social science (see Francis 2009).

The way in which this body of research has been developed can be illustrated by the debate concerning the connection between religion and psychological well-being. Taking the notion of happiness as a key indicator within positive psychology, Francis et al. (2000) undertook a review of the available literature, and concluded that a major problem with integrating and interpreting the findings was posed by the wide variety of ways in which the construct of happiness was defined and assessed.

Evaluating these empirical studies, Francis et al. (2000) argue that future studies need to agree on a more robust form of measurement. One particularly attractive way of defining and operationalising the construct of happiness is provided by the Oxford Happiness Inventory developed by Argyle et al. (1989) on the basis of a theoretical discussion of the nature of happiness. Drawing on earlier analysis, Argyle and Crossland (1987) suggest that happiness can be measured by taking into account three empirical indicators: frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; average level of satisfaction over a period; and absence of negative feelings, such as depression and anxiety. The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity has now been employed in a series of eight studies alongside the Oxford Happiness Inventory. All eight studies demonstrated a significant positive correlation between happiness and attitude toward Christianity, after controlling for the possible contaminating influence of personality (see Francis 2010a).

Subsequent studies tested whether the consistent pattern found between the attitudinal dimension of religion and happiness within a Christian context also held good within a Jewish context (see Francis et al. 2004).

Religious Orientations

The notion of religious orientation, as originally proposed by Allport and Ross (1967) and subsequently expanded by Batson and Ventis (1982), has had a major impact on the social scientific study of religion within Christian and post-Christian contexts, distinguishing between intrinsic orientation, extrinsic orientation, and question orientation. In many ways the jury may still be out assessing the question raised by Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) regarding whether this influence, on balance, is the boon or bane of contemporary psychology of religion. What is not in doubt, however, is the fact that the concepts of intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest orientation, and the instruments designed to measure these concepts, have been widely used. Recent empirical studies have employed these measures in projects concerned with a wide range of issues.

Within the large body of existing empirical research, the measures of religious orientation have been used both appropriately and inappropriately. In distinguishing between these two uses the conceptual problem concerns clarifying where the notion of religious orientation fits alongside other aspects or dimensions of religion as operationalised within the social sciences. In its origin the notion of measuring religious orientation is very different from the notions of measuring, say, religious affiliation, religious practice, or attitude toward religion. Questions regarding religious affiliation are generally designed to categorise individuals according to whether or not they align themselves with a religious group. Questions regarding religious practice are generally designed to grade individuals according to the frequency with which they engage with personal or public religious behaviours. Questions regarding attitude toward religion are generally designed to locate individuals along a continuum ranging from a negative to a positive view of religion. In other words, all three notions of self-assigned religious affiliation, religious practice and attitude toward religion are designed to distinguish, in one way or another, between individuals high in religiosity and individuals low in religiosity. The notion of religious orientation, however, provides a very different construct. The measurement of religious orientation is intended first and foremost to distinguish different ways of being religious among those who, by some other criteria, can be described as religious.

In a (now classic) coauthored paper, Allport and Ross (1967: 434) develop understanding of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic orientation in the following way. Here is their description of the extrinsic orientation.

> Persons with this orientation are disposed to use religion for their own ends. The term is borrowed from axiology, to designate an interest that is held because it serves other, more ultimate interests. Extrinsic values are always instrumental and utilitarian. Persons with this orientation may find religion useful in a variety of ways—to provide security and solace, sociability and distraction, status and self-justification. The embraced creed is lightly held or else selectively shaped to fit more primary needs. In theological terms the extrinsic type turns to God, but without turning away from self.

Here is their description of the intrinsic orientation.

> Persons with this orientation find their master motive in religion. Other needs, strong as they may be, are regarded as of less ultimate significance, and they are, so far as possible, brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions. Having embraced a creed the individual

> endeavours to internalize it and follow it fully. It is in this sense that he lives his religion.

Allport and Ross (1967) proposed two scales to measure their dimensions of intrinsic and extrinsic orientation. The intrinsic measure contained nine items, the first two of which were: "It is important for me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation"; "If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I attend church." The extrinsic measure contained eleven items, the first two of which were: "Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in my life"; "It doesn't matter so much what I believe so long as I lead a moral life".

Allport's measures of intrinsic and extrinsic orientation demonstrated that individuals could occupy four locations defined on these two dimensions. Those who recorded high scores on the intrinsic scale and low scores on the extrinsic scale were defined as 'pure intrinsic' orientation. Those who recorded high scores on the extrinsic scale and low scores on the intrinsic scale were defined as 'pure extrinsic' orientation. Those who recorded high scores on the extrinsic scale and high scores on the intrinsic scale were defined as 'indiscriminantly pro-religious'. Those who recorded low scores on the extrinsic scale and low scores on the intrinsic scale were defined as 'indiscriminantly anti-religious' (Hood 1978).

Critiquing Allport's model of religious orientation, Batson and Ventis (1982) argued the case for a third dimension alongside the intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, which they styled the quest orientation. The quest orientation gave recognition to a form of religiosity which embraces characteristics of complexity, doubt, tentativeness, and honesty in facing existential questions. Batson and Ventis (1982: 150) provided the following description of the quest orientation.

> An individual who approaches religion in this way recognises that he or she does not know, and probably never will know, the final truth about such matters. But still the questions are deemed important, and however tentative and subject to change, answers are sought. There may not be a clear belief in a transcendent reality, but there is a transcendent, religious dimension to the individual's life.
>
> Batson and Ventis (1982:145) proposed a six-item instrument to measure the quest orientation, which they originally identified by the name 'interactional scale'. Two items were: "It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties"; "Questions are far more central to my religious experience than are answers". Subsequently, Batson and Schoenrade (1991a, 1991b) developed a longer twelve-item quest scale.

Building on these clear foundations, Francis (2007) developed the New Indices of Religious Orientation (NIRO). These three new scales were designed to improve on the earlier instruments in three ways: by ensuring that the three instruments were of equal length; by giving equal empirical weight to three conceptual components within each construct; and by employing direct and accessible language. In the NIRO the three components of intrinsic orientation comprised public religion (for example, I go to church because it helps me to feel close to God), personal religion (for example, I pray chiefly because it deepens my relationship with God) and religious integration with life (for example, My religious beliefs really shape my whole approach to life). The three components of extrinsic orientation comprise social support (for example, I go to church because it helps me to feel at home in my neighbourhood), personal support (for example, One reason for me praying is that it helps me to gain relief and protection), and religious compartmentalisation (for example, While I am a religious person, I do not let religion influence my daily life). The three components of quest orientation comprise openness to change (for example, There are many religious issues on which my views are still changing), self-criticism (for example, I value my religious doubts and uncertainties) and existentialism (for example, My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious beliefs).

The New Indices of Religious Orientation have been employed in a series of recent studies to explore the connection between different Christian motivational styles and issues like the connection with personality (Francis 2010b), purpose in life (Francis et al. 2010) and the congregation at cathedral carol services (Walker 2012).

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced and discussed five key constructs employed within empirical theology and the social scientific study of religion in order to explore individual differences between Christians and the personal and social correlates of such differences. This empirical and scientific perspective has confirmed that an appreciation of what it means to be Christian in today's world is both complex and rich. Each of the five key constructs discussed in this chapter (affiliation, practice, belief, attitude, and orientation) has something significant to add to the picture. While it remains appropriate for future studies to examine each one of these dimensions independently of the others, it is also important that the findings from such independent enquiry are contextualised within an awareness of the wider multi-dimensional theoretical framework.

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CHAPTER 10

Vicarious Belonging and the Persistence of Institutional Christianity

Abby Day

Introduction

In this chapter the concepts of 'believing in belonging' and 'vicarious religion' are combined to help explain contemporary forms of relationship to institutional Christianity. The term 'institution' is being used in its broadest sense to help resolve some contemporary paradoxes, particularly concerning the widening gap between institutional affiliation and institutional participation. An 'institution' in this sense is a formalised ideal to which people subscribe and aspire, not a building or other physical place, whose function is to create and maintain a particular social order, much of which may be invisible and symbolic, and discursive (Giddens 1984). This will include social institutions like religion, marriage, the family, politics, government, and legal institutions.

Vicarious Religion

The idea of vicarious religion was first proposed and developed by Davie (2007) to convey a specific kind of religious sentiment, namely "the notion of religion performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much larger number, who (implicitly at least) not only understand, but, quite clearly, approve of what the minority is doing" (Davie 2007: 22). She is discussing Christianity in this case, and quite specifically those who actively participate through church attendance, although it may be argued that her notion would apply to other religions as well. Why would not, for example the majority of Muslims, or Jews, or Sikhs, understand and approve of their religion's own active participants? Davie explains that the idea of acting on behalf of someone else is only half the definition, and although briefly mentioning the religious equivalent of a 'vicar', she does not entangle the meaning with theological definitions (for which, see the detailed study by Muskett 2012). She then breaks down more precisely how these performances are carried out and selects four modes: through ritual,

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through beliefs, through embodying moral codes, and through creating unique spaces for debating unresolved issues.

The first mode, as she notes, is relatively uncontroversial. Many people who never or rarely go to church still turn to it for important life-cycle rituals such as marriage or funerals. That they may do so in decreasing numbers does not, I suggest, diminish the point Davie makes most strongly in regard to death rituals:

> It is at this point, if no other, that most Europeans come into direct contact with their churches and would be deeply offended if their requests for a funeral were met with rejection. A refusal to offer either a funeral liturgy or appropriate pastoral care would violate deeply held assumptions.
>
> DAVIE 2007: 23

I can illustrate her point with two examples from my own fieldwork (Day 2006; Day 2011; Day 2013) carried out in northern England between 2003 and 2011, in two phases. In the first phase (2003–2005) I interviewed 68 people and through observation studied others aged from their early teens to early 80s living in towns and villages in northern England. The study was focused on what people believed in, provoked by the results from the 2001 UK decennial census when 72 percent of respondents self-identified as Christian in answer to a question about religion—the first time such a question had been asked on the UK census. My research was framed to capture and contrast the beliefs of three generations. Mirroring the demographics of England and Wales, most of my research participants were white and most were from middle to lower socio-economic groups. In the follow-up study (2009–2011) I was able to revisit 38, of whom I re-interviewed 22 and followed three in-depth as case studies.

I will expand on various aspects of the research throughout this chapter, highlighting two specific examples that match well Davie's claims about the importance of deeply held assumptions. The first example relates to Charlotte[1] whom I first met in her classroom in 2004, and then interviewed her twice over the following weeks. She came from an economically disadvantaged family, rife with domestic problems, and had only ever attended church briefly with her grandmother, on 'poppy day'. When I re-interviewed her during the second phase, five years later, she told me that her sister had just given birth and the baby had died. She and her sister had discussed funeral arrangements at length,

1 All actual names, and some non-essential characteristics, have been changed to protect confidentiality.

and were agreed that they wanted a dramatic event, with a horse-drawn hearse carrying the coffin and doves released, and that the baby should be buried in a church nearby so the sisters could visit the grave. She seemed so intent on the religious nature of the funeral that I was momentarily confused and wondered if I had misunderstood her those years earlier when I remembered her as not religious. Seeking to clarify the point, I asked her if she and her sister were religious and she told me that "none of us are religious". It then became evident that their lack of practice was posing a problem, because she and her sister did not know what church to approach or if they would be permitted to have a funeral there when the family did not attend services. Her lack of familiarity with churches and their policies may have presented a logistical problem, but it did not affect her desire to have that critical ritual observed in a religious, and specifically Christian, form. Davie expands on this point by proposing the term "mixed economy funeral" (Davie 2007: 23) to describe a hybrid form of religious and secular event. This will include an element of the Christian-based structure and clerical presence, together with more personally relevant "extraneous elements, including secular music or readings" (Davie 2007: 23) or, adding from the above example of Charlotte, a preference for horses and doves.

The other relevant example from my fieldwork involves Liz, a woman 40 years older than Charlotte who had attended church when she was younger, and then stopped through becoming angry at what she described as the hypocritical nature of many church-attending Although Liz had become disenchanted with many social forms of Christian practice, when her son died some 15 years after she had ceased church attendance, it was to the church she turned for both his funeral and burial. Those two examples were dissimilar in age range and some aspects of social class, but converge on the point of alienation and belonging. Neither woman practised traditional forms of institutional belonging if measured by regular attendance, and one had even become psychologically and emotionally estranged from the church, and yet each returned to the idea and place of church for loved ones' funerals. These are examples of the deeply-held assumptions to which Davie alluded above and an instance of vicarious belonging.

Davie also argues that the church is more than just a dependable performer of ritual on behalf of others; it is also a believer on their behalf. Bishops, in particular, are expected to aver the tenets of their faith and when they publicly express doubts, they will be criticised. The public antipathy towards a doubting bishop shows, suggests Davie, a cultural expectation that bishops should believe in the tents of their faith. There may also be, I suggest, traces here of what Liz, above, had described to me as "hypocritical," especially considering the palatial lives bishops live.

Davie's third point, similar to her example of believing bishops, relates to the issue of behaving bishops, or at least of church representatives. The public expects the church to uphold strict forms of moral codes, particularly when they relate to what is perceived as traditional family life.

Davie then develops an angle which takes vicariousness in a new direction, from the more tangible expressions above to the range of invisible, symbolic value. She raises the example of Nordic countries, about which her long and deep association with Uppsala University makes her a highly informed commentator. The Nordic churches have a national church with more secular tentacles than the UK church. For much of its history, the Nordic churches and citizenry had a material, symbiotic relationship. All citizens were automatically members of the Church and approved that a proportion of their taxes supported it, unless they actively disassociated themselves, giving rise to a Nordic inversion of Davie's famous proposition of 'believing without belonging': the Nordic citizen may well belong without believing (Bäckström et al. 2004). This means that citizens participate in the ritual aspects of church performances "and regard membership as part of national just as much as religious identity" (Davie 2007: 25). Further, she points out, a consequence of the citizens' contribution through taxation means that the churches are well maintained and act as a cultural resource. Crucially, for the theory of 'belonging without believing', she adds that the Nordic populations do not attend church regularly and "appear on every comparative scale to be among the least believing and least practicing populations in the world" (Davie 2007: 25).

I can broaden that point with reference to the UK, a country without automatic official church membership. The number who attends church is small but who self-identify as Christian large, even though the numbers declined between the 2001 and 2011 censuses from 72 percent to 59 percent. I will discuss this in more detail below. Davie elaborates the idea of 'belonging' by claiming that people react strongly when they hear of a church being closed. While this seems intuitively correct, I propose that such reactions deserve closer examination because public reaction to the rise and fall of church fortunes may vary according to other temporal responses and may signal something more profound at work than church-related national identity. My theories of 'believing in belonging' (Day 2011) relate to national religious identity sometimes being a form of secularised Christianity that uses Christian as a proxy for, in the UK example, white Christian.

A newspaper article about church decline in the region I studied contributed to my developing that theory. On December 15, 2010 the local newspaper

circulating in the region, the *Craven Herald* ran a story titled 'What's next for city's churches?',[2] and began by reporting that:

> Earlier this year, a national Sunday newspaper suggested that the Church of England's Diocese of Bradford was going to be scrapped. Too few people were attending church services and all too soon—next year perhaps—the 91-year-old diocese was going to be recommended for scrapping or merging by the Dioceses Commission.

In one sense, the story was not surprising: church attendance in the UK has been steadily declining for 50 years and churches everywhere have been closing and parishes merged. What was surprising was the sudden turn in the story, half-way into it and following several paragraphs of church statistics, when new and un-related information is presented:

> The Commission's report does not state that the diocese should be abolished because of the presence of more than 85 mosques and Islamic schools in the Bradford district.

Given that the report did not state that, I can only conclude that it was a deliberate insertion of editorial judgement that made that link and forced a leading Bradford Muslim to make a statement:

> Ishtiaq Ahmed, spokesman for Bradford Council for Mosques, said, contrary to what some people might think his organisation would not welcome the disappearance of the diocese as a vindication of the power of Islam's popularity.

Such media excursions into populist anxieties about 'what most people think' are not without consequences: Voas and Bruce (2004: 28) speculated that the high 'Christian' identification in the England and Wales census response may "represent increasing anxiety about national identity rather than increasing commitment to Christian faith". They also suggested that ethnic-religious identity was further triggered by the atmosphere at the time of the so-called 'race riots' in northern England and the general media presentation of ethnic relations. The region I studied bordered two sites, Bradford and Burnley, which experienced

2 At http://www.cravenherald.co.uk/archive/2010/12/15/8738321.What_s_next_for_city_s_churches_/ Accessed 13/02/2014.

riots in 2001. One study (Ray and Smith 2004) argued that such tensions and the related violence were exacerbated by discourse in the locale, particularly in the media, that accentuated and reinforced ethnic differences. Some of those differences may be expressed in racist terms as anti-Asian, or in religious terms, such as anti-Muslim. As Modood (2013: 4) points out, "since the attacks of 11 September 2001, Muslim migrants and settlers have come under new political and security scrutiny even in countries in which Muslims form a relatively small proportion of recent settlers, such as the US, Canada and Australia" and there is conflation in the public imagination of non-white/Muslim/immigrant, even though in the UK Muslims only represent 5 percent of the population.

Developing Davie's use of vicariousness, I suggest that churches symbolise an ethno-national identity in the UK as well as the Nordic countries, which can be triggered and strongly expressed when under threat. When that combines with a population's more marginal or nominal church adherence, we see a rise of what I termed "ethnic Christian nominalism" (Day 2006; Day 2011). Davie further makes the point that the public wants the Church to maintain the physical, not just symbolic, church spaces as free spaces open to the public. Her suggestion that the public resents being asked to maintain churches seems intuitively correct, but her conclusion that this is because the public sees churches as public buildings is possibly not the whole story: the public also assumes that the church is a wealthy institution. In my longitudinal study and comparative work with the geographer Ben Rogaly (Day and Rogaly 2014) I was surprised by how several people provided almost matching verbatim accounts about the church's perceived wealth and mis-use of its power in relation to the activities of priests. And yet, Davie observes, churches can be surprisingly tenacious: even Communist regimes with their atheistic principles maintained church buildings as cultural spaces, she says:

> Vicariousness can, it seems, maintain itself on pretty slim resources, in the sense that religious institutions remained publicly available cultural and political resources, even in situations of considerable legal constraint.
>
> DAVIE 2007: 26

Thus far, Davie builds up a convincing picture of her theory of vicarious religion, so much so that she commends it as more useful and accurate than her previous theory of 'believing without belonging'. Attentive to the cultural and historical nuances at the time of writing and future, Davie says that her ideas of vicariousness may take new forms as cultures shift from cultures of obligation to cultures of consumption.

Vicarious religion has an important methodological implication and challenge, Davie explains, mainly because of the problem of studying that which is largely invisible, as she takes vicarious religion to be. Quantitative measurements tend to tally the publicly visible, repeated performances of, largely, church attendance and, neglect the less visible kind of religiosity in its new form. She suggests that sociologists need to observe specific moments when vicarious religiosity reveals itself, and gives examples of occasions of public mourning when people turned to the churches, with the Swedish case of the 1994 *Estonia* ferry sinking and the British response to Princess Diana's death. The expectation was not simply for the churches to perform services, but to be open for the experience of the Christian tradition, structure, and repertoire for mourning.

Davie pays close attention to the strength of vicarious religion in response to 'the other', in this case, Islam. She suggests that the presence of increased numbers of Muslims may act as a catalyst "in the religious life of host societies" (Davie 2007: 31), more precisely in terms of how it causes a religiously passive majority to reconsider the role of religion in the public sphere. The impact here, I suggest, is more on belonging than belief, and it is to that theme of what I am describing as 'vicarious belonging' that I now turn. While easily measured forms of both belief and belonging may point to a secular age, the picture becomes more complicated if we look at it through an expanded view of vicarious religion. The expansion is necessary, I will argue, to allow us to discern the ethno-national-religious element of what people may believe in and belong to when they are claiming a Christian identity. I will use here two specific examples—my own work on the UK decennial census question on religion, and recent examples of public discourse surrounding cases of apparent infringement of human rights. Discourse is not neutral, but an expression of deeply held and sometimes ideological positions (Fairclough 2001).

The UK Census and Vicarious Belonging

My question began in 2002 when the results of the 2001 UK Census showed that 72 percent of respondents chose to self-identify as Christian. Every ten years a national census is taken, asking people questions about their age, jobs, gender, where they live and so on. On the 2001 census there was, for the first time in England and Wales, a question asking people to name their religion. In response, 71.9 percent said 'Christian'. Sixteen percent stated that they had no religion. This category included agnostics, atheists, heathens and Jedi Knights. Six percent identified themselves as members of other religions, the largest

single group being Muslims at three percent and all others accounting for less than one percent each. The remainder chose not to answer the question.

The high percentage of Christians seemed surprising, considering that less than seven percent of the population were attending church on an average Sunday. That number had been declining markedly during the last fifty years, and the median age had increased. In an era otherwise best described in Taylor's (2007) terms as a 'secular age'. I wondered why people without faith in God, Jesus, or Christian doctrine self-identify as 'Christian' in certain social contexts. Those people are often described as marginal or nominal Christians, the latter being a slightly confusing term. Nominalism derives from the Latin word *nominalis*—'of or pertaining to names'—and in philosophy refers to a doctrine that abstractions, or universals, have no essential or substantive reality. My research found that Christian nominalists may not believe in God or Jesus, at least if belief is understood as 'faith', but it would be incorrect to dismiss them as 'unbelievers' or assume that their nominalist beliefs have no essential or substantive reality. They believe in many things, usually related to 'belonging'. In my interviews I deliberately did not ask informants about overtly religious questions related to belief in God, Jesus or church attendance, but probed wider, ontological and existential questions concerning their feelings, practices and sources of happiness, meaning, sadness, moralities and the nature of life's beginning and end. At the end of each interview I asked people what they had said (or, in the case of young people, what they would have said) in answer to the census question and why.

Like the census, my study found that most people chose 'Christian'. About half of those Christians were people whom I termed faithful Christian adherents. They may not always go to church, but most would like to. In our interviews, their faith was embedded in their answers: God is important to them and the source of all love and goodness in the world; Jesus is a friend; they will reunite with their loved ones in heaven. Most other 'Christians' were ambivalent about a god who may or may not exist, but either way plays no part in their lives. Some were even openly hostile to religion. They explained they would choose 'Christian' on the census to indicate that they were not members of another religion, such as Islam, or because they were baptised as a child. They often reinforced the idea of English cultural identity throughout our interview and frequently identified immigrants as the source of the country's problems. I argued that for them Christianity is a powerful marker of ethnic or familial identity. By closely examining people's sense of Christian 'belonging', I found that they believed in and belonged to several important sources and categories of, for example, friends, families, teams, towns, villages, history, moral systems, nation, gender, ethnicities, and culture. My thesis, 'believing-in-belonging',

argued that human relationships can be the main sites for people to source and experience emotion, morality and 'transcendence'.

A minority in my study (and, I would argue, in Britain) are faithful, adherent, theocentric Christians whose religious beliefs play an important part in their lives. The majority are anthropocentric, locating meaning, power, and authority in themselves and other humans. That does not mean that the institution of Christianity serves no purpose for them; on the contrary. As a powerful identity marker it can be surprisingly relevant, as the cases below suggest.

Religious Equality and Vicarious Belonging

Religious matters do not appear in the public sphere spontaneously. Such 'public' emergences are found through media reports which themselves are products of active campaigns or other public manifestations by religious actors. Stuart and Ahmed (2012) conducted a detailed media analysis of three best-selling British daily newspapers: the left-leaning *Guardian*, right-leaning *Daily Telegraph*, and right-leaning tabloid, *Daily Mail*. Their analysis covered reports of 'claims' against a public or private organisation by individuals on religious grounds. They found that between 2000 and 2010, Christians comprised 67 per cent of reported claims covered by the media, Muslims 31 percent, and the other main religious groups less than 10 percent. Christians also participated in most (96 percent) of discrimination claims. Most of these involved sexual or reproductive rights, although the report noted that media interest spiked in relation to the case of Nadia Eweida, a British Airways employee whose case is discussed in more detail below. The report also analysed opinion pieces in newspapers and found that newspapers treated religious claims differently. The *Daily Mail*, for example, was notably supportive of Christian single-faith claims, but generally not of Muslims' unless theirs was seen as multi-faith. The authors observed that the *Daily Telegraph's* opinion pieces tended to focus mostly on issues affecting the theme of religion in public life, explaining: "This is, in part, due to the paper's recurring focus on a perceived marginalisation of religion, specifically Christianity, in public life" (Stuart and Ahmed 2012: 13).

To illustrate vicarious religion as a specific form of belief in belonging, I will look in particular at four specific cases, all heard together by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg which delivered its verdicts in January 2013.[3] All the applicants had argued that they were being discriminated

3 For an excellent overview of the cases, including legal judgements, see Catto and Perfect (2015).

against by the UK government on the grounds of their religious belief, and three out of the four lost their cases: Nadia Eweida, a 60-year-old British Airways employee who wanted to wear her cross visibly above her uniform in defiance of BA policy, and won; Shirley Chaplin, a 57–year-old nurse employed by Devon and Exeter NHS hospital, who wanted to wear her cross on a chain around her neck above her uniform, in defiance of hospital policy, and lost; Lillian Ladele, a registrar with Islington County Council in London who appealed her dismissal because she refused to carry out same-sex civil partnerships, and lost, and Gary McFarlane, 51, who appealed against his dismissal from *Relate*, a couples-counselling charity, on the grounds that he refused to carry out same-sex sex counselling, and lost.

What interests me for the purpose of this chapter is the way in which their cases were adopted by both special interest groups and sections of the mainstream media, and the resonance in wider public discourse to sentiments about the links between religious and national identity. Ahmed and Stuart report that while all cases were covered by the media, it was the Eweida case that captured most attention. It is likely that this was so, I suggest, because it was the only case that specifically invoked a double-sacred impact: Christian, and British.

Nadia Eweida worked for British Airways, which enforced a uniform policy for all those staff who came into contact with customers. This included Eweida, who worked on the check-in desk. In 2004 they changed the female uniform to include an open-necked blouse with a cravat. According to their regulations, items considered mandatory by a religion, such as the *hijab* or *kara*, were permissible (and worn in British Airways colours) but jewelry or similar accessories were not. In cases where employees refused to cover up, they would be sent home without pay to change their clothes. For two years Eweida complied and wore a cross under her uniform, but on May 20 2006 she came to work with her cross outside her blouse. She was asked to conceal it and eventually she agreed. On August 7 she again arrived at work with her cross and again concealed it after discussions with management. On September 20 she wore it to work, refused to conceal it and eventually was sent home where she remained without pay. On October 23 British Airways offered to change her job position to one without customer contact, where she would not have to wear a uniform and therefore could wear her cross. She refused. Around that time newspaper coverage began of the story, unfavourable to British Airways and mostly presenting the Eweida case as one as a battle between Christianity and Islam. A report in the Guardian[4] quoted Eweida as saying:

4 At http://www.theguardian.com/business/2006/oct/15/theairlineindustry.religion. Accessed 19/05/2014.

> I was forced to take unpaid leave because I have refused to remove my cross or put it under my cravat. A cross is a cross, when you explain the reason is your belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the end of it. Muslims wear their hijabs.

In November, BA said it would change its policy and consulted widely with trade unions and other stakeholders. On January 19 2007, BA announced it had revised its policy and religious symbols would henceforth be permitted. Eweida returned to work on February 3 and was allowed to wear her cross, but BA refused to compensate her for loss of earnings. Meanwhile, she had filed a case in December with the Employment Tribunal claiming damages for indirect discrimination contrary to regulation 3 of the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003. She complained also of a breach of her right to manifest her religion contrary to Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Tribunal ruled against her, concluding that wearing a cross was not a requirement of her faith but her personal choice. It also ruled that there was no evidence of indirect discrimination when not one of the other 30,000 employees of BA had ever lodged a complaint. When she appealed, the Court of Appeal agreed with the Employment Tribunal and dismissed her appeal.

During this period considerable agitation was being expressed by politicians and media commentators. The view that the British Airways actions offended not just individual rights but more traditional, cultural rights was voiced by the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, who told the BBC[5] that:

> British Airways needs to look again at this decision and to look at the history of the country it represents, whose culture, laws, heritage and tradition owes so much to the very same symbol it would ban.

He was, of course, referring to the cross being a symbol of Christianity which he implies is entrenched in UK culture, laws, heritage and tradition. Many non-religious actors also waded into the debate. Former UK Home Secretary John Reid told the *Daily Telegraph* that the British Airways' move was wrong because it "plays into extremists' hands".[6] Prime Minister Tony Blair told BA to change their policy. Conservative MP Ann Widdecombe called on Christians to boycott

5 At http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/north_yorkshire/6166746.stm. Accessed 05/01/2014.

6 At http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/7028261/BA-wrong-to-ban-Christian-from-wearing-cross-because-it-plays-into-extremists-hands.html. Accessed 09/02/2014.

British Airways. One hundred MPs signed a Commons motion condemning British Airways. MP Jack Straw declared that:[7]

> Like the rest of this House, I strongly supported the right of Sikhs to wear turbans both in private companies and, for example, in the police service and the Army. I strongly supported the right of women of the Muslim faith to wear the *hijab*—the head scarf—in all circumstances.

One of the few voices opposing Eweida's case was The National Secular Society, which said that BA should not be bullied by Christian activists:[8]

> This is the latest putsch by Christianity pretending to be a victim but in fact becoming much more aggressive, egged on by John Sentamu. Those putting pressure on BA are at pains to avoid acknowledging that BA are not banning the wearing of religious jewellery underneath uniforms or openly in other jobs, which Eweida has been offered.

The kind of outpouring the case generated seems to have triggered strong emotions relating to the apparently indivisible and invisible connection between Britishness and Christian, with the 'other' being clearly identified as Islam.

Gary McFarlane's case did not pit such loaded concepts as culture, country, and Christian against each other, but was the kind of 'moral' issue that frequently reflects a belief in belonging to the Christian institution. He was employed by *Relate*, a couples-counselling charity, and became unwilling to comply with *Relate*'s policy to provide counselling to people regardless of their sexual orientation, on the grounds that this countered his Christian beliefs. McFarlane was subsequently dismissed, and appealed unsuccessfully to the Employment Tribunal on the grounds of discrimination and wrongful dismissal. He then went to the Court of Appeal, this time with a special statement from Lord Carey, a former Archbishop of Canterbury asking for a special court to be established to hear his case, composed of judges with a proven sensibility towards religion. He lost then, and again at the European Courts of Human Rights.

Considerable outrage accompanied his case, including a claim by a writer for the leading UK conservative newspaper the *Daily Telegraph*, Christopher Booker,[9] that: "Under a law designed to bar religious discrimination, it is now

7 At http://metro.co.uk/2006/11/23/straw-blasts-ba-over-cross-ban-395037/. Accessed 05/01/20.14.

8 At http://www.secularism.org.uk/bashouldnotbebulliedoverjeweller.html. Accessed 05/01/2014.

9 At http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/7664681/The-divisive-law-of-Lord-Justice-Laws.html.

perfectly legal to discriminate against someone's beliefs so long as these are based on religion—eg Christianity (but not of course Islam)".

In a similar case, Lillian Ladele, like McFarlane, felt that her Christian beliefs were contrary to homosexuality, and had refused to conduct same-sex civil partnership ceremonies on the grounds of her religious beliefs. Islington Council, where she worked, disagreed with her. She took her case of unfair dismissal to the Employment Tribunal and won, both in terms of unfair dismissal and harassment, but lost on appeal by the Council. She then took it to the Court of Appeal, and lost again, as she did in Strasbourg on the grounds that in her public duty she had to abide by the Council's policies to protect gay people against discrimination, and was refused the right to appeal. In his submission[10] defending Ladele and the three others whose cases were simultaneously brought before the ECHR, former Archbishop George Carey referred to the cases concerning gay rights:

> It is now Christians who are persecuted; often sought out and framed by homosexual activists.

Christians are driven underground. There appears to be a clear animus to the Christian faith and to Judeo-Christian values. Clearly the courts of the United Kingdom need guidance.r.

Shirley Chaplin, a 57-year-old nurse employed by Devon and Exeter NHS hospital, was prevented from wearing the her necklace with cross around her neck, due to rules about health and safety and how the necklace could get caught up with patients or equipment. She was told she could wear it concealed, or pinned to her clothing, but she refused and took her case to an Employment Tribunal, and lost. Her case in Strasbourg was also lost.

In one *Daily Mail*[11] article, Chaplin specifically mentioned that she felt she was being persecuted because Muslim members of staff could wear *hijabs*. The hospital spokesperson explained that due to health and safety rules she would be allowed to wear a cross pinned to her uniform, but not hanging around her neck, and that Sikhs were prohibited from wearing bangles and Muslims had to wear tight-fitting sports *hijabs*. In a letter[12] to the *Daily* Telegraph, six Bishops defended her, claiming that other faiths were treated differently.

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10 At http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/14/christians-persecuted-archbishop-canterbury-carey.

11 At http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1263985/Shirley-Chaplin-Crucifix-row-nurse-loses-discrimination-case.html. Accessed 19/05/14.

12 At http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/7528487/The-religious-rights-of-Christians-are-treated-with-disrespect.html. Accessed 14/02/2014.

Other players besides judges and clerics were an important part of the mix. The four cases were in part funded by Christian organisations, reflecting an increasingly vocal mood of anti- human rights discourse. What is striking about the public discourse surrounding the cases and the statements by the financing Christian organisations is just how much centred on defending what was apparently a true, pure, traditional Christianity linked strongly to British and American culture, and threatened by Islam. Eweida's domestic court costs were financed by an American Evangelical organisation, *Alliance Defending Freedom*, which also represented her and the other three in Strasbourg. McFarlane and Chaplin were funded by *Christian Concern*, a campaign group dedicated to bringing the UK back to Christianity. On its website, it describes its central concerns and projects, including:[13]

The influence of radical Islam has grown in the UK and as an ideology it seeks to shape our political and social landscape. From the introduction of sharia law and Islamic finance to the implications on freedom of speech and women's rights, the presence of Islamism in the UK has great repercussions for all of us. At Christian Concern we hope to bring awareness of the impact that this may have on the UK and offer a Christian response.

Discussion

The above cases illustrate the extent of emotional attachment to the institution of Christianity felt by many involved. This was frequently expressed as a sense of 'persecution'. In a lengthy report commissioned in 2011 by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on understanding equality and human rights in relation to religion or belief in England and Wales, researchers noted (Donald 2012: xiii):

> Participants who think that Christianity is being marginalised appear to view specific legal cases as the principal evidence for this claim. However, since legal cases may be unrepresentative of common experience, it is not possible to interpret whether they do, in fact, indicate a trend towards anti-Christian discrimination. The evidence base concerning discrimination against Christians is incomplete; however, the evidence that does exist suggests the need for a more nuanced analysis of the incidence and seriousness of discrimination against Christians than the generalised 'marginalisation' narrative presently articulates.

13 At http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/islam. Accessed 14/02/2014.

In other words, there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to support claims of Christian persecution or marginalisation. This in no way detracts from the symbolic value of persecution or the role of vicarious religion here to, as Davie predicted, act as a catalyst "in the religious life of host societies" (Davie 2007: 31) and even open up spaces for debates about unresolved issues—immigration and secularisation being just two.

In his work exploring the 'secular age', Taylor (2007) begins with a succinct overview of what is secular about this age, being a time where "you can fully engage in politics without ever encountering God" (Taylor 2007: 1). He qualifies that by contrasting two ages throughout the book—the age of 1500 and the world of 2000—where in the former it would not have been possible to imagine a life without worship. Taylor claims that attendance at church or mosque is not the main issue about secularity, but what it means to believe because belief is now, he says, an option, even if embattled in "Christian or (or 'post Christian') society and not (or not yet) in the Muslim ones" (Taylor 2007: 3) He bases much of his argument on the idea that a secular age is one where profound God-belief has minimised and where there has been a "shift in background where we once lived in a naive and unreflecting way in a 'theistic construal' to where we now have belief as an option" (Taylor 2007: 13, 14). Leaving aside both the nostalgic, anachronistic assumptions of how 'we' used to live, and the hint of trajectory from Christian to Muslim societies, I suggest Taylor is foregrounding a kind of belief that relates more to belonging than he is explicitly arguing. Following a Durkheimian theme, I will note that the act of binding implicitly includes the act of excluding. Sometimes, people choose to focus on 'others' to blame them for social problems. In that form of binding, people engage in a process of categorisation between the 'in' and 'out' groups (see, for example, Tajfel and Turner 1986). Religious persecution and discrimination are examples of creating boundaries (Barth 1969) between groups with whom people think, and feel, they belong, and those with whom they do not. These are often strategic choices, where people knowingly engage in actions and discourses that may solidify boundaries. In her recent work on 'belonging', the political theorist Montserrat Guibernau (2013) argues that modernity is characterised by a freedom to choose to belong, unlike earlier societies when people belonged through ascription by others. Attention to how people choose to belong as well as how they choose to exclude can reveal the processes by which boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are hardened.

Cimino (2005), for example, showed that boundary-marking between Christians and Muslims increased substantially in Evangelical literature after the events of 9/11. While before that event the literature was generally critical of Islam, afterwards it became more hostile and portrayed Muslims as inherently

evil. He further suggests that the tendency towards this kind of boundary-marking was a response by Evangelical Christians towards an increasingly pluralistic society. Merino (2010) described 'theological exclusivism' as an everyday practice by American Christians. While many Christians agreed in theory that religious diversity was a good thing, Merino found that Christians who viewed the United States as a 'Christian nation' were less likely to include Muslims and Hindus as part of their lives.

The above findings fit broader theories about belonging, particularly when understood as a means of attaching oneself to a social group, and excluding another, in relationships which may be imagined. Anderson's (1983) work on imagined communities dealt specifically with the phenomenon of nationalism, and showed how narratives absorbed from media or novels create forms of longing for and belonging to the idea of a nation. The nature of that relationship is often driven by emotion. Most measures of belonging, however, only focus on a behavioural aspect, such as church attendance, or on top-of-the-head responses to a survey question. If belonging is understood as an emotional state, then 'longing for belonging' becomes an impulse that may manifest itself through diverse behaviours, beliefs, emotions, values and attitudes.

I have drawn attention here to the way in which the census actions, legal cases and related discourse focused on an exclusive group, Christianity and in particular to its threat by Islam. It is therefore not accurate to view these cases in terms of the persecution of a religious people, or even about the protection of their rights, or even a contest between secular and sacred, but particularly as an attempt to protect the dominant ethno-religious category, Christianity, in face of Islam. As an institution representing the society to which many people feel they belong, contemporary Christianity becomes a vicarious religion that will ebb and flow in response to threats and challenges. This kind of discursive boundary-marking recalls Cimino's observation, cited earlier, that may be a response to an increasingly pluralistic society.

It is a central point in this chapter that the institution of Christianity symbolises a universe that people create and to which they desire to belong. That claim fits certain explanations for why people are religious, vicariously or otherwise. Theories from cognitive science, for example, suggest people are religious because their brains have adapted for evolutionary purposes to detect the presence of an external agent causing effects in the world around them (Barrett 2000). It is good for survival purposes for people to be suspicious and to seek to find the person, animal, or other thing that is causing some events to happen. Psychologists have argued that religion can generate both prosocial and antisocial behaviours, from altruism to prejudice (Allport 1966).

The prevalence of scapegoating behaviours range from witchcraft trials in the middle ages to phobias about immigration today. There are other kinds of religious representations that confer meaning and sense on the world, particularly in times of anxieties and result in better coping behaviour (Boyer 1994), but the focus of this chapter has been on how religion and belonging create boundaries to guard against the 'other'. My argument therefore follows more closely Berger and Luckmann's model (1966) that depicted how people create a view of reality through a process of 'externalization', 'objectification' (or habitualization), and 'institutionalization'. They suggested that people confer legitimacy on the institutions they create by imposing 'symbolic universes' to make plausible both social institutions and individual biography. Berger applied this theory more directly to religion in his next book (Berger 1967) by locating the canopy of a symbolic universe in a specifically 'sacred' realm. Berger's description of the function of the sacred canopy recalls Durkheimian theory that God is a representation of society created and worshipped by people. Berger breaks with Durkheim, however, in arguing that the most important distinction within a religious framework is not between the sacred and the profane, but between the sacred and chaos.

In this chapter I have focused on Christianity as an institution performing the function of a sacred canopy to maintain a symbolic order. It does so by people supporting it and even patching its frayed edges by direct and indirect action. An example of a direct supporting action would be church attendance, or participation in rites such as baptism or confirmation. An example of indirect action would be ticking the 'Christian' box on the national census or arguing for certain rights to be upheld in the name of Christianity. These indirect examples are best explained through combining two relevant theories: 'vicarious religion' (Davie 2007) and 'believing in belonging' (Day 2011).

The concept of vicarious religion helps to flesh out the category of belonging that otherwise may remain singularly focused on inadequate measurements of church attendance alone. Belonging, more broadly understood, relates to everyday, metaphysical, embodied, emotional, transcendent, performative, and immanent ways of being.[14] This is why methods of measuring religiosity solely in terms of survey responses to questions about beliefs in God or behaviours of church attendance both produce compromised data. What is important is not that respondents may answer, sometimes flippantly, a question about God-belief, but about why and how that matters in their everyday lives (Ammerman 2007).

14 For more in-depth work on the area of religious emotion, see Riis and Woodhead (2010).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest that the future for the kind of vicarious religious belonging reliant on creating boundaries as discussed here may be limited. In the 2011 UK census,[15] the numbers of people who self-identified as Christian had declined in a decade from 72 percent to 59 percent, particularly amongst those people under 60, and those identifying as having 'no religion' accounted for 25 percent, with most in the age brackets of 20–25 and 40–44. This represents a significant generational difference, indicated by other studies showing younger people to be less nationalistic than their parents (Tilley and Heath 2007). It may be that the ethno-national-religious conflation may be less a trigger for vicarious religion in the future. What, if anything, will take its place remains to be seen. The people who represent the 'active minority' are diminishing, and the effect of their departure will be greatest when the wider impact of their involvement is considered.

There is more to the active minority's activity than just church attendance. Winter and Smart (1993: 648), found that people who did not attend the Church of England regularly were twice as likely as regular attendees to oppose any change in what they considered to be perceived traditional elements of church services. The actions of the active minority may be, in the minds of the non-active majority, romanticised and only occasionally glimpsed in practice, but that does not diminish their salience. Research I carried out with ESRC funding between 2011–2013 focused on a significant cohort within the 'active minority': Anglican women, members of what I call 'Generation A', born in the 1920s and 30s, – the mothers and grandmothers of the less religiously active baby-boomers, and so-called generations X, Y, and Z. The study showed the intensity of activities carried out by these women, who often attend church three times a week or more. A little recognised part of their work is to keep their church open during the week outside of service times. Working to a rota, they take turns sitting in the church for several hours at a time to allow people to drop in casually for a look around, sometimes for a quiet prayer, or even for a chat. The church is the only public space that is open, for free, to anyone who wants to come in for any kind of reason. It is probable that when Generation A dies, there will not be others taking their place, in which case churches will close, apart from during services and special events. The extent to which vicarious religion covers the sense of longing that is satisfied by such brief visits and occasional prayers is hard to measure, but evidence from my study suggests that providing access for

15 At http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt---religion.html.

the religiously inactive majority is surprisingly important. Taking a narrow definition of religion, as have Bruce and Voas (2010) in their criticism of Davie's thesis, may weaken the case for Davie's vicarious religion argument. When, however, we view religion more holistically, to include variations of belonging as well as believing, the picture is more complex and boundaries between vicarious and non-vicarious, or sacred and secular, begin to dissolve.

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PART 3

New Movements within Christianity

CHAPTER 11

Forcing the Kingdom

The 'Over-realised' Eschatology of Contemporary Christian Post-millenarianism

Stephen Hunt

Introduction

Eschatology has long been a principal component of Christian theology which focuses on the 'End Times' including doctrines related to the end of this world and the arrival of the Kingdom of God. It is bound up with a number of additional core themes divulged in the New Testament related to death, the afterlife, divine judgement, heaven and hell, the 'tribulation' and the rapture of Christian believers. These themes are further inter-connected with the prophecised thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ—'the millennium' and the messiah's Second Coming when, according to a clause in the Nicene Creed (325 AD): "… he shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead". While many of these eschatological doctrines derived from scripture are debated as to their precise meaning, perhaps that which is most contested relates to the prophesised millennium with interpretation of the millennium leading to contrasting theological understandings of what is actually entailed. While the terminology 'millenarianism' may refer to a number of beliefs associated with the doctrine of the millennium, it may equally be said to refer to 'movements' which place considerable emphasis on this teaching.

One aim of this chapter is to chart the fluctuating fortunes of one form of Christian millenarianism, namely post-millenarianism. While surfacing periodically throughout Church history from the third century, post-millenarianism remained largely peripheral to dominant Christian theology. Particularly among Evangelical Protestants, however, post-millenarianism for the best part of the last two centuries vied for acceptance alongside pre-millenarianism and amillenarianism, although each strand perennially culled theological formulations from contending standpoints (Padrides 1958: 169–186). Along with pre-millenarianism, post-millenarianism endorses the belief in the literal thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ precipitating the eternal Kingdom of God. Hence, it rejects the amillenarian stance which posits that the millennium constitutes a figurative conception whereby the key narratives scattered

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throughout the Judaic-Christian scriptures are understood as relating occurrences in the spiritual dimension rather than on earth and essentially pertain to the era between Christ's first and second Advent (Hood 1900). On the other hand, the major departure from pre-millenarianism is that post-millenarianism interprets the scriptures as alluding to the messianic advent after the millennium, rather than pre-empting it.

Other than tracing the fortunes of post-millenarianism, the major aim of this chapter is to provide an appraisal of post-millenarianism in contemporary times. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, for particular historical reasons, post-millenarianism almost displaced pre-millenarianism as the commonly received doctrine especially in the United States, while significantly influencing Evangelical thinking in Europe. The subsequent decline of post-millenarianism by the first decades of the twentieth century was no less due to a further range of historical considerations (Chafer 1936). The same can be observed in respect of its increasing popularity from the latter half of the twentieth century where post-millenarianism has been largely transmitted by neo-Pentecostalism, albeit disseminated via various theological configurations. This has included the doctrines and praxis of the so-called Third Wave movement, Dominion Theology and what has come to be known as Restorationism. Although these brands of mostly neo-Pentecostal post-millenarianism are in some respects significantly different, they share a number of pivotal beliefs clustering together to embrace a distinctive form of Christian eschatology.

Much like other expressions of millenarianism, the fortunes of post-millenarianism on both sides of the Atlantic are best comprehended by two key related factors. Firstly, its distinct eschatological framework indicates the adaptation of Protestant Evangelicalism to prominent cultural trajectories. Secondly, the relationship of the Evangelical constituency to its external social environment signifies a unique, largely fundamentalist-orientated response to the immediate and even global context in which it finds itself—making sense and negotiating the world outside of its boundaries. Neo-Pentecostal revivalism would seem best placed to articulate this response by embracing a form of post-millenarianism that might be described as an 'over-realised eschatology' whereby the faithful expect God to bless them in the here and now with blessings which historical mainstream Christianity considers the promise of the next life. Here the New Heaven and the New Earth encroach on the existing order as the visible manifestations of the Kingdom of God. Put otherwise, the *not-yet* element of Christian eschatology is realised in the present.

The Eschatological Imperative of Christian Millenarianism

As Malcolm Hamilton (2001: 12) observes, the sociological study of Christian millenarianism frequently constitutes part of a broader generalised endeavour to analyse millenarianism as a distinct religious phenomenon and entails a consideration of a diverse range of ideas and movements in many different parts of the world, cultures and historical periods. Hamilton recognises however that the discipline, in surveying 'millenarian' manifestations, consequently struggles for a definition. Nonetheless, he settles in his account of Christian millenarianism for Yonina Talmon's panacea delineation of "religious movements that expect imminent, total, ultimate this-worldly, collective salvation" (Talmon 1966: 166).

The term 'millenarianism' is culled from the Christian eschatology relating to the thousand year reign of Christ, thereby emphasising the major impact of the associated doctrines. While the belief in such a coming event can be viewed as an integral and elementary part of historical Christianity, the beginnings are not entirely Christian in origin. The central doctrines to be found in the prophetic utterances of the Judaic Old Testament, and which subsequently impacted early Christianity, may in fact have first emerged in Zoroastrianism in ancient Persia (Cohn 1970). That acknowledged, it is clearly the case that notions of the millennium appears to be fully developed in the Christian New Testament. Nonetheless, the only literal biblical reference to this thousand years is to be found in the Book of Revelation (20: 7–8):

> When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore…

This verse has nevertheless to be seen in the locale of a biblical chapter which is highly esoteric and subject to numerous interpretations. Even so, the verse is usually read as bound up with a range of eschatological doctrines related to the 'Last Things': the judgment, death, heaven and hell, and the world to come, which are again seemingly connected to a number of Judaic prophetic writings, especially the books of Daniel and Ezekiel. Beyond that, the observable millennial threads are frequently linked to the more visionary and mystical elements of the gospels and the epistles of Paul and other apostles which constitute the canon of the New Testament.

It would be too simplistic to view this millenarian dogma as informing the world of fanatics, especially fundamentalists who take the key scriptures

chapters literally and not infrequently self-referentially in bolstering their worldview and place in the world. Yet the point has to be reiterated that the concern with the millennium is legitimate since it stands as a central part of historical Christianity. This is largely because it is woven into the faith's larger and crucial eschatological schema and, as the theologian Karl Barth once succinctly put it, a "Christianity that is not entirely and altogether eschatological has entirely nothing to do with Christ" (Barth 1993: 317).

What is also true, when taking a broad sociological sweep, is that the millennial vision of a new order may be said, to some extent at least, to be an enduring part of human consciousness. The belief in and anticipation of a total, cosmic, and supernatural transformation of this world into one where righteousness reigns; where war, poverty, pestilence and suffering are evils of the past, has an enduring appeal. Other religious faiths may articulate this notion of a final cosmic drama and the arrival of a perfect state of universal harmony and peace. But none have expressed it so emphatically. Wherever Christianity has impacted across the globe, the millenarian hope persists. This renders Christianity especially dynamic in heralding the return of the messiah and the end of this world as previously known.

That acknowledged, the periodic emphasis, even obsession by Christian constituencies with the coming of the millennium renders it of particular sociological interests. Millennial ideas, as already observed, are frequently carried by 'movements' that expect 'imminent collective salvation'. The particular social actors who carry such ideas and why they transmit them is of major significance, as is the time and place in which such movements emerge and in what form. As Hamilton (2001: 12–13) investigates, Christian millenarianism can be explained and made sense of in terms of a range of historical, anthropological, sociological theories (for example, those espoused by Barkun 1974; Kautsky 1925; Worsley 1970) engaging with millenarian movements in the early Church to those of the Middle Ages, and from the millenarian sects which developed in the nineteenth century to those emerging at the end of the twentieth century. The commonalities evident in the beliefs of adherents to these diverse movements and their apocalyptic mindset are well described by Richard Landes who writes:

> They think they know good and evil well. When they look at humanity, many see not various kinds of people, but a few saints and a vast sea of sinners, some, perhaps, most, not redeemable. They see quite clearly who will suffer punishment (above all the abusively powerful) and who will gain reward (those faithful willing to risk all for the kingdom of heaven) at the final revelation. And they do not believe in compromise.
>
> LANDES 2006: 3

In recent times, as Martyn Percy (2001) points out, millenarianism has proved to be largely the preserve of Evangelical Protestants. The significance of this is that millenarian ideas are the prism through which their other doctrines are interpreted and the outside world perceived and negotiated. Moreover, Percy conjectures that the variety of millenarian thought is, at the same time, forged by both wider social events and cultural developments. Such responses are nonetheless not consistent and are frequently indicative of parochial views of the world. This is largely because the Evangelical mentality, especially that of a fundamentalist persuasion, tends to focus upon global events and make sense of meaning to current occurrences, a practice which reduces the Christian scriptures to a kind of 'virtue reality Bible'. That is, to see holy texts as providing other-worldly set of causes, objectives, and designs governing history and an interpretive schema which translates contemporary events for the self-designated 'true' Christian Church.

Such has been the case with the hitherto dominant form of millenarianism in its 'pre' form and the attempt to search for 'signs' of the End Times forewarned in the Bible. Pre-millenarianism is in many ways pessimistic. It insists the return of Christ will be prior to the millennium and follows the scenario that events in the world will be so devastating and traumatic that only the return of Christ will save the human race. The endurance of this position during the twentieth century is, to some extent, understandable. It proved to be the most traumatic century in human history with plenty to enrich the mind of the Adventist. Two major world wars, social revolutions in which millions perished, the Jewish holocaust, potential nuclear war, and a growing concern with ecological problems, all stirred the pre-millenarian imagination. This view, often informed by fear of satanic conspiracies, has more recently been inspired by the 9/11 terrorist event in New York and the rise of global Islamic militancy which, in the mind of many pre-millenarians, has come to replace Communism as the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

In contrast, post-millenarianism, albeit not without its apocalyptic dimensions and sign-watching, emphasises the restoration of the 'true' Church and occurrence of the worldwide revival throughout the millennium before the return of Christ. In many respects this rendering carries a utopian vision; an integral part of this utopianism being that *this* world can be radically transformed by human effort in tangent with the designs of God. This essential essence of post-millenarianism is captured by Carlo Aldrovandi:

> Postmillenarianism is that view of the Last Things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of

> individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the Millennium… The millennium to which postmillenialists look forward is thus a Golden Age of spiritual prosperity during this present dispensation, that is during the present age. This has to be brought through the forces now active in the world… Evil in all its many manifestations will be reduced to negligible proportions… and that Christ will return to a truly Christianized world.
>
> ALDROVANDI 2014: 47–48

Post-millenarianism: A Brief Recent History

Orestis Indermayer (2001) has pulled attention to the not inconsiderable influence of contemporary North American pre-millenarianism and accompanying cultural ethnocentric inclinations. Its integral 'sign watching' for the 'End' has been indicative of localised views of the world. This is especially true of fundamentalists in the United States who identify 'America' as the Christian Leviathan and interpret external forces as conspiring to attack the 'righteous'. American culture and the fundamentalist cause therefore converge. At the same time pre-millenarianism derives a pessimistic quality from what it perceives as the threat of liberalism, secular humanism and sexual immorality which have infused the cause of the Christian Right (Martin 1996).

Neither is post-millenarianism without its cultural and ethnocentric grounding. But it is one which takes a different path. In the nineteenth century it was essentially characterised both by a belief in supernatural events, and a millenarian form which embraced natural laws of organic social development mirroring ideas of secular progress and rationalism. Representative of this was the mentality of early advocates such as Jonathan Edwards and other revivalists who could impart terrifying sermons of God's wrath and eternal perdition, yet were not resistant to science, critical rationality and the faith in progress. Indeed, in the United States the passion and piety of such revivals fuelled the progressivist vision of the American Dream (Walker 1997: 19–22).

In theological terms it could be said that the tendency of post-millenarianism in the nineteenth century to be both other-worldly and world-affirming meant that it was capable of straddling the conservative and liberal theological divide. Arguably it took from liberal theology a faith in progress translated via an eschatology in which human beings moved towards a moral and this-worldly perfection. Nonetheless, post-millenarianism retained literal cosmic images in contrast to the liberal figurative interpretations and moral or psychological

reduction of Christian eschatology. While retaining the optimism of the liberals, post-millenarianism did not however scheme to demythologise the scriptures in endeavours to retain any plausibility for the disenchantment of modernity. A hard residue of apocalyptic thought remained. This was put succinctly by Moorhead (1984: 61, 73) who suggested that, translated into Christian eschatology, 'progress' was expressed through revival and the conversion of souls in order to bring the millennium. Put succinctly, the saints were to be co-workers in the creation of the New Jerusalem on earth via purpose driven exploits.[1]

We have already acknowledged that one of the key distinguishing features of post-millenarianism is that which renders scriptures in such a way as to focus on the belief Christ's return will be after the millennium, rather than before it. An important repercussion, especially compared with pre-millenarianism, is the conviction that the secret rapture of the Church, allowing the saints to miss the 'great tribulation' mentioned in the Book of Revelation, is rendered an unfounded biblical inference. Rather, the so-called 'great tribulation' is to be endured by the saints before the Second Coming. The emerging Kingdom of God will nonetheless be ushered in by the 'true' Church withstanding attack by the Anti-Christ and his satanic myriads. This is evident, above all, in the core tenet that the Church will be perfected as the 'bride without blemish' and evil will be overcome at the same time the ranks of the elect are swelled by a vast worldwide revival.

It was post-millenarianism in the nineteenth century, as a distinct form of millenarianism, which gave the most overt articulation of modernity and, above all, expressed faith in progress that was decoded into a missionary zeal aimed at winning the world over to Christ. The major thrust of post-millenarianism was to delay history's cataclysmic end until after the millennium and therefore allow the Church the interval necessary for an ongoing conquest of the powers of evil. In turn, this reflected economic and political changes. Above all, it mirrored Western economic expansion and a widespread optimistic ideology of social and political egalitarianism expressed via Armenianism and ecclesiastical disestablishmentarianism. Post-millenarianism in North America and Europe therefore engendered the proliferation of voluntary societies to buttress domestic and foreign missions, established evangelical colleges, promoted temperance,

1 In the nineteenth century amillenarianism, to some extent at least, was also influenced by the same cultural developments and took a position between post- and pre-millenarianism in that it looked at the world with neither extreme optimism nor extreme pessimism. Here, progress was perceived as neither inevitable nor impossible and Church history frequently interpreted as a series of cycles of religious enlightenment and spiritual dark ages.

and launched public campaigns to impose the Sabbath. Landes expresses this spirit of post-millenarianism (which he alternatively refers to as 'transformational millenarianism') prior to the twentieth century:

> Historically, (post-millenarianism) has contributed to a number of typically American 'reformist' developments: the Great Awakenings, the Civil War, utopian farming and industrial communities (from the Shakers and Amish to the Oneida and Fourier communities), the profession of social work, and the civil rights movement, and arguably, the ecumenical movement.
>
> LANDES 2006: 11

The ascendency of post-millenarianism was nonetheless relatively short-lived. Its decline was a consequence of a number of factors. Firstly, post-millenarianism was wedged out in the fundamentalist versus liberal debate (Moorhead 1984: 76). By the late nineteenth century numerous of its central doctrines became increasingly arduous to uphold in the light of biblical studies (particularly those conducted in the German universities). The principal critiques converged on the observation that the Bible yielded no single eschatology and the highly dualistic theology espoused by post-millenarianism was an aberration from the main direction of biblical thought (Carpenter 1963). Moreover, in the eyes of conservative theologians its inherent belief in a worldwide revival appeared to concede too much to modernity in its all-embracing optimism. Simultaneously, the erosion of post-millenarianism was part of the waning perception of the supernatural that was characteristic of the same modernity. This was reflected in the liberal view of eschatology which sought to accommodate the rationalism of the modern world. As a result, liberal theology snubbed the literal apocalyptic tones embraced by the fundamentalists. It followed that from the liberal viewpoint, post-millenarianism clung too much pre-critical biblicism and antiquated supernaturalism.

Post-millenarianism simultaneously appeared increasingly far-fetched since global events had obstinately refused to fulfil its prophecy. The modern world was becoming profoundly secular and disbelief and scepticism the markers of the emerging culture. Religious decline, not revival, was abundantly evident. It simply was not true that evangelicalism was emerging triumphant. Indeed, the cause of mission became more and more socially and politically peripheral and found itself reduced to an artefact in a lost world. This marginalisation, and resultant pessimism, was nourished by a wider cultural despair fashioned by global conflicts, revolutionary upheavals and the economic calamities of the twentieth century (Creelan 1985).

Illuminated by these events, the pre-millenarian scenario gained greater credence. Indeed, if post-millenarianism reflected the spirit of the Enlightenment, pre-millenarianism gave expression to the trauma and upheavals of the modern world. It appeared to fulfil the prophecies of one of the main early exponents of dispensational pre-millenarianism, John Nelson Darby (founder of the Brethren movement). Darby espoused its ingrained pessimism by advocating that the Second Coming of Christ would be preceded by the biblically forewarned 'wars and rumours of wars', global plagues and famines, moral depravity and religious decline. As a result of these developments post-millenarianism was overtaken, once again, by pre-millenarianism as the most plausible theological framework among Protestant Evangelicals. This was especially the case in North America where pre-millenarianism's principal precepts became eulogised in the Schofield version of the Bible and enshrined in the constitution of numerous fundamentalist churches. Throughout the twentieth century pre-millenarianism's hegemony grew, informed by identified 'signs' of the End which seemed to become increasingly more evident (Riddlebarger 1992).

While pre-millenarianism has continued to dominate the Protestant Evangelical/ fundamentalist world, particularly in the United States, it has once more been rivalled since the late twentieth century by the increasing popularity of post-millenarianism. Again, as in the nineteenth century, its rise could be largely attributed to the wider cultural milieu and interpreted as an alternative and no less powerful response of Evangelicalism to profound social and political changes that had a direct bearing upon it. To some extent post-millenarianism carried a sense of marginalisation felt by Protestant evangelicals which seemed to be expressed in notions of divine 'power' but also abounded with an optimism communicated in the faith of a coming revival. In particular, for specific reasons, post-millenarianism has been increasingly expressed over the last fifty years predominantly through the tenets of Pentecostalism and the growing appeal of its more recent expressions or, otherwise put, its 'neo' derivatives.

Reconstructionism

Before considering the significance of neo-Pentecostalism in forging a post-millenarian disposition, the picture of developments in recent decades would not be complete without at least recognition of the contribution of a largely non-Pentecostal form most commonly known as Reconstructionism that is Reformist and largely Calvinist in nature. This expression of post-millenarianism may be seen as a response to the marginalisation of the Evangelical constituency and its millenarian longings of redemption. Like pre-millenarianism, Reconstructionism

in some forms has sought to engage in political struggles and may perhaps be understood as a stricter persuasion of what came to be known as Dominion theology. In its pure fashion the movement has little acceptance outside the United States and can be interpreted as constituent part of the Christian Right which emerged in the 1970s (Barron 1992; Barron and Shupe 1992). Reconstructionism has thus been identified by a prevailing angry political rhetoric, while its leading exponents tend to operate with an unmistakable air of superiority in their writings which guides them to an aggressive posture of contempt for the secular world (Shupe 1997).

The main theological thrust of Reconstructionism is the belief that God expects His people to utilise a blueprint for the complete transformation of North American society (and ultimately the world) according to biblical principles unearthed from the books of the Pentateurch, thereby establishing the basis for Christ's millennial Kingdom on Earth. Hence, the movement premises more of its aspirations on literal biblical directions than other versions of Dominion theology considered below. From the 1980s Reconstructionism evolved a design for a God-mandated set of social, economic, educational, political and legal principles as if the Kingdom of God had already arrived. The fundamentalism of Reconstructionism therefore leaves no room for pluralism—secular or religious—even within the Christian realm. These dogmas were advanced by a leading Christian Reconstructionist, Rousas John Rushdoony, whose *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973) is often deemed by advocates to be the founding document of the movement. In short, as Bruce Barron explains (1992: 14), Reconstructionism endorses a reinfusion of biblical values in American culture and institutions and may be designated as "a commitment to defining and carrying out an approach to building a society that is self-consciously defined as exclusively Christian, and dependent on the work of Christians". Thus the millennium will arrive in a triumphal gradualism which matches God's will with human endeavour. By implication Christians must be political activists who will eventually establish a theocracy. This theocracy, in its more extreme form, would include the ancient Jewish injunction to execute adulterers and homosexuals.

According to Anson Shupe (1997), Reconstructionists have two chief targets: secular humanists and pre-millennial advocates. At one level Reconstructionism attacks all the familiar targets of the Christian Right: abortion, homosexuality, the decline of the family, etc. At the same time, it is vehemently opposed to pre-millenarianism since this mode of millenarianism is viewed as surrendering the world to Satan. Pre-millenarians (particularly dispensationalists) are castigated for being fatalistic pessimists and defeatists who believe, in the words of its major advocates Gary North, an "eschatology of shipwreck", displaying a measure of 'theological schizophrenia' (North 1982: 17, 19). To conclude, in the view of

William Martin (1996: 354), author of the volume *With God on Our Side*: "It is difficult to assess the influence of Reconstructionist thought with any accuracy. Because it is so genuinely radical, most leaders of the Religious Right are careful to distance themselves from it". Nonetheless, its demise did not mark the end of Dominion theology which has taken more a more enduring form, largely as an expression of neo-Pentecostal revivalism. This development will be rejoined below.

The Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism

> For most Christians the present determines the future; they believe they will reap what they sow. But for most Pentecostals the future determines the present, their view of eschatology governs their view of current events. Their interpretation of prophecy has had a very significant effect on their perceptions of world historical events and on their political and social response to those events. On a smaller scale their eschatological views have affected their own history by stimulating missionary endeavours.
>
> WILSON 1988: 264

It is with this quote by D.J. Wilson that one of the foremost scholars of Pentecostalism, Margaret Poloma, begins her analysis of the millenarianism of the Pentecostal movement (2001: 166). Poloma proceeds to explore why a detailed millennial eschatology was especially significant for early Pentecostals, concurring with Wilson (1988: 265) that, although Pentecostals shared their restorationist worldview with other fundamentalists, they differed in their belief that the birth of their movement, with the fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was "itself a fulfilment of end-time prophecy". Moreover, she suggests that, even if identifying common characteristics of all its constituents is not a simple task, the Pentecostal movement is more about a distinctive worldview of a curious blend of pre-modern miracles, modern technology, and post-modern mysticism which merges with the supernatural (Poloma 2001: 168–169).

To be precise, the 'classical' Pentecostals that emerged in the first decade of twentieth century saw their movement as the 'Latter Rain' of God—an outpouring of God's Spirit in the Last Days. While the exact origins of the movement are now heavily disputed,[2] its emergent characteristics are not:

2 With revisionist views such as that of Allan Anderson (2004: 19–38) critiquing the emphasis on the 1916 Azusa street revival and stressing the paralleled revivals in China, India, Korea and elsewhere.

the teaching of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the reappearance of the spiritual gifts (charismata) including speaking in tongues, healing and prophecy. Nor is it disputed that the early Pentecostals saw their movement as something dramatically new in Church history. A fresh-found spiritual experience and the charismata all seemed to point towards the restoration of God's 'true' Church which occasioned the hope of revival that was integral to additional millenarian themes. This millenarianism largely took a conventional pre-millennial form; partly because of the felt persecution by the growing Pentecostal movement from the outside secular world, as well as fellow Christians, reflected their very real experiences, and partly because of the ready acceptance of the prevailing dispensational pre-millenarianism of John Nelson Darby and its major principles extolled in the Schofield Bible.

The terms 'neo-Pentecostalism' or the 'Charismatic Movement' are usually utilised to describe the outbreak of Pentecostal phenomena and doctrines from the mid-twentieth century beyond the 'classical' Pentecostal congregations, over-spilling into the established mainstream dominations (sometimes referred to as Charismatic Renewal) and in forging new para-church organisations, initially throughout the Western world. The early charismatics in the established churches came to use similar terms as those embraced by traditional Pentecostals such as 'revival' (with or without its eschatological overtones) and 'outpouring', leading many to be convinced that renewal signified a return to the early Church experience and precipitated a growing sense of Christian unity that the Pentecostals had hitherto eschewed through their sectarian modes (Hunt 2006).

By the late 1960s the spread, scope and influence of charismatic Christianity was phenomenal. This was not merely because of its growing impact in the historical churches, but because it took alternative, often more dynamic forms. Certainly, in these fresh expressions there were all the markers of 'classical' Pentecostalism, spiritual baptism, the charismata etc, to be observed but there were also new trajectories. To incorporate all of the innovative developments the term 'neo-Pentecostalism' gained currency and came to be designated as a 'movement' with a goal which united adherents, namely to revitalise the Christian Church in the modern age.

Nonetheless, some of the more novel articulations of Pentecostalism seemed to so depart from its original mode as to come to be designated as heretical by the older Pentecostal churches. One form was that which came to be known as the 'Latter Rain movement'. The movement had its beginnings in the years following World War II and generally identified with the ministry of the healing evangelist William Branham. In reality The Latter Rain was part of

a larger movement seeking to re-invigorate Pentecostalism which had shown evidence of ossifying and losing its original momentum. The teachings of this revivalistic movement quickly spread throughout Canada, the United States, and around the world. Latter Rain dogma brought a redirected focus on the spiritual elements of Pentecostalism, subsequently connecting them with the restoration of the five-fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher—with the first two offices believed to have been lost soon after the emergence of the early Church.

It also meant a different eschatological emphasis. The Latter Rain broke with the pre-millenarianism dispensationalism which had become the touchstone of Pentecostalism. While the latter tended to be pessimistic in its outlook, the Latter Rain emphasised a victorious scenario. Rather than attempting to save a few souls before the rise of the Anti-Christ, the Latter Rain emphasised the Church as overcoming and victorious. The term 'Latter Rain' stemmed from biblical passages such as Jeremiah 3:3, 5:23–25, Hosea 6:3, Zechariah 10:1, James 5:7 but especially Joel 2:23 that reads:

> Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.

The idea of a 'Latter Rain' was not new to Pentecostals. It was present from their formative days whereby the reappearance of speaking in tongues and the baptism in the Spirit marked the 'Latter Rain of God's Spirit' and were themselves signs of the coming end of history. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost had been the 'Former Rain' ('autumn') that established the Church, but the new 'move' of the Spirit anticipated by the Latter Rain movement was the 'Latter Rain' ('spring') bringing the Church's work to completion and culmination in the imminent return of Christ.

A major feature of the expected 'Latter Rain' would be the anticipated appearance of 'manifestation of the Sons of God' or 'Joel's Army' comprised of 'overcomers' that would arise within the Church. These Manifest Sons of God would receive a number of superior divine gifts, including the ability to change their physical location, to speak any language through the Holy Spirit, and able to perform divine healing and other miracles. By entering into the full stature of Christ, they would usher in his millennium reign. Joel's Army would purge the earth of all wickedness and rebellion and even judge the apostate Church. The Manifest Sons of God might overcome death itself, and aid God in redeeming all creation, restoring the earth that the Church would inherit, and ruling the nations before Christ's return.

Another para-church grouping of relevance was the Shepherding or Discipleship movement—an influential and controversial movement within some British and American charismatic churches, emerging in the 1970s and enduring throughout the 1980s. The doctrine of the movement emphasised the spiritual mentoring relationship described in 2 Timothy of the New Testament. It began when renowned charismatic teachers: Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Charles Simpson, Ern Baxter, and Don Basham, created a prophetic cadre that felt the Charismatic movement needed greater accountability, guidance, and deeper spiritual relationships. Collectively they became known as the 'Fort Lauderdale Five'.

Other charismatic ministers and some Pentecostals began to submit to the authority of the Fort Lauderdale Five in a vertical, descending, 'chain-of-command'. At the zenith of the movement there was a national network of followers who formed pyramids of 'sheep' and 'shepherds'. The relationships that were formed became known theologically as 'covenant relationships'. While the movement and its leaders were to become discredited, the teachings of Ern Baxter in particular had a major influence not just in the United States but also across the world, notably in Australia and the UK. In the UK Baxter addressed the main charismatic conferences—the Lakes and Dales Bible—weeks and became a powerful influence on the British New Church movement including the churches established by Bryn Jones and New Frontiers.[3] The post-millenarian aspiration of the Fort Lauderdale Five was expressed by Baxter who stated in 1975:

> We have individual salvation—but in the nation we have corporate salvation… God's people are going to start to exercise rule and they're going to take dominion over the power of Satan. As the rod of his strength goes out of Zion, he will change legislation, he will chase the devil off the face of God's earth and God's people will bring about God's purposes and God's reign.
>
> QUOTED IN MACPHERSON, *Can The Elect Be Deceived?,* 1986, 52.

The British House Church Movement

The British New Church movement is worth more than a passing mention in the recent history of post-millenarianism. The theme of returning to an

3 The influence of the FLF waned as evidence of abusive relationships between shepherds and sheep came to the fore. Several of its members issued apologies for what proved to be their destructive teachings.

imagined pristine biblical arrangement of the Church was to be observed among many of its various 'streams' that took as their ecclesiastical model the restoration of a way of Christian life believed to be operative in the early Church described in the New Testament. What came to be otherwise known as 'Restorationism' or the 'House Church movement' was most pronounced in the UK but it was a phenomenon evident elsewhere. Restorationism was also emphasised by several charismatic-orientated groups in the United States. This included a nationwide network of churches known as the People of Destiny International and the North Carolina based National Leadership Conference (Walker 1998: 138). However, in the United States such movements remained only a minor part of the evangelical sector. Elsewhere, in South Africa and some countries in Latin America, Restorationism had at least some impact. Besides winning new converts, the early Restorationists followed traditional sectarian formations since many of the representative fellowships had seceded from a number of mainstream denominations that were perceived as too liberal and compromising with the world.

Emerging in the UK in the 1970s, the eschatology developed by Restorationism generated a Last Days scenario in which the early Restorationists saw themselves at the forefront of God's plans. Adherents interpreted their movement as precipitating an outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would take on a concrete New Testament Church structure, including a hierarchy of apostles and prophets, in preparation for the Kingdom of God that subscribers to the movement believed they were building. The Kingdom would not compromise with this world but would exist as an alternative society, run according to God's dictates and ruled by his people. Despite the apostasy of the historical Church, the Kingdom of God was destined to be restored. The wider schemata allowed the conviction that the spiritually lukewarm denominations would be abolished and the revived Church established as a glorious witness to the power and holiness of God. In the Last Days God's people would grow in number and become victorious over satanic forces. The function of the restored Church led by the Restorationists themselves was therefore to usher in the Kingdom of God before the return of Christ.

In Europe and the United States Restorationism may well have predated the rise of its neo-Pentecostal cousins in the Charismatic Renewal of the mainstream churches. In terms of its impetus, the movement peaked in the mid-1980s, somewhat later than its charismatic denominational counterpart. However, its impact on the wider charismatic scene was significant, not least of all in the influence of its pronounced post-millenarianism doctrines. A significant number of denominational charismatics adopted at least a measure of the theology and praxis of Restorationism, stripped of its sectarianism, to the

extent that the additional differences between them could scarcely be discerned. In turn, Restoration was partly reinvigorated by other strands of post-millenarianism, including the teachings and practices of 'Kingdom theology' exported by the Vineyard organisation. Restorationism was sectarian in that it drew strict boundaries between life in the emerging Kingdom initiated by the restored 'true' Church and the outside satanic world of 'Babylon'. This belief was emblematic of how various strands of post-millenarianism, like pre-millenarianism, displayed a preoccupation with the demonic and no more was this articulated than in Dominion theology and the Third Wave movement.

Dominion/Kingdom Theology and the Third Wave/Signs and Wonders Movement

The so-called Signs and Wonders movement, which emerged in the USA throughout the 1980s, much like Reconstructionism, stressed notions of 'power'. But the movement was of a radically different ilk within the world of post-millenarianism. The Signs and Wonders movement constituted a reaction against the marginalisation of Protestant Evangelicalism and an increasingly secular world. An emphasis on the miraculous—on 'signs and wonders'—provided an attempt to access the power of God in an age of disbelief. Much was epitomised by the Kingdom theology of the late healing evangelist John Wimber. In some respects Wimber's theology developed many pre-millenarian themes and embraced an ecumenical emphasis. However, the predominance of a rather elitist post-millenarian tone was indubitable. Kingdom theology placed a great deal of emphasis on the 'power evangelism' of signs and wonders which resonated with Latter Rain themes. Wimber insisted that it was necessary for the Church to harness God's power in order to be rescued from its impotence and numerical decline. While Wimber adopted the rational strategies of church growth popular at the time and forged largely at Fuller seminary in Pasadena, they became enmeshed with issues of divine power through his emphasis on signs and wonders of the miraculous and how they connected with the enduring theme of revival (Hunt 1997). The impact on numerous Pentecostal/charismatic churches and ministries was considerable. The task of church leaders, as Wimber saw it, was to 'equip the saints' by pointing to the cultivation of such spiritual gifts as healing, deliverance and prophecy in order to generate revival.

Widespread revival, according to Wimber (1985), was precipitated by miraculous signs and wonders. These 'signs' were supposedly evident in the revivals led by Wesley, Whitfield and Edwards. Hence such signs could accompany

contemporary evangelism. This theology did not remain at the theoretical level. Under Wimber's tutelage, his movement, the Association of Vineyard Churches, spread across the globe with congregations in over forty countries and constituted a membership approaching half a million people. Curious esoteric phenomena, typified by the so-called 'Toronto Blessing' (overviewed below), had a wide appeal—particularly to the middle-classes that largely constituted the congregations of one of the most successful globalised strands of neo-Pentecostalism.

Wimber and his movement stressed the reality of the supernatural realm and, unlike many post-millenarians of the nineteenth century, lamented the decline of such a worldview since the Enlightenment. Thus, Wimber, like most post-millenarianism, stressed the significance of all things demonic. From one perspective this invariably accompanied apocalyptic thinking where the forces of good are confronted by, but finally defeat the powers of darkness. However, a concern with the demonic also reflected the tendency for many evangelical groupings to perceive practically everything outside of their boundaries as satanic (Hunt 2001). Common to prevailing strands of millenarian thought—both 'pre-' and 'post-'— is the belief that Satan is lord of this world—frequently controlling, to one extent or another, the 'powers and principalities' spoken of by the apostle Paul. Nonetheless, it is the post-millenarian scenario which emphatically emphasises that the powers of evil would necessarily be overcome by the 'true' Church as it spread globally and established the Kingdom.

As part of the dualist construct, the 'Holy War' had a central place and constituted the relentless struggle between the forces of good and the powers of darkness. Typical was the dualism to be found in Wimber's Kingdom theology. Taking the tone from the earlier theology of C.H. Kraft (1985), Wimber insisted that it was imperative for the Church to rediscover the supernatural and the reality of the demonic. The failings of the evangelising endeavour in the Majority World, especially those nations that remained stubborn to evangelising efforts, were largely due to satanic opposition. Wimber argued that this was also the case in Western society where the demonic influence was primarily felt through rational scepticism and disbelief but which nonetheless could be challenged by 'power evangelism'. The imperative was thus to hasten the Kingdom of God, to bring mass revival by actively confronting and overcoming the forces of darkness through aggressive spiritual warfare.

The foremost strategy of surmounting Satan's dominions could either be overtly political or appear in more esoteric forms, or incorporate both. In this context, the role of the 'prayer warrior' developed into something of a specialised ministry as a result of expressions of Dominion theology—particularly those inspired by the teachings of Peter Wagner. As part of spiritual warfare

'prayer warriors' can take dominion over satanic forces and pray for the sins of the nations or for the repercussions of ancestral sins (see for example, Jacobs 1992). Hence, there are intercessors who pray from the top rooms of skyscrapers in order to be closer to the spiritual realm, while in Paul Yonggi Cho's Church in Korea, the Yoido Full Gospel Church (allegedly the world's largest church and affiliated to the Assemblies of God Pentecostal denomination) hundreds of intercessors pray twenty-four hours a day every day of the year in order to break 'spiritual bondages' across the globe. Those Christians specially trained in discerning the 'spiritual atmosphere' can ascertain whether demonic forces are present. This may either be through divine revelation via the Holy Spirit or by reading historical books and discover the sins committed over previous generations that have led to an area succumbing to prostitution, drugs, crime, homosexuality and so forth. Indeed, whole neighbourhoods of cities could be explored by this procedure that is frequently referred to as 'spiritual mapping'.

Although Dominion theology is popular among Western neo-Pentecostals, its major tenets have spread globally at a fairly rapid rate over several decades. As Paul Freston (1997: 192) shows, throughout countries in South America, such as Brazil, the political and esoteric aspects of spiritual warfare frequently merged in a theory of society and the role of evangelicals in it. At the level of evangelism, intercessory prayer breaks down the 'strongholds of Satan' before proselytism can succeed. Alternatively, there may be attempts to secure a political conquest of the state in much the same way as Christian Reconstructionism. For instance, the International Spiritual Network, founded by Peter Wagner in 1990, established a branch in Brazil which put evangelical Christians up for political office and undertakes daily intercession to evangelise politicians.

It was Wagner, professor at Fuller seminary, arguably the most influential and prestigious seminary in the USA, who is attributed with first using the term 'Third Wave Movement', which he himself associated with the ministry of John Wimber, and which he discerned as beginning in the 1980s. He referred to the movement as the 'Third Wave' because it constituted, he insisted, the last of three distinct 'moves' of the Holy Spirit. The first wave was manifest in the original Pentecostal movement that began in the early 1900s with the Azusa Street revival and signified the return of spiritual gifting in earnest. The second wave came in the 1960s with the Charismatic movement where Pentecostal doctrines, teachings and practices began to spread to non-Pentecostal churches and denominations. Then, in the 1980s, another, third 'move' of the Holy Spirit was evident, supposedly characterised by 'signs and wonders'. Also known as the neo-Charismatic movement, this Third Wave of Pentecostal doctrine and praxis interested more traditional Evangelicals, with Wagner teaching that the

Holy Spirit was precipitating an ecumenical move that marked the increasing emergence of one 'true' Christian Church in the Last Days. This Church would be resplendent with 'new apostles and prophets' in preparation of a worldwide revival.

The Prophetic

Writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century Poloma notes that the subject of prophecy—primarily understood as an action of the Holy Spirit speaking through dreams, visions and 'impressions'—was an increasing preoccupation with the broad Pentecostal movement at the end of the twentieth century, especially in relation to what is understood as the 'End Times'. She explores how, in the Pentecostal/charismatic sub-culture, prophecy was aroused, refashioned, and expanded by an increasing vocal minority articulating prophecy of a forthcoming revival (Poloma 2001: 175, 180). Poloma names the key actors in this cadre, charismatic personalities in a Weberian sense, who were involved with major churches and para-church grouping. This includes Mike Bickle whose church, the Metro Christian Fellowship in Kansas, a megachurch, eventually joined the Association of Vineyard Churches. During his tenure as the pastor of the church, Bickle became involved in a group known as the Kansas City Prophets that included Bob Jones, Paul Cain, John Paul Jackson and others, before founding the International House of Prayer.

Although these were all key figures in the neo-Pentecostal movement, Paul Cain in particular was close to John Wimber and constituted for a short period of time the bridge looking back to William Branham and the Latter Rain movement of the 1950s. Cain focused especially on the teaching of the 'Manifest Sons of God', affirming that in the Last Days a 'new breed' of believers would attain to immortality and conquer the last enemy of death. Later there was a cross-fertilisation with similar movements linking ministries and prominent personalities with this orbit including Peter Wagner and his apostles and prophets of the self-designated 'New Apostolic Reformation' which, among others, included Cindy Jacobs, Dutch Sheets, Chuck Pierce, Ted Haggard and Jim Goll.

Poloma (2001: 180–182) explores how these prophets and their prophecies played a vital role in initially foretelling and confirming and then redirecting waves of Pentecostal-Charismatic revivalism at the end of the twentieth century. Prophecies were seemingly met with events in the revivals known as the Toronto Blessing and Brownsville Revival. These two revivals, as well as one outside of Poloma's time of writing, the so-called Florida Outpouring, will be briefly outlined here.

Toronto Blessing

From the early 1990s tens of thousands of Pentecostals and charismatics made a pilgrimage to Toronto, Canada, where divine manifestations were believed to be observable and experienced in great measure. This pilgrimage marked the overwhelming attraction of the so-called 'Toronto Blessing'. The church where the experience of the Holy Spirit was believed to be most evident was the Toronto Airport Vineyard (TAV), although it was recognised as only one location where the Spirit was being 'poured out'. In the mid 1990s the 'Blessing' spread globally and rapidly throughout numerous charismatic/Pentecostal churches and others previously untouched by neo-Pentecostalism.

Glossolalia, divine healing, words of knowledge, prophecy and other experiences of the Spirit were claimed to be evident. However, the 'blessing' became associated primarily with outbursts of uncontrolled, if not hysterical laughter during church services or specially organised meetings to 'catch' the 'Blessing'. While some members of a congregation sank to the floor 'resting in the Spirit', allegedly under the power of God, others professed to experience a 'spiritual drunkenness'—laughter or slurred speech and uncontrollable spasms of the limbs, gentle weeping, jerking and the 'Toronto Twitch' and, controversially, a range of animal noises. Expressions of the Blessing were not merely restricted to its curious physical manifestations since there were more 'hidden' dimensions—claims to prophecies, visions, 'pictures' and out of body mystical experiences (Hunt 2009a; Richter 1995).

In a good number of the accounts advanced by those who subscribed to the Toronto Blessing there was a precise beginning to the unfolding events at TAV. These renditionings relate to the revival that broke out in January, 1994. The church at that time was part of the Association of Vineyard Churches. Church memberships at TAV had risen from 300 to over 1,000 since 1990 through an 'in house' revival. Revival had, in turn, fulfilled a prophecy evidently announced earlier through a member of the pastoral team, Marc Dupont. Further popular prophecies then abounded in some number including that which foretold world revival would stem from one in Toronto.

Immediately leading up to the Blessing were a series of meetings featuring Randy Clark, a Vineyard pastor from St. Louis, who laid claim to a comparable revival at his own church, accompanied by similar phenomena. After hearing of Clark's experiences at a meeting of the AVC in November 1993, the senior pastor of TAV, John Arnott, invited Clark to preach to his congregation. The phenomena associated with the Blessing became evident. Clark claimed a special 'anointing' acquired through a series of evangelising events including those held by the South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne who had

connections with several ministries of the Prosperity Gospel including Ray McCauley, Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn. The former had become associated with 'holy laughter' in the meetings he attended (in 1993 he led a series of revival meetings at Carpenter's Home Church, an Assemblies of God congregation in Lakeland, Florida). By now it was evident that the Toronto Blessing marked a convergence of several strands of neo-Pentecostalism through various personal and ministerial networks.

By June 1995, 300,000 people had attended the TAV to witness events and experience the 'Blessing'. Visitors continued their pilgrimage for a decade, putting their estimated number at two million. As the Toronto Blessing developed it was not clear whether those involved believed that a 'last' revival was occurring, or whether the 'true elect' were merely being prepared for the imminent final revival of the End Times. Nevertheless, revival and arrival of the Kingdom of God was the key theological emphasis. Moreover, much was symbolic of how it was believed that heaven had the appearance of continuity with present life in what was developing into an over-realised post-millenarian eschatology. In his book *The Father's Blessings*, John Arnott told of how the faithful were inwardly transformed:

> While people are under the Spirit they were delivered of all sorts of problems. They go into the heavenlies. They come back, and they are no longer the same. They are transformed.
>
> ARNOTT 1995

Brownsville

The Brownsville Revival, also referred to the Pensacola Outpouring, occurred in connection with the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, and similar to events in Toronto, from 1993 to 1995 when the pastor of the church, John Kilpatrick claimed his congregation had prayed for a revival and that prophecies had pointed to its realisation. The pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea, Yonggi Cho, announced that God had spoken to him in 1993: "I am going to send revival to the seaside city of Pensacola, and it will spread like a fire until all of America has been consumed by it" (Liichow 2007). Apparently a guest preacher reported that "God told him (Kirkpatrick) to draw a tabernacle on a piece of paper. He was to then denote at the four directions the following: in the west, he was to write the words 'Azusa Street'; in the east, 'Cleveland Tennessee'; in the north, 'Toronto'; in the south 'Pensacola'. This was to indicate a 'spiritual cross' across America through which God would pour out His Spirit" (Dager 1997).

By all accounts the revival began during the sermon of guest evangelist Steve Hill on Father's Day (a day perceived of symbolic importance), June 18, 1995. Kilpatrick relates that he heard the sound of the "rushing mighty wind" and what he described as the "river of the glory of God" as it swept into the church. Further, the physical manifestations of the Spirit were experienced by some church attendees at the Sunday service. Word quickly spread about the revival and attendance at the Brownsville Assembly increased rapidly as people flocked to the church. It is estimated that by the year 2000 at least four million people from over 150 nations had visited the Brownsville Assembly to participate in the revival (Riss 1996), which was one of the longest running in the United States, rivalling the legendary Azusa Street revival, which spanned a nine-year period from 1906–1915 (Tellefsen and Bromley 2011).

The manifestations observed were not that dissimilar to those identified with the Toronto Blessing: shaking and jerking of the body, uninhibited laughter, etc (Riss 1996). These 'gifts' could be transmitted to believers through touch ('impartation'). As reported, the revival impartation occurred through touch by Hill, Kilpatrick, or members of the prayer team and in some instances "… many, while experiencing impartation, enter into the heavenly realm and have visions of angels" (Dager 1997). Participants in the revival also reported miraculous healing experiences, changes in sexual orientation, and recovery from drug addiction. In many respects however, the Brownsville revival was different from that of Toronto in that there was a greater emphasis on holiness, the call for repentance, and spiritual warfare. There was a connection between the Brownsville and Toronto revivals nonetheless in that Hill received an 'impartation' from the Toronto Blessing at an offshoot group, the Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, in London: or, as it more usually known, Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB). Leaders of the Brownsville Assembly of God had also earlier visited the Toronto revival and the Blessing had been shown to the congregation, while evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne preached at the church prior to the revival.

Lakeland Revival

Following the Toronto and Brownsville revivals, further revivals were expected by those involved and prophesised to be accompanied by an increase of esoteric and ecstatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Minor revivals in fact broke out across churches in various cities of northern United States (Poloma 2003: 180–182). One prophecy appeared to have particular validity for what became known as the Florida Outpouring and was again attributed to the Yonggi Cho at Yoido Full Gospel Church, Korea. He predicted in 1987 that "the last great move of the Spirit will originate in Canada". Initially this was believed to be the

Toronto Blessing, but subsequently it was re-interpreted to refer to the ministry of the Canadian idiosyncratic healing evangelist Todd Bentley who initiated the revival at Lakeland.

The Carpenters and Joiners Church in Lakeland, pastored by Stephen Strader, was affiliated with the Assemblies of God. It flourished as a megachurch for a number of years but began losing members in the late 1980s amid the waning of the Charismatic movement and a financial scandal. In 1993, South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne led a revival at the church for sixteen weeks that featured the kind of 'holy laughter' that had characterised the earlier Toronto Blessing and drew several thousand visitors nightly.

The revival at Lakeland was identified with one individual in a way earlier revivals were not. Todd Bentley had earlier laid claim to numerous spiritual and demonic encounters. He recollects that "the heavens opened with a bright flash and a white dove materialized out of thin air and flew across the lake to a nearby tree. Although it was a single dove, it sounded as the flapping wings of ten thousand doves… I had received not only tongues, but also an enduement of power from on high for miracles, signs, and wonders" (Bentley 2008: 83). Just prior to his entry into the ministry Bentley claimed to have received further spiritual legitimation for his ministry when the Holy Spirit took him in a vision to Mount Zion and then up the mountain where he encountered Jesus. He was evidently told that "This is the council of the Lord. I have called you as one of many to be part of the last days' army and a last days' generation" (Bentley 2008: 28). Leading up to the outbreak of revival in Lakeland, Bentley had initiated several evangelising campaigns throughout North America and various parts of the world with an emphasis on generating revival fire, equipping the body of Christ in 'power evangelism' and a miraculous healing ministry.

Bentley's visit for evangelism and healing in Lakeland was initially scheduled for five days but due to his person charisma, claims of miraculous healing, and the unusual physical phenomena observed in the church he remained for over six months. Perceived as a significant move of the Holy Spirit, the revival claimed to have attracted an estimated 140,000 people from over 40 countries by the close of May and by the end of June 400,000 from some 100 nations (Lake 2008). This was in addition to around 1,200,000 that watched via the Internet as well as those who tuned into the broad coverage offered by GODTV. The revival was also streamed live via Ustream by the Ignited Church and received over one million 'hits' in the first five weeks of transmissions. In addition to claims of numerous miraculous healings, the Outpouring seemed to make more extraordinary assertions, including at least thirty resurrections of the dead (Hunt 2009b).

Bentley endorsed many of the teachings propounded at the Toronto and Brownsville revivals but also furthered doctrines deliberately avoided by their leaders. Most important was that of the Prosperity Gospel associated with, among others, and Kenneth Copeland and the late Kenneth Hagin. During the Outpouring Bentley unashamedly advocated the teachings of 'health and wealth' and in his Lakeland meetings 'commanded' 'financial breakthroughs'. This additional aspect of the Outpouring resulted from a supernatural revelation: that personal wealth for the born-again believer was divinely sanctioned and that the Church as a whole would come to partake of the riches of the world. Not only was the Outpouring a melting pot for the range of neo-Pentecostal dogmas but also charismatic phenomena that had been observable during the Toronto, Brownsville and other revivals of the 1990s, taking them to a greater level of esoteric manifestations. Altered states of consciousness and angelical visitations were claimed by Bentley in an 'open heaven' when the Spirit descended. At his meetings there was a prevailing belief during the Lakeland Outpouring that such phenomena could be transmitted to believers through touch ('impartation'), especially by Bentley. Alternatively, Bentley, who increasingly attracted media attention because of his biker's clothing and tattoos, would partake of 'wafting' the Holy Spirit over the assembled during revival meetings (a strategy earlier associated with Rodney Howard-Browne and the evangelist Benny Hinn). Of all the claims to supernatural experiences it was Bentley's reference to angelic visitations that attracted the greatest attention. Angelic manifestations were earlier associated with the Toronto Blessing. Featuring prominently was one particular angel named 'Emma' a supernatural figure as recounted by Bentley: "Emma carried these bags and began pulling gold out of them. Then, as she walked up and down the aisles of the church, she began putting gold dust on people…". The miraculous sprinkling of gold dust was earlier connected with the so-called 'Gold Dust Revival', which immediately followed the Toronto Blessing, a phenomenon usually associated with the late evangelist Ruth Ward Heflin (Sheflett 2000).[4]

Joel's Army

Clearly, in the revival events briefly related above there had been an observing growing overlap of ministries, churches and para-church organisations at a

4 The revival lost steam when Bentley admitted being unfaithful to his wife. In 2010, Rick Joyner declared that Bentley was finally 'restored' and he returned to leading crusades. In April, 2013, Bentley was at the forefront of a revival in Durban, South Africa.

global level for at least two decades. The Lakeland revival proved to be a kind of melting pot for several trends integral to post-millenarian beliefs and the narrative of a growing global revival. Clearly, Todd Bentley subscribed to the popular doctrine of Joel's Army, taking his teachings back to the Latter Rain movement and those of the Kansas City Fellowship and John Wimber who, before his death in 1997, proclaimed that Joel's Army would not only conquer the earth but defeat death itself (Bentley 2008: 22–25). Bentley stated on his web-site that

> An end-time army has one common purpose—to aggressively take ground for the kingdom of God under the authority of Jesus Christ, the Dread Champion… The trumpet is sounding, calling on-fire, revolutionary believers to enlist in Joel's Army… Many are now ready to be mobilized to establish and advance God's kingdom on earth.[5]

Joel's Army adherents today claim a disproportionate number of younger people in its ranks convinced that they are members of the final generation before the 'End' and part of the global, post-millenarian Dominionist movement which seeks to supplant earthly governments and establish a hierarchy of apostles and prophets who will rule over the earth. The movement has several high profile advocates including Rick Joyner, a pastor whose books, *The Harvest* (1993) and *The Call* (2010), helped popularise Joel's Army theology by selling more than a million copies each. Another pastor, Lou Eagle, annually initiates 'The Call', a twelve-hour revival of up to 20,000 youths held every summer in a major American city. Attendees are expected to fast and pray for 40 days and take up pledges to lead holy lives, reject pornography and fight abortion, and undertake 'identificational repentance' of their ancestors' sins and their repercussions. Rick Joyner teaches

> What is about to come upon the earth is not just a revival, or another awakening; it is a veritable revolution. The vision was given in order to begin to awaken those who are destined to radically change the course, and even the very definition of Christianity. The dismantling of organizations and disbanding of some works will be a positive and exhilarating

5 Quoted by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Intelligence Report, "Todd Bentley's Militant Joel's Army Gains Followers in Florida," Fall 2008, 131, http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2008/fall/arming-for-armageddon. Assessed 13/02/2015.

> experience for the Lord's faithful servants… the Lord will raise up a great company of prophets, teachers, pastors and apostles…[6]
>
> RICK JOYNER, THE HARVEST

How Joel's Army will rule the millennium is seemingly spelt out in Peter Wagner's work, *The New Apostolic Churches*, which explains that a new 'Apostolic Spirit' is raising international leaders who will establish churches from which a new form of Christianity will emerge throughout the world:

> This army, there's never been one like it and there never will be one like it in ages to come… It's so mighty that there's never been anything like it before. Not even Moses, not even David, not even Paul. What's going to happen now will transcend what Paul did, what David did… what Moses did, even though Moses parted the Red Sea… there'll be a numerous company…[7]
>
> VINEYARD MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, 1990

In this declaration the Dominionists schema is revealed and appears to be close to the teachings of Reconstructionism. Yet is a movement which largely turns its back on secular politics and sees the path to world domination and the Kingdom of God emerging through churches based on the revived 'five-fold ministry' of prophets, apostles, elders, pastors and teachers. In 2006, Rick Joyner posted a sermon called 'The Warrior Nation—The New Sound of the Church', in which he asserted that an 'End Time' army is being assembly, calling on believers that he refers to as 'freedom fighters':

> As the church begins to take on this resolve, they (Joel's Army churches) will start to be thought of more as military bases, and they will begin to take on the characteristics of military bases for training, equipping, and deploying effective spiritual forces… In time, the church will actually be organized more as a military force with an army, navy, air force, etc.
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> VINEYARD MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, 1990

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6 By Dominionism: The False Kingdom of God, http://www.dominionismus.info/tag/kingdom-now/. Accessed 11/02/2015.

7 Quoted in Let Us Reason Ministries, http://www.letusreason.org/Latrain10.htm. Accessed 12/02/2015.

Conclusion

Mark Noll in his much lauded work, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, comments on how the preoccupation with millenarianism in whatever form has become the preserve of an evangelical expression which tends towards fundamentalism and biblical literalism (Noll 1995: 124–125). Noll argues that such a disposition generates features of anti-intellectualism. In this context he quotes E.J. Carnell in that American fundamentalism has become a 'cultic' and 'ideological' movement only partly connected with Christian orthodoxy (Carnell 1959: 53: 114–117). How might this conjecture relate to the rise of post-millenarianism in its late twentieth century/early twenty-first century form and what is its significance in the totality of the Christian world?

I would suggest that a starting point is Martyn Percy's (2001: 26) assertion expressed above that Christian ideas about the End Times are nearly always shaped by perceptions of the present. The end of the world is a common enough narrative within Christian tradition, he suggests, but it becomes a more plausible as a theological theme and prophecy is matched by social, ecological and political disorder. Percy insists that the millennium is a *kairos* through which it is best understood. The time that is foretold in the future must be understood in the present, even if it is unrealisable. The heavenly city is only comprehended because enough people know what the earthly city is.

The significance of contemporary post-millenarianism is that it takes nineteenth century variants of optimism and channels it into revivalism. This helps construct a worldview for latter-day Evangelicals and revivalists to come to terms with their peripheral cultural marginalisation through an esoteric form of triumphantism: a belief that they are at the 'cutting edge' of what God is doing in the world. Through Reconstructionism some post-millenarian Evangelicals aggressively confront the world on their own grounds by fighting for power over political and social institutions in order to usher in the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, post-millenarianism can take esoteric forms. The Toronto Blessing, the Brownsville revival, and the Florida Outpouring are all expressions of this development as reflected in the pursuit of a heaven which descends to earth in the here and now.

This of course brings into question the likelihood of the endurance of post-millenarianism, at least in this popularised revivalistic form. In the nineteenth century the resurgence of post-millenarianism was a short-lived paragraph in the story of Christianity. Its late twentieth century/early twenty-first variant is discredited by others within the Evangelical community. Nonetheless, the hope for revival continues as an enduring theme for many, particularly those

of a neo-Pentecostal persuasion. Certainly, the post-millenarian resurgence on a global scale may yield to new developments and challenges for the Evangelical constituency in the twenty-first century.

In the present time there exist numerous theological strands of post-millenarianism that in some respects radically differ but nonetheless display family resemblances. Moreover, these resemblances converge upon a number of principal themes that mark them out as distinctly post-millenarian in their general orientation. The reason why these strands do differ at some points is largely due to their regional or even global enculturation and wider socio-political environment. Beyond this, those such as the Signs and Wonders movement and the Third Wave movement continue to take theological inspiration from each other and frequently overlap in terms of practices and beliefs. Increasingly, forged global networks, as evident in the Lakeland revival, show how different threads could be brought together. Underlying all of these expressions was a post-millenarianism forged by developments in neo-Pentecostalism and its claimed experience of the supernatural. And, as evident at the Lakeland revival, the emphasis on an 'open heaven' ensured that post-millenarianism brought an over-realised eschatological almost to its logical or, perhaps more in its own terms, a supernatural conclusion.

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CHAPTER 12

The Prosperity Gospel

Debating Charisma, Controversy and Capitalism

Simon Coleman

Introduction: What's in a Name?

Many religions encourage their followers to seek prosperity in the form of good health, material plenty or harmonious social relations. In his magisterial survey of religious protest and aspiration, *Magic and the Millennium* (1973), the sociologist Bryan Wilson provides an extensive account of the multiple dreams of material as well as spiritual salvation that have inspired social movements in the non-Western world. The etymology of the term 'prosperity' is itself suggestive, combining *pro* (for) with *spes* (hope). It might therefore seem that a theology based on such sentiments would be uncontroversial. And yet, the Prosperity Gospel—as a high-profile dimension of currently burgeoning neo-Pentecostal and charismatic activities around the world—has attracted not only academic interest but also passionate criticism in recent decades, often from fellow Christians as well as secular commentators.

In this chapter, I provide a brief characterisation of the Prosperity Gospel, covering its history and manifestations in different parts of the globe. I compare some of the ways in which analysts have tried to explain its spread, and explore reasons why it has attracted so much critique, and even anger. However, I also question the idea that we can regard 'it' as a fully unified movement or internally consistent theological position. Admittedly, many ideological affinities and social connections can be traced between Prosperity-oriented Christians.[1] Stephen Hunt is justified in noting (Hunt 2002: 6) that in certain respects the Gospel "constitutes a distinctive wing of contemporary Pentecostal movement, with its own style and ethos and clearly overlain with a materialistic culture". At the same time, what also interest me are the adaptability and flexibility of Prosperity messages and associated practices as they have diffused and morphed throughout a wide variety of Christian circles and beyond.

Ultimately, I suggest that we might think of such Prosperity discourse as manifested less in a single Gospel *per se*, and more in a set of ethical practices

1 When capitalised, Prosperity refers in this chapter to the Prosperity Gospel.

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that can be combined and reconstituted in very different cultural contexts, and which may in fact work through ambiguity and play as much as through the expression of apparently firm and exclusive religious convictions. In common with many such 'tricksterish' cultural forms, Prosperity practices arouse feelings of unease as well as delight, ambivalence as well as inspiration, in those who observe their workings. But even in their ambiguities, they also point us towards much wider questions of religio-political significance, towards critical reflections on what have been depicted as shifts in authority and influence from the global North to the global South in relation to Christian movements (Jenkins 2002). We shall touch on these wider issues later in this piece, but first we must examine the origins and scope of the Prosperity Gospel.

American Origins?

We shall consider cross-cultural dimensions below, but even if we focus on the United States we soon see that the ideological streams that have fed into the development of the Gospel have been highly complex. Of course, prosperity itself is hardly a new theme within American revivalism. Robert Wauzzinski (1993: 220) traces the relations between nineteenth-century Protestant evangelicalism and the Industrial Revolution, noting that ideological tendencies of the period conflated "the materialistic progress of capitalism with the coming of the kingdom of God".

At the same time, some very specific influences can be traced in the emergence of what was to become known in the United States as the Prosperity—or Health and Wealth—Gospel. Kate Bowler (2013: 11) sees it as composed of three intersecting streams: Pentecostalism; New Thought (a striking amalgam of metaphysics and Protestantism); and a more general American gospel of pragmatism, individualism, and upward mobility. Another religious historian, Dennis Hollinger (1991: 58), argues that the powerful combination of New Thought and healing revivalist tradition resonated well with an early Pentecostalism that actively sought miraculous signs of the transformation of the born-again believer. The development of New Thought itself can be traced in part to the maverick healer Phineas P. Quimby (1802–1866), a student of parapsychology who was said to have healed and influenced Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science. However, its theological amalgamation with evangelicalism came most notably through E.W. Kenyon (1867–1948), not a Pentecostalist as such but the founder of a Bible Institute in Massachusetts, sometime itinerant preacher and—in the latter part of his life—a pioneer in radio evangelism.

In Kenyon's interpretation of New Thought ideas, seekers were entitled not only to health and happiness but also to a faith based on certain knowledge that the world operated through immutable laws (Bowler 2013: 19). Mere 'sense' knowledge contrasted with that received through revelation. Furthermore, the spoken word was the key for activating divine power, so that "Faith-filled words not only brought the universe into being but also governed the world as an invisible force" (Bowler 2013: 19). These attitudes towards the power of speech would ultimately lead to what became known among Prosperity preachers as 'Positive Confession': the sense that words spoken in faith have a performative effect on the world, and moreover that in producing such effects the believer draws on a binding relationship with God and the scriptures. In theological terms, such a relationship is constructed out of the Old Testament notion of the Abrahamic covenant with associated blessings, but also through the subsequent atonement of Christ, which makes such benefits potentially available to everyone. As one prominent contemporary preacher, Kenneth Copeland, states: "You are an heir to the blessing which God gave to Abraham. This blessing, found in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, covers every area of your existence: spirit, soul, body, financially, and socially".[2]

Prosperity discourse formed a powerful amalgam with Pentecostalism in the years following the Second World War, and this time revivalism in general was growing markedly in both public confidence and material resources, at a time when Billy Graham was making a name for himself in evangelical circles while the so-called 'Latter Rain' movement was expressing the energies of a new generation of Pentecostal preachers. Key figures in a new healing revival—sometimes seen as contributing to a 'second wave' of Pentecostal expansion—were William Branham, Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, A.A. Allen, Gordon Lindsay and T.L. Osborn. Lindsay's monthly *Voice of Healing* magazine provided an internationally circulating chronicle of a loose movement that preferred to manifest itself through publications, radio programmes and conferences rather than in permanent organisational structures or theological exactitudes. In certain respects, then, this wave of revival saw ministers breaking from more traditional Pentecostal denominations to form independent associations, centred around the personalities of their founders (Bowler 2013: 41).

Probably the most significant figure to emerge from the short-lived healing revival was Oral Roberts (1918–2009). According to Pentecostal lore, Roberts 'discovered' the Bible verse 3 John 2 as early as 1947, causing him to dwell on the words "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (KJV; see Hollinger 1991: 59). By 1954, he

2 Cited in Hollinger (1992: 43).

had introduced the notion of the 'Blessing Pact', promising that God would repay donors to his ministry from an unexpected source (Bowler 2013: 49).

Over time Roberts would develop his hugely influential 'seed-faith' concept, the notion that the Old Testament tithe (resources given out of *obligation* to God) was replaced in the New with more *voluntary* giving in order to expect a blessing (Hollinger 1991: 59). With the propagation of this idea, he managed brilliantly to combine aspects of Prosperity discourse with the need to engage supporters: if Positive Confession involved using divinely-charged words to mould external reality, the active forms of giving proposed by Roberts enabled the believer to tap divine power and cultivate influence through 'investing' material resources. Such forms of speaking and giving were thus adapted to the needs of entrepreneurial ministries that were prepared to bypass more traditional denominations, forming believers as both spiritual 'clients' and donors. The metaphor of broadcasting seed combined agricultural and biblical associations with the idea of deploying a powerful medium (words or money, emanating from the empowered self), in the assurance that laws of increase would cause the seed to grow—producing a sevenfold or even greater return on its investment. Thus the much-quoted words of Luke 6: 38—"Give and it shall be given unto you" (KJV)—actually implied much more than the offering of a free gift. A return was expected on a donation that, to the secular world, implied taking a risk with one's resources; and yet the believer should ideally be convinced that they had engaged in a sure bet. They were not only on to a winner; they *were* winners—or at least constructing themselves as such precisely through being *prepared* to give. The idea of broadcasting also referred to the activities of the media ministries (television as well as radio) that Roberts was developing with much organizational skill and personal charisma, and which were making him into a nationally and indeed internationally known figure.

Despite Roberts's undoubted significance, the person most commonly identified as the 'father' of the contemporary Prosperity Gospel was Kenneth Hagin (1917–2003) (Anim 2003: 57). Hagin was said to have been cured of a childhood heart defect a year after his conversion in 1933, and he claimed to be the frequent recipient of divine visions that, among other things, eventually led him to move to Tulsa, Oklahoma—the adopted home town of Oral Roberts. A key point in Hagin's career came when he founded Rhema Bible Training Center (RBTC) in 1974, a facility that enabled him to train many thousands of students for influential ministry. The Center also established outposts in Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa. Hagin's 'Faith Seminar of the Air' produced hundreds of daily broadcasts throughout the US and beyond. His name also became known through sales of books, tapes, and the circulation of his magazine, *The Word of Faith*. Indeed, proponents of the Prosperity Gospel are nowadays sometimes seen as supporters of 'The Faith Movement'.

What did Hagin and Roberts have in common, besides being based in Tulsa? Note that both were participants in the healing revival of the 1940s and 1950s, and their careers reflected the Pentecostal transition from the more marked denominationalism of the first part of the twentieth century to the freer, entrepreneurial, theologically looser, 'neo-Pentecostal' and charismatic developments of the century's last decades. Both focused on education, resulting in the effective reproduction of other preachers and ministries through institutions such as RBTC and Oral Roberts University (ORU). More broadly, both men managed not only to bridge shifts within Pentecostal history, but also to articulate faith practices that could mediate between sacred and secular, church and everyday life. They did so in part through using self-consciously modern means of communication, and such tools of modernity not only cultivated relations with remote supporters, but also encouraged believers to become positive towards the idea of a church that could keep up with—and help to form—the times, rather than retreating into a backward-looking religious enclave.

Reinforcing such attitudes and technologies was a package of practices and assumptions that could be adapted to local circumstances: the trinity of material prosperity, physical healing and positive confession (Hollinger 1991). Such Prosperity discourse deployed a vocabulary complementary to that of biblical text: seeds, gifts, confessions, and 'rhema' (the notion of the inspired, spoken word). While Hagin did not emphasise 'seed faith' to the extent that Roberts did, he used language in ways that combined Pentecostal assumptions concerning the power of speech acts with New Thought notions of the connections between inner and outer selves and worlds. A key text for Hagin was Mark 11:23: "Whosoever shall say… and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (KJV). A Prosperity interpretation of this verse implies, first, that spoken words both access and index the spiritual conviction of the speaker; and, second, that they provide a readily available method of (broad-)casting sacralised language in and 'over' all contexts, without limitation—constituting ethical practices reflecting the inner state of the person while also being oriented towards external places and circumstances.

Prosperity organisations began to consolidate more generally from the 1970s onwards, introducing other important personalities.[3] In 1978, Jim Kaseman (a graduate of RBTC) and his wife Kathleen set up The Association of Faith Churches and Ministers (ACFM). A year later, The International Convention of Faith Ministries (ICFM) was founded in Tulsa by a number of ministers including

3 The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) had provided a regular platform for Prosperity preachers since the 1950s.

Buddy Harrison, Hagin's son-in-law, and came to include such important figures as Hagin himself, Kenneth Copeland, Charles Capps, Jerry Savelle, and John Osteen. Oral Roberts also founded the International Charismatic Bible Ministries (ICBM) whose annual conference became one of the most publicised and best-attended events in the Pentecostal-charismatic world (Bowler 2013: 86). These and other groupings allowed ministries to retain their independence but also to join loosely-knit constellations of broadly like-minded Christians. Arguably, the organisational form that was most significant in promoting information exchange, social contacts and a kind of moral and ritual density in short supply for dispersed congregations was, and remains today, the conference: part occasion for Pentecostal 'pilgrims' to hear—and perhaps touch—great charismatic personalities, part old-style revivalist rally, such events provide opportunities for people to gain knowledge of, and training in, Faith language and practices. Another important medium has been television, alongside the older technology of radio. The 1970s saw the foundation of Trinity Broadcast Network by Paul and Jan Crouch, and Jimmy and Tammy Bakker's Praise the Lord/People That Love (PTL) Network. As Bowler puts it (Bowler 2013: 75), reflecting on the effects of such national broadcasting: "Faith believers moved from being a side act in pentecostal revivalism to center stage".

In all these developments—from Bible schools to conferences to television programmes, and more recently to other electronic media such as live podcasts, blogs, Facebook pages, and so on—we see Prosperity adaptations of an older Pentecostal trope, that of meeting combined with movement: coming together while never quite wishing to accept stasis and institutionalisation. A characteristic Prosperity aesthetic comes from the unabashed adoption of apparently secular props and discourses: smart television studios, expensive clothes and jewellery, adverts and frequent calls for donations. Another Prosperity dimension is added by the constant appeal to ideals of maximisation, created through the apparent assumption that the believer is empowered to conquer all circumstances, no matter how unpromising they might seem.

Equally importantly, we see a willingness to work in non- or trans-denominational ways. Bowler (2013: 73) mentions Oral Roberts's energetic attempts to win supporters of ORU over to his vision of a charismatic as opposed to merely Pentecostal university (in 1968 Roberts had officially converted to Methodism). Jonathan Walton (2012: 112–13) notes that, notwithstanding their neo-Pentecostal roots, Word of Faith congregations have often maintained no formal affiliation with any Pentecostal fellowship. Thus (Walton 2012: 113): "At Word of Faith conventions one can meet groups from local Word of Faith congregations in their respective communities as well as individuals who otherwise attend Methodist, Baptist, and traditional Pentecostal congregations".

Prosperity activities have continued to evolve in the United States. Towards the end of their lives Hagin and Roberts passed on their ministries to their sons—Kenneth Hagin Jr. and Richard Roberts respectively—and a broader generational shift has occurred away from the leading preachers of the 1970s, alongside a continued diversification and diffusion of Health and Wealth discourses. In a curious sense, the latter have been both criticised and increasingly appropriated over the years, and this double trajectory is echoed in the delicate balance preachers have had to maintain between on the one hand cultivating an overtly miraculous discourse appropriate for firm supporters, and on the other crafting generic appeals to positive-thinking and a more therapeutic style of language. Bowler (2013: 5) cites a Nielsen media report that has declared Joel Osteen (son of John) to be America's most watched inspirational figure, with a weekly television audience of around seven million, as well as a *Time* magazine piece declaring the African American T.D. Jakes one of the country's most influential new religious leaders (see also Lee 2005). Both Osteen and Jakes are preachers but also authors whose books are likely to appear in self-help sections of bookshops, occupying an ostensibly secular sphere of the market.

Most strikingly, a relatively recent *Time* poll found that 17 percent of Christians surveyed identified themselves as part of a Prosperity movement, while 31 percent believed that God increased the riches of those who give (Bowler 2013: 6). Thus Health and Wealth ideas in the American context are not obscure: they are culturally conservative but mainstream, often controversial but not marginalised. Osteen and Jakes head the first and eleventh largest churches in the country respectively, and by 2011 self-reported membership showed that a million people were attending American Prosperity megachurches (Bowler 2013: 181), even though some areas of the country—most notably the Northeast and the Western prairies—have been relatively more resistant to the message.

The Prosperity Gospel originally found its firmest roots in working class populations in America, and—as far as it is possible to tell, in the absence of firm data—it has gradually permeated the middle class as Pentecostalism has become neo-Pentecostalism, and pious attitudes of holiness Christianity have accommodated to less restrictive lifestyles. The issue of race remains an intriguing one. Attending an annual Southwest Believer's Convention in Fort Worth, Texas, hosted by Prosperity superstars Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Walton notes how the audience seems to cut across race, ethnicity, class and gender, at least on the surface: "Middle-aged white men in leather Harley Davidson biker gear sit on the same rows as young African American men in doo-rags and Timberland boots" (Walton 2012: 108). Martin Marti's ethnography

of the broadly Prosperity-oriented Oasis Church in Hollywood, California, examines a congregation of some 2,200 people, of whom the largest proportion (45 percent) are African American, and says of its moderate theology of Prosperity that: "The choice of champion of life as the dominant metaphor of Oasis has enough affinity with the liberation theology of African American churches and prosperity theology that it relates to the experience of black attenders" (2008: 152). At the same time, as Marla Frederick (2003: 153) points out in her study of black women's experience in Halifax Country, North Carolina, while her interviewees appear to favour both African American preachers such as T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar and Frederick Price as well as leading white figures, the tendency of televangelical output has been to regard race as only a problem between individuals, rather than a systemic issue within society at large. Looking at the history of American Prosperity discourse as a whole, a line of distinctively Black churches is discernible whose integration with their white brethren has been variable, to say the least (Bowler 2013: 205). Unsurprisingly, the ethnic context of Prosperity Christianity remains dynamic, with for instance Latino, Spanish-speaking Faith churches coming to the fore in some contexts. Prosperity discourse in America continues to encourage 'movement' as well as 'meeting', while constantly looking to scale up in coverage and influence.

Prosperity in Global Context

What I have said so far might seem to make a strong case for the Prosperity Gospel being a fundamentally American phenomenon, displaying deep roots in that country's religious history. There is some truth to that assumption. However, Prosperity discourse has been experienced, appropriated—and produced—by believers throughout the world who may or may not have had direct contact with American missions. In many areas, Prosperity ideas have diffused in national contexts where more classical forms of Pentecostalism have been around for some time. Katherine Attanasi (2012: 3) states that the countries most open to such ideas have been Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa, and the Philippines. Notably, the first three of these have long histories of evangelical and Pentecostal mission. As Amos Yong (2012: 16) has commented, not only have "pluralistic shades of prosperity" become evident around the world, they have also encompassed "an irreducible mix of sociological, economic, political, and historical factors".

To gain a sense of how such factors may come into play it is helpful to take a look at one of the most prominent Prosperity-oriented denominations in the

world today, the Redeemed Christian Church of God. The RCCG traces its origins to south-western Nigeria as far back as the early 1950s, when it was founded as part of a wave of independent churches known as 'Aladura' (for example, Ukah 2008).[4] The instigator of the church, Josiah Akindayomi, came from a poor, rural, Yoruba family and had originally been a convert of the Anglican Church Missionary Society. His new Church, which stressed strict holiness ideas, remained in obscurity for many years. However, after 1980, when Akindayomi died, a new and startling chapter in the Church's history began to open, prompted almost as much by external circumstances as by internal strategy. Enoch Adeboye, formerly a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos, became overseer in 1981 and thus took over an organisation that would move from local, to national, to transnational phenomenon within two decades. In 1988, Adeboye modernised RCCG expansion by sanctioning the development of so-called 'model parishes', designed to attract a more upwardly mobile membership of government, military and academic elites, English rather than Yoruba-speaking, and oriented toward Prosperity (Hunt 2002: 19; Maier and Coleman 2011).

While an internal revolution was occurring within the RCCG, economic and political upheaval were evident in Nigeria as a whole. In the face of corrupt and incompetent military rule, Adeboye presented the RCCG as having a public role as an alternative, well-functioning society, fulfilling Nigeria's true destiny as a Christian nation (Marshall 2009: 180, 209ff.), and embodied in an ordered prayer-camp (complete with university, school, medical centre and bank) that he had constructed outside of Lagos. Expansion was extended overseas, prompted not only by the exodus of Nigerian middle classes as a result of the economic problems of the 1980s, but also by the RCCG strategy of encouraging members who sought work or education abroad to found parishes, often linked with ones back home in Nigeria. Nowadays, parts of the urban landscape not only in Lagos but also in London, Toronto, and other major cities are marked by an RCCG presence, albeit drawing mostly on the dispersal of West African populations whose motives for movement have combined the economic with the religious.

Much more could be said about such developments, but I focus on how RCCG ideology links with American versions of Prosperity discourse. James Doubleday (for example, 2008: 127) talks more of 'resonance' and 'overlap' than of simple adoption. Thus he points to coincidences between broadly 'North Atlantic' individualism and the emphasis in Yoruba contexts on personal agency and the role of worldly things (health, marriage, children, property) as

4 'Aladura' means roughly 'The Praying People'.

means of achieving self-realisation (Doubleday 2008: 127, 141). In the London (UK) setting that Doubleday examines, contemporary Yoruba understandings of money's capabilities of symbolising social success in a competitive society are applied in secular markets—finance, employment, education, property, clothing, textiles, hair and beauty products, electronic goods, cars and publishing—and largely with explicit Pentecostal blessing (Doubleday 2008: 141–142). Wider issues of scale and spatiality also come into play. John Peel (2000: 317) argues that the born-again message of the RCCG has been able to draw on a Yoruba notion of *olaju*, enlightenment, carrying the connotation that: "Progress depends on opening oneself to the wider world, forward movement on spatial enlargement". In turn, Doubleday (2008: 64) discusses how his informants in London describe achievement of material success as a kind of arriving in a "wealthy place". For Doubleday, the sense of positioning articulated here is open, porous and constructed through social interconnection; furthermore, the 'space-ness' or 'capacity' of certain locations can be seen as reminiscent of the Yoruba metaphorical market-place, forming transactional arenas where a person can display–and make–their 'bigness'.

We can see why there might be general affinities in tone and content between the self-help messages in Adeboye's preaching and those evident in equivalent US contexts, but also why it would be far too simple to regard the RCCG as a clone of the North American Prosperity Gospel. The RCCG's overseer does attend international conferences where he mixes with other elite pastors of the Prosperity world (Coleman 2013). Some of his supporters are aware of the writings of people such as Kenneth Hagin or Kenneth Copeland. In addition, the origins of the RCCG display certain temporal parallels with congregations in the United States: emergence in the 1950s, expansion in the 1980s, and globalising mission from then on. However, Adeboye's message responds and must be understood in relation to the history of colonial and post-colonial mission, the pervasiveness of Christianity in Southern Nigeria (in a country marked by violent Muslim-Christian conflicts), the politics of tribal and ethnic boundary-marking, the workings of the Pentecostal-influenced 'Nollywood' film industry, the huge growth of the Nigerian diaspora over the last forty years, and so on. At the same time, the RCCG is negotiating its own global—or perhaps better stated transnational—occupation of countries beyond Nigeria or even West Africa, engaging in what is sometimes called 'reverse mission' in the United Kingdom and beyond, even though as yet it has not made great inroads into non-West-African populations around the world. All of these factors describe a genealogy, and a trajectory, that intersects with that evident in the United States, that sometimes runs in parallel with it, but is not reducible to it.

Anim (2003: 18; see also, for example, Meyer 2004) presents a similarly complex story in his analysis of developments in Ghana. While the Prosperity Gospel was originally heavily influenced by the American neo-Pentecostalism espoused by media evangelists such as Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, and the Nigerian Benjamin Idahosa (himself a product of the American Faith Gospel), Prosperity teaching has undergone considerable reconstruction in more recent years (Anim 2003: 85). Furthermore, it is inextricably linked to other already existing ideas in relation to procreation, health, material possessions, physical and spiritual protection (Anim 2003: 84). On the other hand, the articulation of the Gospel has helped act as a catalyst for the development and work of some very dynamic ministries. In a context where nearly all charismatic churches in Ghana embrace a version of Prosperity theology, much attention is paid to the respective potencies of particular leaders, and the seed faith concept is complemented by the idea that giving is an explicit compensation for the work of such leaders (Anim 2003: 208). There also seems to be a wider-ranging effect of the diffusion of Prosperity orientations in the country: "As in the case of Nigeria, the Charismatic ministries in Ghana are gradually creating, if they have not already created, 'delocalised' subjects, whose individual and collective identities seem to have been formed in terms of a new type of negotiation between the local and the global" (Anim 2003: 283).

We might ask whether the expansion of West African forms of Prosperity is catalyst for, or rather consequence of, wider processes of economic and cultural globalisation. The answer is that both have some validity, even though globalisation in itself is too blunt an explanatory instrument to 'explain' the widespread diffusion of Prosperity discourses. Certainly, the Gospel has found footholds, with varying results, in contexts where borders are shifting in ways that involve forms of religious, political and economic reorientation. Daniela Augustine (2012) traces the resonances between Prosperity ideas and the spread of neoliberal ideologies in part of Eastern Europe, as nations move from planned to market economies. Nanlai Cao (2012) describes the 'property Christianity' that flourishes in China's Wenzhou Christian Communities, noting that newly rich Chinese Christians see their wealth as a blessing from God. A powerful South American counterpart to the RCCG has been the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG), founded in 1977 in Brazil by Edir Macedo (originally a civil servant), and expressive of a country that has seen rapid internal economic expansion and a growing international profile in recent years (for example, Freston 2001). The Church is not as strict in terms of personal piety as other forms of Latin American Pentecostalism, and has been heavily involved in media productions and political campaigns. Like the RCCG, it has also become a considerable presence in much wider religious landscapes,

including those of Euro-America, (beginning in Portugal but expanding rapidly afterwards), India, and Africa. While the RCCG can attract half a million people to its monthly Holy Ghost rallies outside Lagos, total support for the UCKG around the world runs into the millions. Unsurprisingly, the latter's congregations find fertile ground in Latino communities in the United States, and at one point the Church bought the appropriately named 'Million Dollar Theater' on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.[5]

The RCCG and the UCKG have carved out their respective missionary empires out of self-conscious strategies of expansion, while taking advantage of diasporic movements around the globe. They engage in few contacts with each other, but both have in common charismatic and eloquent founders who began in non-religious, middle class professions. Both present Gospels well designed to be mediated not only in virtual, but also in urban, metropolitan space. Both present missionary models from which Euro-American preachers might learn just as much as the other way around. This last point is also salient in the case of Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, led by Paul Yonggi Cho and the world's largest congregation, co-ordinating around a million members. Cho was raised as a Buddhist and completed a degree in law in Korea. One of the secrets of his success, the use of extensive cell groups, has encouraged a degree of female leadership highly unusual in Korea. While Cho has undoubtedly benefited from American contacts—his huge auditorium was dedicated in 1973 by Billy Graham—he has become a globally influential figure in his own right, and has become recognised in America as an expert on church growth and church planting.

We need also to remember the Prosperity Gospel's inherent flexibility, as evidenced in one of its most remarkable manifestations. El Shaddai, based in the Philippines, is a Roman Catholic charismatic group that began its life in 1981 as a non-denominational Christian radio program, initiated by a businessman, Mike Velarde (Wiegele 2005). Within fifteen years, it had a following of around ten million people, including extensive overseas membership (Wiegele 2005: 4). Even today, El Shaddai is manifested in rallies, television and radio programmes rather than in conventional churches, as well as ritual events organized by local chapters (Wiegele 2005: 5). The term El Shaddai is taken from a booklet written by Kenneth Hagin, and refers to a name used by Abraham for divinity, translated by Velarde as 'God Almighty' or 'The God Who is More than Enough'. While the movement appears to have been influenced

5 Also worth mentioning is Hillsong Church, a transnational megachurch founded in Australia, which from the 1990s became known in Prosperity congregations in part through its extensive music sales.

by such figures as Hagin, Roberts, and Pat Robertson (Wiegele 2005: 7), it nonetheless retains its Catholic affiliation even as it condemns the ritualised cultivation by other local Christians of suffering as a virtue (Wiegele 2005: 22).

In an echo of Philip Jenkins (2002), Bowler (2013: 230) characterises the developments discussed in this section as indications that Christianity has "gone south". The numbers claimed for the groups listed above are impressive (if approximate), but even they do not give a full picture of the extent to which Prosperity ideas may have seeped into other congregations ostensibly separate from, or even officially opposed to, Health and Wealth Christianity. Thus Bowler notes Hagin's remarks: "Prosperity is not an 'American gospel'. It will work in Africa, India, China or anywhere else God's people practice the truth of His Word. If it's not true in the poorest place on earth, it's not true at all!" (Bowler 2013: 230; in Hagin 2002: 200). As social scientists, we might dispute Hagin's implicit assertion of the homogeneity of the Gospel and its separation from social and economic factors. We might wish to probe further into his deeply pragmatic sense of the 'workings', the *functioning*, of both faith and truth. Where we are likely to agree with him is in his denial that the Gospel is a purely American phenomenon.

Controversies

In 1996, Mike Verlarde was named one of the fifty most powerful people in Asia by the journal *Asiaweek*.[6] In 2008, *Newsweek* magazine named Enoch Adeboye one of the fifty most powerful people in the world. As noted earlier, *Time* magazine identified T.D. Jakes as of America's country's most influential new religious leaders. It might seem strange to begin a section on controversy by mentioning the prominent public profile of these leaders (all men, we note), but their high visibility is precisely the point. Controversy thrives on what is perceived to *matter* and on what is *noticed*; and what is striking about these media assessments is that they all involve secular publications acknowledging the significance—although not necessarily approving—of religious leaders.

The forms of controversy in which Prosperity leaders and supporters have often become embroiled are many and varied, and at times say as much about the accusers as the accused. This is not to say, however, that the former have not, on many occasions, brought opprobrium on to themselves. One of the forms of critique that this brand of Christianity has attracted is what I call 'legal-moral', and refers to occasions when people have acted in ways that directly contravene

6 July 5, 1996.

official or accepted norms in a given context. The most obvious examples are fraudulent activity carried out by preachers. Walton (2012: 117) mentions the negative media attention Prosperity Preachers received in the US after the launching in 2007 of Senator Charles Grassley's investigations into potential abuses of tax-exempt statuses. The 1980s in particular seemed a decade of exposure of the wrong-doings of preachers. Just one example was provided by Jim Bakker, founder with his wife Tammy Faye of the successful PTL Club, and a figure whose initial involvement in a sex scandal was followed by evidence of accounting irregularities. Bakker underwent both a prison sentence and divorce, alongside the humiliation of his ministry's Heritage Theme Park USA being taken over by the fundamentalist Jerry Falwell. However, two aspects of his downfall are worth noting. First, the fact that the identification of Bakker as a 'bad apple' and fierce criticism from such as Jerry Falwell did not destroy the long-term popularity of Prosperity discourse as a whole. Second that, in true evangelical fashion, Jim Bakker was later able to turn his downfall into a narrative of redemption, as he subsequently returned to televangelism.

Legal-moral allegations are not confined to the United States. For instance the UCKG has regularly been accused of financial corruption and even witchcraft, as well as exploiting the poor. In the United Kingdom, the Church was questioned in the case of the tragic death in 2000 of Victoria Climbié, a young Ivorian girl who died after apparently being ritually tortured by her guardians, who seemed to have believed that she was possessed. The case brought to the fore numerous societal anxieties, including concern over the potential influence of the Church, the inability of social services to protect innocent victims, and the hidden lives of migrants in large cities such as London.

A second form of controversy is one I call 'genealogical'. By this I mean disputes over how genuinely Pentecostal, or even how Christian, the Prosperity Gospel is considered to be. In my fieldwork in Sweden on the Word of Life ministry (Coleman 2000), I have heard the then leader of the organisation, Ulf Ekman, derided as a 'shaman' by a distinguished mission scholar. Powerful critique has sometimes come from within evangelical circles, represented for instance by D. Hunt and T.A. McMahon's (1985) *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days*, where they refer to what they see as 'mere' technique, close to self-improvement psychology and positive thinking—almost a form of sorcery (Hunt and McMahon 1985: 12). Along with others, these authors highlight the roots of Prosperity ideology in nineteenth-century New Thought and Mind Cure Philosophies. For them, the image of 'seduction' implies a leading astray from a true path of properly ascetic, or at least humble, Christianity, while the pointing to New Thought suggests that Prosperity thinking was never on a conventional holiness path in the first place.

If genealogical attacks are most likely to emerge within Christian circles, so too are those I would label 'organisational'. With this term I refer to opposition to Prosperity Christians' ways of creating communities. The fact that the Health and Wealth message, along with the dynamism of its preachers, has attracted Christians from other, more established congregations has led to accusations of poaching Christians as opposed to creating new ones (for example, Coleman 2000). The entrepreneurial style of many ministries, supported by commercial branding, may lead fellow believers to perceive them less as genuine congregations and more as marketing opportunities.

A fourth form of controversy has been seen powerfully at work in Sweden but has also been very evident elsewhere: that of 'cultural' clashes, often exacerbated by Prosperity talk of 'spiritual warfare' and combating the evil spirits discernible in a given region. The Word of Life ministry was so controversial from its foundation in the 1980s in part because it initially looked 'un-Swedish'—a form of slick, rhetorically aggressive, American revivalism transplanted directly to a very different Scandinavian context (Coleman 2000). Such a view was over-simplistic, but it provided a powerful narrative for critics to hang on to. The sense that Prosperity discourse may represent a cultural invasion is exacerbated in contexts such as South America where it frequently appears to be part of a more general evangelical upsurge that is challenging long-standing Catholic hegemonies (Stoll 1991). Drawing on the work of Ogbu Kalu,[7] Allan Anderson (2002) notes that the public disgracing of figures such as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart encouraged some churches in Africa to lay more emphasis on the Africanist roots of their ministries. Anim (2003: 144) also quotes the views of the well-known Ghanaian preacher Mensa Otabil, who has declared his distance from American counterparts, partly on the grounds that in his view the Word of Faith movement was mostly attempting to reach the suburban, white, middle class American community.

Finally, it is worth mentioning a fifth, more abstract, background to some controversies surrounding advocates of the Prosperity Gospel, at least in Euro-American contexts. The combination of religious and economic discourses promulgated by supporters threatens the separation of spheres characteristic of Western forms of modernity, which have tended to maintain an ideal of religion kept 'pure' from political or economic concerns. A fascinating example of the anxieties prompted by their admixture was evident in a December 2009 headline article of the well-known American magazine *The Atlantic Monthly*, which asked: "Did Christianity Cause the Crash?"[8] and went on to state:

7 For a recent example, see Kalu (2008).

8 By Hanna Rosin. See http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/12/did-christianity-cause-the-crash/307764/. Accessed 28/08/2014.

> America's mainstream religious denominations used to teach the faithful that they would be rewarded in the afterlife. But over the past generation, a different strain of Christian faith has proliferated—one that promises to make believers rich in the here and now. Known as the prosperity gospel, and claiming tens of millions of adherents, it fosters risk-taking and intense material optimism. It pumped air into the housing bubble. And one year into the worst downturn since the Depression, it's still going strong.

What is notable about this quotation, combined with the headline of the article, is the sheer agency attributed to Prosperity attitudes. Even allowing for journalistic hyperbole, we see not only how irrationality is attributed to this supposedly new strain of Christian faith, but also how its associated risk-taking is presented as influencing worlds far beyond those of congregations, including even secular marketplaces within and ultimately beyond the United States.

Analytical Perspectives

In this final section, I want to sketch out just a few of the ways in which social scientists have tried to analyse the recent expansion, popularity and effects of the Prosperity Gospel. It is worth bearing in mind that, as with controversies surrounding this form of Christianity, analytical frameworks can be revealing for what they do not as well as what they do choose to emphasise. For instance, much of what is written focuses on what appears to mark the Prosperity Gospel out as *different* from earlier Pentecostalism rather than raising the ways in which it still resembles much classical Pentecostalism in its forms of worship. Having said that, some writers do place the rise of Prosperity discourses in the wider context of the overall expansion of contemporary Pentecostalism in many parts of the world.

A relatively early volume that dealt extensively with Prosperity was Brouwer, Gifford and Rose's *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (1996). As the title suggests, this book saw neo-Pentecostalism as a transnational religious culture that was, at its heart, a form of "fundamentalist Americanism" (Brouwer et al. 1996: 13): Thus: "This quintessentially American faith, which promises material 'blessings' and spiritual 'power encounters' to all, is rapidly shaping the content of the evangelical message that is spread among the lower classes" (Brouwer et al. 1996: 5–6). While this text was important in highlighting the global spread of such mission, its rather one-dimensional view of Prosperity as both deeply American and deeply commodified has been nuanced by later work. One of the questions the book raises is the extent to

which the expansion of this Gospel can be explained by its appeal to populations searching primarily for material advancement that they feel has been denied them. In a much later piece, Hunt provides a balanced assessment of the 'deprivation thesis' applied to the Faith movement. He points out that it does appear to appeal to both working and more middle class populations, so that it demonstrates the capacity to resonate with different sections of the population (Hunt 2002: 17). In addition, as also noted above, he points out that in a context such as Nigeria "the impetus for prosperity originates as much from cultural traditions and ethos of the major Nigerian tribal groups as it does from North America" (Hunt 2002: 20). Where Hunt agrees with Brouwer *et al.*, however, is in the assertion that Prosperity discourse tends to encourage believers to advance *within* prevailing economic conditions, rather than critiquing them in any systematic way (Brouwer et al. 1996.: 21).

A more complex analysis of Prosperity Gospels (now in the plural) than that evident in Brouwer *et al.* is provided by Jean and John Comaroff (2001) in their influential discussion of what they call "millennial capitalism". Here, they place "a capitalism that presents itself as a gospel of salvation" in the context of "epochal shifts" in relationships between production and consumption. Their point is that consumption, rather than production, has become the moving spirit of the late twentieth century, so that value tends now to be generated through control over provision of services, means of communication, and flows of finance capital: "In short, by the market and by speculation" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 5). It is true, they say, that financial risk has always been important to capitalism, but while in the past it was shunned by an older Protestant ethic, it is now routine. Persons are no longer seen as producers, rooted in place, but rather "consumers in a planetary marketplace" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 13). This, then, is the context for those at the wrong end of the movements of capital and labour to wonder how wealth is apparently produced out of nothing. It is also the context for denominations such as the UCKG to promise quick paybacks to those who embrace Christ and denounce Satan, and who exercise their faith by sacrificing what they can to the movement (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999: 23). Mistrust of the accumulated wealth of others as achieved through satanic means complements the desire to obtain one's own wealth through Christian powers, so that "The salvific and the satanic are conditions of each other's possibility" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 26). The dark side of prosperity is an "occult economy" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999) that seems to involve the illicit use of magic for material ends.

The Comaroffs are attempting to diagnose the structural conditions that produce both desire and deep frustration in those left behind by movements of capital. Under such circumstances, it seems that Prosperity Gospels provide an

explanation, if also a misrecognition, of the causes of inequality, but must not be seen as isolated ideological phenomena: they belong to a broader set of potential human responses to contexts of global exchange, circulation, uncertainty, and risk. In these terms, the Prosperity Gospel cannot be said to have caused the credit crunch of 2008, but both the global financial crisis and Prosperity ideologies seem to have emerged from broadly the same economic conditions. Interestingly, while the Comaroffs apply their ethnographic analysis to poor populations in southern Africa, their emphasis on risk and the uncertainty of labour resonates in certain respects with the work of Gerardo Marti (2012) on Oasis Christian Center in Hollywood, Los Angeles. Many of Oasis's members are 'employed' under the uncertain conditions of the entertainment industry. However, drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt and Ulrich Beck, Marti moves away from a deprivation theory of prosperity theology compensating for individual failures and presents Prosperity discourse as empowering believers to exercise a form of individuality in ways that are required by societal systems oriented towards the risks of advanced capitalist labour.

Marti and the Comaroffs are drawing on different theoretical literatures and describing very different parts of the world, and while they are clearly describing not exactly the same *movement*, they are referring to distantly related *constellations* of ideas and practices. Both analyses have considerable explanatory power but both also perhaps limit our understandings of the workings of Prosperity in the sense that we are encouraged to see religious action predominantly as *response* to other events, in particular to a current conjoining of the global and the neo-liberal (Coleman 2011). This kind of explanation focuses on structural positioning—in terms of class, generation, and sometimes ethnicity—of believers and on aspirations for economic improvement or consolidation. We may wish to question the assumption that participation must be 'explained' ultimately through an analytical rationale based on societal or emotional need.

I conclude briefly by noting that the all-encompassing rhetoric of Prosperity language is often balanced by much more complex, multi-dimensional, forms of practice. Using a musical analogy, Walton (2012: 109) argues "There may be an operative chord structure or repetitive rhythmic refrain within the Word of Faith Movement to which persons adhere, but adherents strategically riff and creatively improvise within the system". Of course, the degree of perceived freedom to improvise will vary greatly from the slums of South Africa to the suburbs of Texas: and yet in both cases Prosperity discourse seems to operate on the interstices between self-projection and sacrifice, between experimentation and investment, invoking yet also going far beyond what is seen as the conventionally economic in everyday life.

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CHAPTER 13

Hillsong
Australia's Megachurch

Elizabeth Miller

Introduction

Sarah moved from New Zealand to Sydney to attend university, and when she finished her degree, she decided to 'do Europe.'[1] She had been living and working in London for three years when I met her on a Sunday morning in August 2011. When she arrived in the United Kingdom (UK), Sarah was lonely. It was hard making local connections while she worked temporary office jobs, so she took every opportunity to go out. Sarah started drinking. Regularly, and a lot. Then late one Saturday night—or more accurately, early one Sunday morning—Sarah found herself in a bathroom cubicle in a nightclub, her head spinning and her stomach heaving. She told me that she thought, "this isn't right". And then she looked up. On the back of the cubicle door was a poster inviting visitors to attend a service at one of Hillsong's London churches. She had not been to church since she was young, but thought, "why not?" Sarah went to church that Sunday and has attended services nearly every week since. She has made friends through her church, she does volunteer work in the church's community and, having found a permanent job, Sarah renewed her British working visa and prepared to live in the UK permanently, telling me "I'm so blessed."

Sarah's open and frank response to my simple question "when did you start coming to Hillsong?" is typical of many of the stories congregation members have shared with me when I attended Pentecostal and Charismatic church services in Australia and internationally. Building a personal conversion narrative seems critical to the conversion experience, and sharing this story becomes almost a compulsion. The words spill out. What makes Sarah's experience so interesting is that her path from New Zealand to Sydney to London mirrors that of Hillsong Church, Australia's biggest and best-known megachurch.

Brian Houston, founder and current head of Hillsong, explains that when he was a child, his parents left their positions in the Salvation Army in New Zealand to join a Pentecostal church "with nothing, really, at that time. We grew up in what would be a Housing Commission house". Following this, Houston's father "got filled with the Holy Spirit, so it was from there that he

1 The name has been changed.

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became an Assemblies of God minister in New Zealand" (*Australian Story: The Life of Brian* 2005). It was this 'filling' with the Spirit that marks a turning point when Brian tells his story.

Today, Houston is the Senior Pastor of Hillsong Church, which his father, Frank Houston, founded as the Christian Life Centre in 1977 in Sydney. Brian, together with his wife Bobbie, 'planted' the Hills Christian Life Centre in 1983 from Frank's original church. The Houstons merged the two centres—with other smaller churches that had, in turn, been planted from them—in 1999, when Frank Houston was stripped of his ministerial credentials after it was revealed that he had sexually assaulted a teenage boy thirty years earlier in New Zealand (Gibbs 2004). Brian oversaw his father's removal from the church. After the scandal, he rebranded this 'family' of churches simply as Hillsong (Hillsong Family 2014).

This family of churches has since grown rapidly. In 1992, Hillsong planted international churches in London and Kiev and there are now Hillsong churches in South Africa, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, the United States (US), Germany, France, Russia, and the Netherlands. While definitions of 'megachurch' vary, if we take a megachurch as one with a weekly congregation of over 2,000 people, Hillsong clearly fits this category, and it was one of only twenty-one megachurches in Australia as recently as 2012 (Hughes 2013: 7). As a member of a Hillsong, Sarah has found herself part of a community that is bigger than many small *cities* in Australia. The Christian Life Centre may have held its first meetings in the homes of its forty-five members, but the church now has a congregation of around 20,000 in Sydney alone. A further 10,000 people attend their services in other Australian cities (O'Malley 2013).

Australia's megachurches all represent Christian denominations, and all but three are Pentecostal churches—clearly the two phenomena are closely linked. As Sam Hey notes, the three megachurches that are not Pentecostal have practices and traditions strongly associated with Charismatic religion (2010: 26). These megachurches operate in much the same way that large businesses operate—they have warehouse-like buildings, large numbers of highly trained staff, large capital and investments, and an eye for exploring new markets, locally and internationally. Indeed, Hillsong Emerge—a church-based not for profit organisation—started a "Christian Business Directory" in 2000, which they sold in 2006 to a corporation that publishes similar directories in the US, UK and New Zealand ("Find a Christian Business," 2014).[2] This directory is explicitly aimed at helping consumers find businesses owned or managed by Christians, and also aims to allow "Christians in business to reach a loyal, targeted audience

2 Hillsong Emerge is now known as Hillsong City Care.

who would mostly prefer to deal with like-minded Christians". Hillsong's foresight in creating this directory is particularly significant because it illustrates the church's approach to the 'business' of religion, and because initiatives such as this are key to explaining the expansion of Australia's biggest megachurch.

This chapter is interested in when and why megachurches have flourished in Australia, and taking Hillsong as its focus, will argue that in this country, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches experienced a slower and later development than in America and the UK. This slow growth over the most of the twentieth century changed to very rapid growth from the 1980s on, and this is how Sarah was able to find an Australian church in London, without necessarily seeking one out.

The chapter will examine four key themes running through Hillsong's history: the transnational origins and international fluidity of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches; the place the local context has played in the development of a particularly Australian version of this movement; the ways Hillsong's history parallels, and diverges from, social and economic change in Australia from the 1970s, and the role of the prosperity gospel in these changes; and finally, the relationship between the growth and appeal of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and gender. Historiography will ground analysis of the transnational origins and national context, while discussion of social and economic change, and the gendered dimensions of Hillsong, will demonstrate the necessity of an approach that acknowledges international frameworks, while focusing specifically on the Australian context.

As well as considering how Hillsong evolved in its current form, this chapter will consider the ways the church and its practices, attitudes, leaders, and members have changed, both adapting to social transformation and—in some cases—causing it. In drawing this picture, the chapter will examine the reasons for the success of this particular church in a period where many other churches in Australia were losing members, influence, power, and money. It will depart from previous histories as it firmly situates Hillsong in Australian cultural and social history, understanding it as part of a successful social movement, rather than merely the result of either divine inspiration or religious awakening.

Transnational Origins of the Church and the National Context

A National Church Life Survey of religion in Australia demonstrated that between 1996 and 2001, Catholic Church attendance declined by thirteen percent, Anglican attendance grew by just one percent, while attendance at Assemblies of God (the AOG has since changed its name to Australian Christian

Churches, henceforth referred to as ACC) Pentecostal churches grew by forty-two percent (Connell 2005: 318).[3] In 2004, Hillsong Church alone collected an estimated ten million dollars in its 'Sunday buckets', with its music arm earning the church a further eight million dollars (Bearup 2005). Hillsong United's 2013 album, *Zion,* debuted in the US secular billboard at number five, and on iTunes, reached number one in Australia, the US, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand, Ghana, Indonesia, Brazil, and Sweden (*Rap to Religion* 2014). Both in attendance figures and financial earnings, evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches have achieved remarkable success, and Hillsong stands out within this group. It is truly a 'mega' church.

The mainstream media has paid ample attention to these developments, producing television documentaries, magazine articles, and newspaper editorials on the subject. But academics have been slow to follow their lead; few scholarly treatments of Australian evangelicalism exist. Indeed, as one commentator points out, the "chill winds of secularism" in the modern era tend to generate discomfort whenever the subject of modern Christianity comes up, such that those interested in the area feel like they should apologise for their topic (Gilley 2006, 1). Given the salience of evangelicalism to modern Australian history, uneasiness or a lack of interest are equally problematic.

In order to understand the growth of megachurches and the role they play in Australia, it is important to focus on both the national context in which Australian churches operate, and the international networks that have informed and shaped this context; we cannot understand successes in Australia without a global frame. Hillsong and other Australian megachurches, such as C3 (formerly Christian City Church), have started planting churches in other countries, and not just in 'traditional' mission fields such as Africa, South America, and Asia. Hillsong, for example, has had particular success in America, which is more commonly seen as the source of Pentecostal churches. Similarly, churches originally from other countries have been able to establish successful bases in Australia, which has been the case with a Charismatic British network of churches, Newfrontiers. Teasing out these international networks is important, because nation specific accounts have dominated the historiography of evangelical movements, and a solely national focus misses international Pentecostal networks and connections.

3 The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is sponsored by the following agencies: the Uniting Church NSW Board of Mission, ANGLICARE (Diocese of Sydney) and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. It gathers information from 7000 congregations across Australia, and has partnerships with similar organisations in the UK, US and New Zealand allowing for international comparisons.

Given the growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements internationally, and the fact that their leaders are cognisant of the global nature and reach of their churches, it is important that academics reflect upon this in their analyses of these movements. As Birgit Meyer (2010: 127) argues, the transnationalism of Pentecostal discourse is "central to its global identity", and acknowledging this will "further our understanding of the appeal of contemporary Pentecostalism". This makes it important to reconsider the arguments put forward by Stuart Piggin (1988: 24)—that America was a 'mission field' where localised forms of Christianity were created, whereas Australia "simply gave life to Old World traditions, although slightly modified or exaggerated". Such an understanding of megachurches in Australia is too simplistic. The international importance and background of these churches should not be emphasised at the expense of studying their national context. Their ability to adapt to local environments and appeal to wide groups *within* these environments is equally important

Much of the existing transnational or even Australian literature on the history of Pentecostal churches does not know where to place its Australian incarnations. Australia does not feature in many of the founding narratives of Pentecostalism, as it was not well known as a place for Charismatic revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the movement was starting. As such, Australian Pentecostalism is often left out of broad histories of this religion. Where accounts of Pentecostalism in the US and UK have a large number of sources to rely on and a strong historiography surrounding them, the same cannot be said of Australia, which means that a history of this form of religion in Australia must have a wide focus. Where British or American histories may only briefly look outward—mainly to each other or to early missionaries—Australian studies of religion are necessarily better positioned to consider a broader frame of reference.

Australia similarly lacks a clear place in Asian-Pacific regional accounts of Pentecostalism. There are strong bodies of work looking at Charismatic Christianity in Asia, which has the fastest growing Pentecostal population in the world and was the focus of a 2005 book edited by Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, titled *Asian and Pentecostal*. Again, Australia does not feature. It seems to float amorphously in histories of this global religion. This might be because there are no accounts of an indigenised form of Pentecostal theology in Australia, as Hyeon-sung Bae argues exists in South Korea (2005: 528), or as David Maxwell (2006: 32) suggests are prevalent in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, countries such as South Korea have experienced what Anderson (2004: 137) refers to as Pentecostalism of Korean Protestantism, whereby Pentecostalism has been so firmly established as the dominant form of Protestantism that the

majority of churches of other denominations have adopted Charismatic conventions and approaches to religion. This has not been the case in Australia. With an awareness of the importance of both local and international lenses of analysis, this chapter will now examine both through consideration of economic and social change in Australia, and Hillsong's response to these changes.

Broader Social and Economic Change

Although the Christian Life Center was founded in 1977, it was the 1980s and beyond that saw significant growth of the church, and of other Charismatic churches in Australia. It is no coincidence that Hillsong developed in a period of economic neo-liberalism, with its renewed focus on rational 'individuals' and market governance which encouraged these individuals, through taxation concessions, to provide social services in Australia more broadly (Chester 2010: 315). It also developed not long after growth of prosperity theology in the US. In her history of the American prosperity gospel, *Blessed* (2014: 78), Kate Bowler argues that there was an 'explosion' of the movement in the late 1970s in America. It further thrived, Bowler argues, throughout the 1980s, a decade dominated by "supersized churches and televangelists with big hair and bigger promises" because "success followed those ministers who learned how to combine media mastery, church-growth formulas, and openness to independent Pentecostalism". There has been no comparable study done of the prosperity gospel in Australia over the same period, and the Australian prosperity gospel needs to be understood separately to its American counterpart because although it is based on the same historic connection with the New Thought and Holiness movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it follows a different trajectory in Australia.

In the 1970s, Australia did not have the same foundation of Pentecostal churches which could be 'supersized', as Bowler posits was the case in America. Nor were televangelists as prevalent or successful here. There were in fact relatively few Pentecostals in Australia prior to this period. In the 1981 census, just 72,100 Australians identified themselves as 'Pentecostal', a figure which grew by 109 percent to 150,600 in 1991 (ABS 1994), and which, in the most recent census of 2011, stood at 238,000 (ABS 2012). It was not until the 1980s that Australia's biggest Pentecostal churches, notably Hillsong and C3, were founded. The fact that both of these churches, and the other large Pentecostal churches that followed, embraced the prosperity gospel from the beginning means that the Australian version of the prosperity gospel, and Pentecostalism more broadly, grew in circumstances *dis*similar to those in the US and the UK.

Earlier forms of Pentecostalism failed to achieve the levels of success in Australia that they did in comparable countries. It was not until a version of Pentecostalism that embraced the prosperity gospel arrived here that the movement finally established itself as a key part of the Australian Christian landscape. This was not a coincidence; economic changes within Australia over the latter half of the twentieth century provided the right circumstances for the prosperity gospel, and the megachurches that embrace it, to achieve success in this country.

In his *Australian Story* (2005) interview, Brian Houston noted that "Hillsong church today has facilities valued somewhere near $100 million. In our last accounting period, the total income was fifty million dollars. I think that the idea of a church being big and successful and effective threatens some people". The vast wealth Hillsong has accumulated and controls has led to intense public debate and has been the subject of much criticism in the popular press and through online forums.[4] Adam Shand, writing in *The Sunday Telegraph* in 2010 "revealed" that "Brian Houston uses a not-for-profit company—Leadership Ministries Inc (LMI)—to fund a burgeoning, tax-free global preaching empire. LMI and other tax-free companies in the Hillsong network are able to provide housing, cars, overseas travel, accommodation, credit cards and other perks free of fringe benefits or income tax". An Australian current affairs television program offered similar questions in 2013 about the Hillsong "Money Machine", asking how Hillsong raises money, what it spends it on, and whether the church and its leaders should shoulder a larger tax burden (*A Current Affair*).

In the *Australian Story* interview, Bobbie Houston dismissed public concern about the perceived material focus and gains of Hillsong and other Pentecostal and Charismatic churches saying: "you know, I think some people out there may have a perception that this is religion for a material age. But, um, that is so far from the reality of what it really is". Brian, perhaps unsurprisingly, agreed with his wife's assessment and went further. He argued that rather than being a weakness, the ability of his church and its members to attract money is a good thing: "today, I think a lot of church ministers believe that suffering is the plight of people and there's nothing we can do about it. I'm sure not so blind that I can't see that people suffer and struggle. I just believe that we should have and can have answers that do something about it. I am an absolute believer in the potential of people" (*Australian Story* 2005). Houston here speaks to themes of individualism, aspiration, and above all, a belief that faith is rewarded with gifts of the Spirit, which are often material in nature.

4 The website "Hillsong Church Watch" (http://hillsongchurchwatch.com) regularly explores the church's finances.

"The Life of Brian", as the *Australian Story* interview was titled, also illuminates much about a broader pattern among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Houston's attitude to money, his 'rags to riches' story—which includes moving past horrific family scandal—and his ability to prosper personally and professionally are part of the appeal of this brand of religion. You can have what you want in life if you have enough faith. More than this, you deserve what you want because of your faith.

Houston went so far as to write a book titled *You Need More Money* (2000: 15–20), recently rebranded as part of a series titled *How to Maximise Your Life,* where he argued that God wants people prosper financially, and in fact, derives pleasure from this. There is a clear message that faith can lead to prosperity, and moreover, an individual's faith is tangible and is reflected in their wealth and health. The Houstons could perhaps therefore be described as adherents of the prosperity gospel, or the 'health and wealth' gospel as it is sometimes known; a system where a person's material worth can be seen as a measure of their immaterial faith. The Houstons are hardly unusual among Christian leaders in pursuing financial success, but are perhaps representative of Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders in that they validate their success by viewing themselves as living exemplars of the power of belief, thereby encouraging others to join their church and aspire to emulate their lifestyle.

The transactional relationship that many Pentecostals and Charismatics have with God has evolved out of a longer tradition of 'signs' of God's grace and favour. Albert Banton, one of the founders of the Foursquare Church of Australia, relays the founding story of this church in his history of the Foursquare Gospel in Australia (1989: 4–5). Banton uses the language that so often accompanies a belief in financial signs of God's approval. According to Banton, Frederick van Eyk, a South African evangelist, was conducting a preaching tour of Australia in the late 1920s when his wife started "showing signs of hereditary insanity". Mrs van Eyk returned to South Africa to stay with relatives. van Eyk booked his passage home, and while calling in Adelaide en route, or so Banton's story goes:

> He said to the Lord, 'Lord if you really desire me to remain in Australia and continue my ministry in spite of all difficulties, whilst I am in Adelaide you put it in the heart of someone to give me £100 (this was quite a sum of money in 1928) for the work of the Lord and I will go back to the boat, remove my luggage and cancel my ticket.' As he walked along King William Street he met a Pentecostal sister to whom the Lord had been speaking. She was amazed when they met and told him the Lord brought him before her as she was praying and told her He wanted her to

> draw £100 out of the Bank and give it to Mr van Eyk for evangelistic work. She handed him the money and he went to Port Adelaide and withdrew his luggage and cancelled his booking (1989: 4–5).

Banton's retelling of this story is interesting for two reasons. First, it seemingly promotes financial strain as the worst kind of hardship; there is no immediate mention of van Eyk's wife's mental health after this passage. Second, and perhaps more interestingly, van Eyk is not only bargaining with God, he is confident that God promptly gave him a very specific amount of money because he asked for it, and because his faith was strong enough.

The decades around the 1980s saw a transformation of both the Australian economy, and the Australian religious scene, with deregulation characterising the former and a rapid growth in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity marking the latter. Both transformations followed international trends among advanced economies. Sociologist Alan Black (1995: 285) pinpoints the moment of economic change in Australia as November 1975, the end of the Whitlam government and the beginning of a "resurgence of capitalism" in Australian society. While the 1950s and 1960s had seen the increasing liberalisation of the Australian economy, Black argues that it was the increasing deregulation of financial and labour markets, the liberalisation of trade, and the privatisation of public enterprises during the late 1970s and the 1980s that truly led to this resurgence. Under this neo-classical economic system, the individual became the key to economic policy and the ordering of social life.

Alongside changes to Australian economic relationships, there was also a transformation of the national religious scene. The 1970s and 1980s saw huge growth in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Australia, flowing on from a series of Charismatic 'house' revivals that had occurred in the UK and the US during the 1960s. Many of these churches embraced an ideology that promised believers eternal happiness in heaven, where all one's needs were met, but which also allowed—and encouraged—adherents to pursue material success and conspicuous consumption here and now. The so-called 'prosperity gospel' is thus different to the 'social gospel', which had previously dominated Christian attitudes to wealth in Australia and elsewhere. Rather than promoting the state or social institutions, such as the church, as the protector of the weak, the prosperity gospel suggested that the individual pursuit of economic self-interest would lead to the most equitable and effective distribution of resources—a concept mirrored in neo-classical economic ideas about rational individualism.

In the early 1980s several major Australian churches released similar reports concerned with economic and power imbalances in Australian society, and

with the growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. *Agenda for a Changing World* (1981: 9) is a compilation of major papers from the National Evangelical Anglican Conference, and thus acts as an interesting barometer of the issues that concerned this group. In his introduction to the publication, Bishop John Reid noted that many attendees raised questions about inequality and suffering in Australian society and said, "some of the answers owe more to Marxism than Christianity". Immediately after his discussion of inequality and the need for a more equal distribution of wealth and power, Reid (*Agenda for a Changing World* 1981: 10) noted the growing impact of the Charismatic movement, and acknowledged that the Anglican Church in Australia has been slow to engage in "dialogue" with these churches compared with the church's international counterparts.

Two years later, the Anglican Social Responsibilities Commission, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, the Australian Council of Churches, and the Commission of Social Responsibility of the Uniting Church published a joint report titled *Changing Australia* (c. 1983: 2) which explored similar themes and also had criticisms of the distribution of wealth in the country: "wealth and power are in the hands of a small number of people. Inequalities affect the ways in which people are able to live and the ways in which society works. There has been a loss of integrity in our national life. Australia is marked by relationships which exploit, by false values associated with wealth and power and by the encouragement of material success".

In explaining this loss of "integrity" in national life, the report says that "our society gives rewards and recognition to those who succeed on its terms: the wealthy and powerful", and goes on to say that the two promote each other to the exclusion of other elements of society. The report further critiques materialism, noting: "our society encourages a desire for a life of material excess. Its attention is firmly focused on the present, and the enjoyment of this moment to its fullest. Its concerns are material concerns: more money, a second or third car, a video-cassette recorder or micro-wave oven, more possessions" (Anglican Social Responsibilities Commission et. al., c. 1983: 8).

The language used above is very different from that typically seen in the prosperity gospel. It suggests that materialism is to be treated with suspicion and disdain; that there is even something 'unChristian' about materialism. Marion Maddox (2005: 277) argues that mainstream churches treat the prosperity gospel with suspicion for obvious reasons: "if God wills us to be prosperous, Jesus failed spectacularly—a homeless itinerant, dependant on charity". Furthermore, Maddox argues, the teachings of the prosperity gospel might be seen to contradict some of Jesus' teachings in The Bible (New International Version), such as "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to

the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" (*Matthew* 19:21) and his warning that "it is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of the needle" (*Mark* 10:25).

The prosperity gospel offers something of an antidote to this attitude. The consciences of the wealthy and powerful are soothed. Others are not only given something to aspire to, the prosperity gospel provides an imperative to seek this lifestyle—God wants you to be successful, in this life and the next. Such is the appeal of this approach to religion that charismatic movements within larger churches—including the Anglican and Catholic Churches, as well as various Protestant Churches—began to appear in Australian from the 1970s onwards.

This strong focus on individuals and their lifestyles is tempered within Hillsong by the promotion of the church as a moderator, and as a way to ensure individuals remain connected to their community. This was the case with Sarah in London, who felt most connected to her new city through the church, but more significantly, through its organised social and charitable activities.

At Hillsong Conference 2012, Youth Pastor Scott Samways argued that generation Z—those born during or after 1995—are also known as the 'media gen' or the 'dotcom kids', yet despite the plethora of technologies available to them, this generation is more disconnected from their community than any previous generation. Samways claimed that regardless of this isolation, young people long for deeper personal connections and meaning in their life; "they're hungry, they just don't know what they're searching for". He argued that the church needs to use the technology and material culture available to reach out and make church "a place of community and family" (Samways 2012). Materialism and the rapid expansion of material culture is not a significant problem for Samways. Indeed, he sees technology and material culture as part of the solution to social problems—they provide a chance to celebrate the agency of individual church members, while also connecting these individuals to their broader church community, thereby giving meaning to their lives.

Changing attitudes to wealth and new understandings of affluence and success as being linked to Christian virtues has led to the transformation of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in practical, as well as theoretical, terms. The way churches organise, promote and market themselves has become increasingly linked to the popularity and financial position of the church, and an increasingly business-like model is utilised by the large majority of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. In fact, many of these churches have become market leaders when it comes to advertising, promotions management and marketing campaigns, leading Robin Hicks (2012), an editor of the marketing, media and entertainment website, mUmbBRELLA, to describe Hillsong as "Australia's most powerful brand".

Churches such as Hillsong have transformed the way they present themselves and operate. As Stephen Hunt (2002: 92) highlights, "on an international scale their organisational frameworks tend to be very alike in form and genre. Many are structured, packaged, and exported in much the same way as business enterprises". The fact that Australian megachurches such as Hillsong have adopted these models, and well as the fact that they emerged alongside the neo-liberal 1980s has defined the shape of Pentecostalism in Australia. By focusing on an individual's relationship with God being experienced moving in parallel with existing cultural and economic frameworks of Australia's society, megachurches have positioned themselves as able to offer 'seekers' a sense of community, connection, and belonging, without challenging (too deeply) other social structures they are embedded in.

Gendered Dynamics

One of the key characteristics of modern, Australian—and international—Charismatic megachurches is their emphasis on separate gender roles as way for congregations to organise and understand themselves. Where economic and social changes have been reflected in the values and attitudes to wealth these churches convey, their definition of gender roles is more reactionary. Hillsong acknowledges changes in society and new opportunities for women, but responds by maintaining the importance of 'Christian' interpretations of sex, gender, family, and home, albeit presented in a new way. Indeed, I have found that marriage, family, household and home, motherhood, sex roles, and family values have become keywords firmly linked in academic discourse to women and religion.

The Pentecostal belief in the 'priesthood of all believers' and the empowering and legitimating experience of the Spirit—which is open to all, regardless of gender—has influenced female participation in, and leadership of, Pentecostal churches (Anderson 2013: 93). The historic attraction of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity to women is commonly attributed to its emphasis on direct and personal religious experience, opportunities for social support and women's ministries, and a spontaneous and emotional style of worship (Tangenberg 2007: 230). Theologian Lisa Stephenson (2011: 411) argues that "understanding authority as legitimated power, Pentecostal women gain access to a realm of religious authority because of their experience of Spirit baptism". This means that, because of their interactions with the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal women have the authority to minister in certain areas. However, this does not usually translate to the authority to hold high-level leadership positions, which are synonymous with masculine responsibilities.

There are several key leaders in the Pentecostal community who are women, notably Bobbie Houston, Donna Crouch, Chris Pringle, and Sam Evans. But the gendered power dynamics of their churches are complicated, and their power often rests of their positions as wives and partners of male pastors. Sociologist Bernice Martin (2003: 54) uses the phrase "Pentecostal gender paradox" to describe the position of women who are leaders within their church, and perhaps broader society, but who are required to submit to their husband's authority, to acknowledge his responsibility to lead family spirituality, and to submit to his decision making. There is perhaps even less room for unmarried women as Pentecostal leaders, although historically, both married and unmarried Pentecostal leaders have faced challenges based on their gender.

Jeannie Lancaster founded the first Australian Pentecostal congregation in Melbourne in 1909. The Good News Hall grew slowly, and never neared the numbers of American's early Pentecostal congregations such as Azusa Street or its offshoots. Evangelist Minnie Abrams was then the first to spread news of the revival in Melbourne beyond Australia when she took word of events in Australia to the Mukti mission in India (Hutchinson 2009: 192). That women performed both these roles reflects the general acceptance at the time of women as missionaries able to start small congregations and spread word of their missions overseas. It also demonstrates the extensive networks of information that were available to women at the time. Abrams was, however, more than just a missionary. She wrote one of the first Australian theological defenses of Pentecostalism—*The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire*—in 1906, after seeing the work of the Indian Christian reformer Pandita Ramabai and her Mukti mission (Anderson 2013: 105).

Lancaster's Good News Hall lacked support from international evangelists, and, faced with a diminishing congregation, in 1926 she launched an alternative, the Apostolic Faith Mission. The Pentecostal Church of Australia formed in the same year, and realising that they were competing for a limited number of adherents, the two bodies united in 1937 to form the AOG in Australia, now the ACC (Anderson 2006: 101).

Women were particularly active as Pentecostal missionaries in early twentieth-century Australia. Mark Hutchinson (Hutchinson 2009: 199) makes a compelling argument about why Pentecostals were comfortable with female missionaries, even those who established their own missions. He suggests:

> … while they remained missionaries, and so were mobile inhabitants of a spiritual frontier on which power relations could be finessed or sidestepped, women were both welcome additions to the Pentecostal

> workforce and indubitable purveyors of spiritual gifts and authority. Gender was not considered to be a biological issue but a creation-versus-culture issue, and so its claims could be negotiated.

When the frontier 'settled down', missions became churches, and churches sought broader denominational affiliation. At this point, Hutchinson argues, issues of 'respectability' became important. Owning property, competing with other Christian churches in a public space, and creating intellectual and doctrinal rationales meant "cultural norms of gender relationships increasingly impinged upon the way that Pentecostal experience was worked out" (Hutchinson 2009: 199). And so, when Lancaster's Good News Hall became the Apostolic Faith Mission, Lancaster—the founder of Pentecostalism in Australia—accepted a new title. She became the Secretary of the Mission, while her husband became the lead pastor (Hutchinson 2009: 199).

Lancaster's decision to diminish her title to make her role in her church seem more in line with scripture and more palatable to conservatives was not unique. *Apostolic News* reported that Pauline Heath, who had led an Adelaide congregation from 1927 until 1933, changed her title from pastor because "a woman is not permitted to be a pastor according to the Scriptures. So Sister Joy, who has humbly, under God, led this work for some years, laid down that title nearly a year ago, and took instead the title of evangelist" (quoted in Hutchinson 2009: 202). This also speaks to broader themes of female submission, and suggests that female leadership within Pentecostal and charismatic churches was never seen as entirely socially or religiously acceptable—the early female missionaries perhaps came closest, but their role was understood as temporary.

Lancaster was not the only female Pentecostal leader in Australia. By 1925, women had founded and led eleven of the eighteen existing Pentecostal churches planted in the country. By 1930, women had started twenty of the thirty-seven Pentecostal churches (for which information is available) in Australia (Chant 1999: 428). While these numbers seem impressive, particularly considering that in 2007 just 5.7 percent of senior pastors in Australian ACC churches were women (Catford 2009: 27), it is important to retain a sense of the slow growth rate of Pentecostalism in Australia. In 1937 when the AOG formed, it had around 1,500 members. By the end of World War II, this had declined to just 1,200 members (Chant 1999: 215).

The 1960s saw the first dramatic increase in Pentecostal numbers, and it was in this decade that several important Bible colleges were founded, including the AOG's Alphacrucis College (formerly Southern Cross College).

However, it was not until the 'third wave' of Pentecostalism arrived in Australia in the late 1970s and early 1980s that the movement burgeoned. The United Kingdom particularly saw an emphasis on house or home churches, and renewal in older established churches, and this model seemed to resonate more strongly in Australia than earlier more American forms of Pentecostalism had done.

Today the ACC, which Hillsong is a member of, claims to have over 270,000 members (ACC 2014). However, a theology of female submission creates barriers to women obtaining positions of leadership within the ACC, and Donna Crouch is the only female member of its nine person National Executive. Cheryl Catford's examination of the challenges facing female Pentecostal leaders highlights the fact that outside of women and children's ministries, women are underrepresented in denominational leadership positions. Furthermore, women who have become part of ministry teams do not generally fill positions of church governance, which their male counterparts would do (2009: 31). Clearly, barriers remain for women as leaders of Pentecostal or charismatic churches in Australia.

These barriers to female leadership are part of a broader discourse of separate gender roles in Hillsong. Bobbie Houston's book *I'll Have What She's Having* (2008) argues that the "ultimate compliment" is for someone to see your lifestyle, attitude, and sense of purpose, and then want those same things. Houston argues that women need to replace gender restrictions based on their own limited ideas, with the "freedom and joy" that comes with being a daughter of the Kingdom of God. She says that God is ready to equip a generation of women with this freedom (2008: 170). Houston argues, "single, married, divorced, or widowed is not a status that controls your destiny", although this affirmation is somewhat undermined when she says she knows "literally dozens of women who are single, active, and achieving so much in life"; the implicit assumption being that these women are to congratulated for managing to achieve without a male partner (2008: 170). Houston does not seriously challenge any gender norms established by the majority of Christian churches, and as one of the key female figures in Australian Charismatic Christianity, her views speak to broader understandings of the role of women in the church and society. She urges readers to look for "equal partnerships", and explains that she sees herself as husband Brian Houston's equal, even though this means they have distinct roles that limit her authority relative to his.

Brian Houston has openly said that he does not believe women are obliged to submit to their husbands. Speaking about gender roles in 2005 (*Australian Story*), Houston said: "Bobbie works alongside me. We're very much a team. In a sense, I've got a conservative, biblical idea that a man should take a role of

leadership in his life, but I certainly don't adhere to the mentality that a woman must submit or that she should be pushed down. I absolutely believe that there's a sense of walking together in life". Brian seems unaware of the paradox in his explanation of his relationship with Bobbie; he is the leader but that does not mean she must submit.

Pentecostal women, particularly leaders, are increasingly approaching and crossing the boundaries between feminism, an engagement with—and rejection of aspects of—consumer society, scriptural conservatism, and church hierarchies. Natasha Bedingfield provides a clear example of this. Bedingfield, the daughter of missionaries from New Zealand, is heavily involved in the Hillsong London music-recording program. She publically announced that she did not want to associate her femineity with the 'musical poledancing' of the secular music industry (Hutchinson 2009: 212). In 2007, London journalist, Liz Jones, described Bedingfield as full of contradictions, being "sweet and steely, shy and super confident, ordinary and a bit starry" (Hutchinson 2009: 212). Hutchinson argues that the challenge for successful women, such as Bedingfield, is that historically their Pentecostalism and associated conservative values makes them wary of the word 'feminist'. Hutchinson suggests that Pentecostal churches base authority on denying individual rights for ones privileges within God, the problem being that men are the arbiters of those privileges. And so, Hutchinson argues, "becoming a successful performing artist is—rather like the women who became 'medical doctors, college presidents, social workers, community organisers, and politicians' in fin-de-siecle first wave feminism—one way of becoming indispensable in the mission of contemporary Pentecostalism" (2009: 212).

Bobbie Houston does not suggest that women cannot have successful careers, as she herself does. Rather, she articulates a version of femineity and womanhood where women need to accept that God has created distinct sexes, with distinct gender roles, and so women need to keep their hearts "pure" and "live a generous and hospitable life", as well as understanding that their role is to be "embracing" (Houston 2008: 118–9).

In Houston's understanding of gender roles, she does note that financial independence is important for women and uses Timothy 3:3 to argue that while Godly women should not love money, they should "have an understanding of healthy biblical prosperity" and "know that God desires women to be resourced so that we can make a difference in the world" (2008: 122). Note that Houston does not refer to the need to be financially independent from men; rather, women are to be independent so that they can "make a difference", the implicit assumption being that women should accumulate wealth to allow them to care for others.

Marion Maddox draws a link between the founding of Hillsong in 1983—and its enormous growth in the 1980s and 1990s—and the 'antifeminist backlash' that occurred during this period (Maddox 2013: 25). Female sexuality, autonomy, and authority were and still are, as Maddox suggests, fraught both inside and outside Pentecostal churches. This is particularly interesting because where, as argued above, Hillsong has used broader social and economic frameworks and transformed or adapted them to suit the church's needs and to attract converts, here, the church walks a complicated path between embracing social change, and challenging it.

Conclusion

There is much work to be done to understand more fully the history and current position of Pentecostal megachurches in Australian history. However, what has emerged through this chapter is evidence of the fact that the effectiveness of Hillsong, and indeed, other megachurches in Australia, can partly be explained by their effectiveness in responding to 'seekers' such as Sarah, introduced at the start of the chapter. While this may seem unsurprising, after all, Pentecostalism is known as a 'seeker sensitive religion', this chapter has argued that an ability to respond to broad social changes has been critical to the success of these fluid and rapidly growing churches. The international goals, methods, and networks of Pentecostalism have informed the evolution of Pentecostal and Charismatic religion in Australia, although startlingly little has been written by academics about this form of Christianity within Australia. To remedy this, an approach that synthesises the international origins and connections of these churches, while exploring the Australian national context, is required. Applying this approach to an examination of the economic values and gendered dynamics of Hillsong, has helped account for the success of this megachurch.

The particular timeframe in which Hillsong was conceived and developed has been critical. The focus of the church on individual success, when combined with efforts to make these same individuals feel that they are part of a valued community, has extended the reach of the church. The Houstons and the other senior Hillsong members lead a church that is modelled on this nuanced position. The balance between creating a church that mirrors broad social change and also promotes the values and core beliefs of their faith, cannot be an easy one. It is perhaps the ability of Hillsong to adopt and adapt wider social institutions and patterns that most clearly explains the success of this, Australia's biggest megachurch.

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CHAPTER 14

The Emerging Church
Intentionally Marginalised Community

Josh Packard

Introduction

The Emerging Church has developed in the last 25 years primarily in North America, the UK, and Australia as an alternative to the relatively homogenous and institutionalised religious experience so common in mainstream congregations. This new form of self-consciously post-modern Christianity reflects the spread of massive distrust among young people in what has traditionally been a well-respected social institution and represents a turn away from a consumer model of religion.

In spite of the outward resemblance to many other Protestant denominations such as Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and the like, individual Emerging Churches intentionally and strategically seek to develop internal styles and structures that are unique, open to change, and constantly evolving. The Emerging Church can best be described as a collection of congregations that share important characteristics but operate independently of one another with no formal organising body.

The most important of these common beliefs is a sense that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, should not be treated as a static entity. This is exemplified in the use of the word 'emerging' to describe this way of 'doing church'. Rather, subscribers to the Emerging Church take the stance that people's experience of the sacred should change as people and societies change. This core belief affects both their organisational structure and religious practices in profound ways. In distinct opposition to rigid forms of religious organisation that characterise mega-churches and denominations, Emerging Churches have no distinct vision, mission or organisation as a group, and the individual congregations proceed with very little formal doctrine. Indeed, one of the most common refrains from participants in the Emerging Church is that they are part of a large 'conversation' where people exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences rather than a quest to obtain a 'right' answer about faith.

The Emerging Church fills a niche which traditional religious institutions cannot, by their very nature, occupy. While this movement in no way threatens to dominate the religious landscape or usurp traditional religious structures,

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its continuing presence and popularity suggest the inherent appeal of religious options that operate on the margins, but not completely outside, of mainstream religion.

Intentionally Marginalised Christianity

The Emerging Church is a modern religious movement that developed primarily in the UK and the United States in the late twentieth century in order to counter the dominant institutional expressions of religion and provide an outlet for what movement insiders would call a more 'authentic' and 'relevant' faith (Bielo 2011; Packard 2012). While the Emerging Church is located firmly within Protestant Christianity, there is much within the movement that separates it from a somewhat crowded field of denominations and other religious bodies in the same tradition, especially with regard to its explicitly anti-institutional organisational structure and ideology. The movement can now be found globally, but most significant activity still remains in the United States and Europe, along with Australia and New Zealand.

Truly assessing the scope of the Emerging Church with regard to size or reach is an impossible task as there is no central, organising body. Additionally, the ideology of the movement in general and within individual congregations means that there are no membership roles to speak of and even fewer weekly counts at worship services and other activities.

Regardless of quantitative size, it is quite certainly the case that the Emerging Church commands a significant amount of attention from the institutional church as it represents a challenge to and critique of traditional modes of Christianity in Europe, the United States and elsewhere. Where traditional churches focus on creating statements of faith and religious dogma, the people in the Emerging Church emphasise the 'conversation' and eschew the generation of documents distilling the basics of what they believe in. Where the modern mega-church movement emphasises size, economies of scale, and putting the church at the centre of one's daily life like a modern cathedral, Emerging Church congregations often meet in bars, coffee shops and other temporary or rented spaces and make decisions to limit growth at any one particular congregation (Bader-Saye 2006). Furthermore, in contrast to the relative rigidity of Catholic and mainline Protestant liturgy, worship in the Emerging Church is much more open, experimental and fluid. As I articulate further below, Emerging Church worship is an amalgam of liturgies, stations, meditation and other, more personal modes of worship done collectively. Services or gatherings are rarely the same from week to week.

As a researcher who has examined the Emerging Church closely, the question I receive most often has to do with belief. Most people who ask questions about the Emerging Church want to know what the core beliefs of the Emerging Church are. Answering this question turns out to be one of the most difficult things about researching the Emerging Church. The people in the movement are explicitly anti-dogmatic while retaining a distinctly Christian identity. Their critics inside the Christian religion claim that the Emerging Church is too open, ecumenical and accepting of different faiths, in short that it is relativistic. However, a full and detailed accounting of the Emerging Church from the existing scholarship lends very little support for this claim. While particular groups or congregations within the movement might trend toward this kind of spiritual egalitarianism, the vast majority are situated firmly within a Christian, Reformed tradition even as they maintain a high degree of criticism for the narrowness of most modern Christian expressions. The ability of critics to level such claims is generally supported by a lack of specific theological identity and coherence within the movement (Carson 2005; McArthur 2012).

Individual congregations generally eschew statements of faith aside from pointing people toward the ancient creeds (for example, The Apostle's Creed) though some congregations will have them. Even the largest, most visible para-church organisation, Emergent Village, at one point released an "Anti-Statement of Faith" explaining why statements of belief are dangerous and counter to the central mission of the Emerging Church as a movement which welcomes all people into a 'conversation' about faith and religion. Thus, one will not find much consistency across the Emerging Church with regard to doctrine or practice.

As with many other religious groups in this era, the theological issues which get the most uneven treatment in the Emerging Church are homosexuality/same-sex marriage and the role of women in the church. While mostly progressive with these social concerns and with theology in general, it would be incorrect to characterise the Emerging Church as theologically liberal or conservative. Instead, it desires to be, and mostly is, theologically open. That is, the onus for theological decision making largely falls on the shoulders of individual congregants within a spirit of community guidance. Rather than theological edicts handed down from a pastor or other clergy member, the theology bubbles up as people deconstruct and construct faith for themselves.

This same spirit of removing authority for decision making from clergy is carried throughout the Emerging Church. While there are certainly leaders within the movement who are very charismatic and command a lot of attention, there is no distinct person or group of people who have the authority to speak on behalf of the Emerging Church, nor are there even any who make an attempt to do so. The first part of this statement is not so unique, but the latter,

about nobody making an attempt to do so, is terribly difficult to maintain over the course of two decades. And yet, those in the movement who might be able to attempt to speak on its behalf (for example, Tony Jones, Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt) consistently turn down the opportunity.

As might be suspected from the brief description above, researchers have noted the high number of young adults (18–30 year olds) as a defining feature of the Emerging Church (Marti and Ganiel 2014). In fact, much of the interest about the Emerging Church within traditional, institutionalised, religion centres on trying to ascertain the appeal and perceived danger of the Emerging Church for young people. Of course, there is no official census which gives any indication of the true numbers of young people, but the observational evidence is consistent and overwhelming. What is still unclear, however, is if the Emerging Church is a station in a religious career which will see people transition in and out of the movement or if the movement can sustain members throughout various life changes (for example, children, retirement, etc.). Very few congregations have been around longer than ten years, so it is not yet possible to ascertain whether the Emerging Church will continue to appeal to people as they age, or if the core spirit of the movement will alter as the initial cohorts of members age.

Social History of the Emerging Church

Perhaps unique among its peers, the Emerging Church has no distinct origin story. There was no seminal moment in history that one can point to, even retrospectively, and claim that it was the beginning of the Emerging Church. Some people find traces of origins as far back as the publication of *The Emerging Church* by Larson and Osborne in 1970. Long out of print, this small, paperback book is frequently found in the collections of Emerging Church practitioners and is even referred to in various places in the literature about the Emerging Church (Packard 2012: 6–7). Larson and Osborne's book laid out a number of elements that are central to the modern Emerging Church that scholars have been recently studying. Packard (2012) notes three key elements that are still clearly present in the church today. First, the book introduces the term 'emerging' and defends the use of the present participle to indicate that religion should not be treated as a static enterprise made rigid by dogma and unresponsive to the surrounding culture. Not only has the moniker stuck, but indeed the rationale surrounding the designation of 'emerging' has endured as well. Along with my own work (Packard 2012), Bielo (2011) has demonstrated empirically that practitioners and the laity in the Emerging Church are very

conscious about the use of the term 'emerging' and use the same basic logic arguments put forth by Larson and Osborne when they explain the term.

Second, the Emerging Church has always been viewed as an alternative to traditional, institutional church. Much of what Larson and Osborne advocate is in direct contrast to previous experiences with institutional church. This theme of the Emerging Church as an explicit alternative to mainstream Christianity, has been addressed time and again by people both inside and outside of the movement to describe everything from the design of services and theology (de Groot 2006; Guest and Taylor 2006), organisational structure (Packard 2012), and appeal (Packard and Sanders 2013) of the Emerging Church. The anti-institutional orientation has become central to understanding the orientation of the Emerging Church and is a large part of what makes the movement so difficult to identify. This orientation is not against or for any one particular thing, but rather resists stasis, monotony and institutionalisation. I explore this point in more depth below.

Finally, in passages that will strike modern readers as being spot on with regard to much of the contemporary religious rhetoric, Larson and Osborne denounce religious divisions especially related to dogma. Reading these sections of Larson and Osborne is a reminder that modern religious divisions, especially among conservative and mainstream Christians in the United States, are not new. Larson and Osborne viewed the dominant religious forces of their day as attempting to force people into an 'us versus them' mentality where the world is divided into Christians and non-Christians. This dynamic is not unlike modern divisions between conservative, fundamentalist Christians and more mainstream Christians and the non-religious in the U.S. which were heightened by political rhetoric driving U.S. Republican political campaigns throughout the 2000s. Seeking to move away from these divisions caused by religion, Larson and Osborne advocate for a 'both-and' approach which seeks to be inclusive rather than divisive. Again, this element of dogmatic or religious inclusivity is a hallmark of the modern-day Emerging Church.

However, it would be a vast overstatement to suggest the Emerging Church began with the publication of Larson and Osborne's book in 1970 or even that the text occupies a canonical place in the mental bookshelves of modern leaders. While many of the key ideas were laid out in this text, the movement itself did not begin gaining momentum in the U.S. or worldwide until the 1990s at the very earliest, and it was not until the 2000s that it began moving in earnest. The thirty years between the publication of *The Emerging Church* and when the movement gained popularity were witness to some unique socio-historical events within the field of religion that precipitated the development of the Emerging Church. Marti and Ganiel (2014) give a very detailed account of the

organisational origins of the movement in both the United States and UK, articulating how wider cultural trends manifested themselves in a youth driven re-imagining of religion centred around creation and skepticism. While there are too many specific historical factors to detail here, there are two in particular that are worth noting as they provide the shape and contour of both Emerging Church practice and membership.

First and foremost, the rise of the mega-church movement in the United States and Europe played a key role in creating a void that could only be filled by a religious group with an anti-institutional bent (Bielo 2011; Packard 2012). Organisational scholars have long noted that dominant organisational forces or types create the necessary social conditions for counter-organisations to arise which oppose the dominant model (Rothschild and Russell 1986). The modern mega-church movement clearly played this role in creating the social conditions necessary for the Emerging Church which opposes the institutionalised mega-church in nearly every way with regard to organisation, theological orientation and practice, though not, necessarily, with regard to specific beliefs. At issue here is not anything specific to a mega-church or even to the defining characteristic of the mega-church size.

Rather the mega-church is the most modern and full expression of institutionalisation in organised religion, particularly in the United States which has been free from state sponsored religion (Ellingson 2007). As I detail extensively in *The Emerging Church: Religion at the Margins*, the Emerging Church is an effort to resist precisely this institutionalisation in religion. Marti and Ganiel (2014) reaffirm this basic conclusion in their book *The Deconstructed Church*. Taking a cue from organisational theories of corporate growth, the modern mega-church was designed from the ground up to appeal to large numbers of people via market research and has exerted substantial influence over the culture while extending tremendous social and cultural power to the pastors of these congregations (Packard 2012). The Emerging Church, then, exists in the gulf created by the hyper-institutionalisation in religion most exemplified in the modern mega-church.

Second, the last half of the twentieth century was witness to a precipitous decline in the amount of trust young people in the United States and Western Europe expressed in their social institutions in general and in religious leaders in particular (Packard 2012). The televangelist scandals in the United States and the Catholic sex abuse scandals on both continents served to seriously erode whatever trust an increasingly secular society might have had in religious leaders. In the United States, this was coupled with the increasing influence of conservative evangelical leaders in politics throughout the early 2000s (Bielo 2011). All of these things served to create a perception that organised

religion was not looking out for the best interest of the people in the pews, but rather was simply an attempt by some individuals to increase their own power.

Participatory Production

The distrust in religion as an institution resulted in an effort to de-institutionalise corporate religion. One of the hallmark features of the Emerging Church, then, is a focus on participation from all members and a bottom-up or flat organisational structure rather than the markedly top-down bureaucracies that produced so much of the religious dissatisfaction among those who would become Emerging Church congregants. Bielo (2011: 70–98), an anthropologist, details the participatory worship style characteristic of Emerging Church congregations extensively in his book *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* and his detailed description is echoed in works by other social scientists (Chia 2011; Wollschlager 2012) and those within the movement itself (Gibbs and Bolger 2005; Kimball 2003). Additionally, Marti and Ganiel's *The Deconstructed Church* and my own work provide numerous first-hand accounts of participatory worship in the Emerging Church. Indeed, it is this feature, more than anything else, that attracts the attention of outsiders be they social scientists, members of the media, or potential congregants.

Emerging Church services contain practices that are far too varied to document even in this essay, but they consist of a range including meditation, yoga, asynchronic collective worship at stations, traditional liturgy, group discussion and a myriad of other practices. Many of these practices are centred around the arts and a connection with what Bielo (2009, 2011) terms an 'ancient-future' spiritual orientation wherein modern religious practices are designed to connect believers to the history of practice within their own religious tradition as a way of moving Christianity and the church forward.

Multiple sources confirm that both leaders and participants within the Emerging Church understand the highly participatory practices of the Emerging Church to be a vital method for creating a worship experience and religious organisation that resists stagnation, concentration of power and organisational rigidity. In all ways, the Emerging Church focus on participatory production stands in stark contrast to the rigid, highly produced and choreographed worship services found in either traditional Christianity (for example, the Catholic worship service) or modern evangelicalism (for example, the praise and worship service).

The focus on production does not pertain solely to the worship service. Indeed, Emerging Church theology is similarly built around implied or direct

critique of the consumer model found in traditional organised religion. Aside from the rather acute issues of trust identified earlier, the more systematic critique levied at the traditional church by those in the Emerging Church has to do with relevance. Traditional theology, they feel, is not responsive enough to the needs and experiences of a modern or post-modern existence. The theology being practiced in the Emerging Church thus retains, for the most part, the highly participative nature of the worship services. Academic accounts largely confirm what movement insiders claim to be true, namely that if there is such a thing as an Emerging Church theology which is developing, it is centred around trying to get people to be more contextual and reflective in the development of a personal faith within a Christian context. These accounts, both academic and otherwise, are filled with descriptions and metaphors which de-emphasise the structural position of pastors and other Emerging Church leaders by portraying them as 'guides', 'facilitators' or, as one pastor recently told me, "professional question askers". In other words, the theology present in the Emerging Church is not one developed by pastors and handed down to congregants unless one considers a commitment to avoiding dogma to be a theological stance.

The consistent focus on production de-centralises power both within any one organisation and within the movement overall, and serves to produce a kind of congregant that has a high degree of ownership over his/her own faith. Marti and Ganiel (2014) term this a strategic religiosity and Bielo (2011) and Wollschlager (2012) have noted the same phenomenon. In my own work, I draw on Ann Swidler's (1986) concept of 'unsettled' life to describe the commitment of those in the Emerging Church to a religious practice and theology that uses questioning and conversation to avoid religious rigidity (Packard 2012: 56–74). Conversation, in particular, is a concept that has been identified as central to the identity of the Emerging Church. The conversation as a theological orientation implies production with no pre-determined end or goal in mind. The only commitment needed is continued participation. George Sanders and I (2013) detailed how the use of conversation, both in practice and as a metaphor, provide a broad organising logic to much of what happens in the Emerging Church and keeps the Emerging Church firmly outside the bounds of mainstream religion.

This rather unique commitment to participatory production in both practice and belief make the Emerging Church difficult to co-opt by mainstream religious organisations. There is typically a significant amount of diffusion of practice between religious organisations even between different faith traditions, but the participatory commitment of the Emerging Church is difficult to fold into traditional paradigms. To be more specific, while congregations have

no trouble mimicking successful practices of other denominations or churches (for example, the rise of praise of worship services across evangelicalism in the United States), it is much more difficult to adopt the underlying commitment to the participatory process that characterises the Emerging Church because it represents a fundamental shift in power arrangements which is inherently threatening to institutional religious forms. The implication of this lack of diffusion, as I discuss below, is that the Emerging Church is able to wholly retain a set of beliefs and practices that appeals to a particular kind of churchgoer with virtually no competition from bigger and more resourced churches and denominations.

Church as Resistance

The theoretical insights generated by researchers generally point to the Emerging Church as an activity of resistance to modern, homogenising forces. Packard and Sanders (2013) draw on Deleuze and Guttari (1986; 2009) and treat the Emerging Church as a theoretical 'line of flight' out of the modern, contracting institutional forces which pervade all fields, including religion. We argue that the hallmarks of the Emerging Church discussed above, such as a commitment to 'conversation' as opposed to static statements of dogma and a desire for 'messiness' or relationship, exist as precise arrangements meant to create space in an overly rigid modern world for people to explore issues of faith outside conventional tropes of religious expression. We drew on ethnographic methods to show how the concept of messiness, a popular one within the Emerging Church, is used to emphasise process over product. Similar to the way movement insiders understand conversation, messiness implies the very opposite of rationalisation and manifests in the Emerging Church emphasis on relationships, generally intense commitment to local communities and insistence on theological deconstruction and examination. The celebration of messiness, they point out, is counter to modern, corporatising forces and becomes a key strategy for resisting institutionalisation.

Elsewhere, I have utilised a similar framework to explore how the Emerging Church provides theoretical insight into the construction of a resistant organisation, that is, an organisation which intentionally avoids isomorphic forces through a specific set of strategies (Packard 2011; Packard 2012). What I found in the course of my research was a level of intentionality by both movement leaders and congregants about avoiding structures that would push their congregation to look and act like a traditional denomination. In order to fend off these forces they enacted a set of strategies that would be peculiar for nearly

any other denomination or congregation. For example, they would explicitly limit the size of the congregation through intentional dissolution at a particular size or moving to a smaller building. Additionally, I encountered several other instances of these strategies such as buildings being sold to limit congregational growth and congregations where every position or group created came with an expiration date. In other words, they were planning for the end even before the position or group began, and they would hold to the plan regardless of traditional markers of success.

Examples of these things abound in the Emerging Church and all drive toward the idea that an organisation which is intentionally resistant can avoid becoming institutionalised and corporatised. In this way, the Emerging Church can serve both as a reflection of the larger social context and give shape to that context. As more people are drawn to these kinds of organisations in religion and other spheres it will inevitably impact the broader fields within which they are situated. Already with the Emerging Church we have seen mainline denominations and mega-churches attempting to adopt some of the more stylistic elements of the movement (while generally disregarding the underlying philosophy as discussed above). In fact, one could easily see the more recent push within mega-churches toward small groups with a focus on local communities as a direct result of the success of the Emerging Church at attracting people with a high degree of commitment to the organisation.

Marti and Ganiel (2014) similarly understand the Emerging Church as a setting which provides tremendous insight into how people resist institutional elements. Where I suggest that the Emerging Church appeals to a niche of people who are likely to resist institutionalisation in other parts of their lives (for example, shopping at farmer's markets as opposed to Wal-Mart), they find compelling reason to believe that the movement appeals much more broadly to a growing group of people who are looking for a religious expression which fits the dual values of community and individuality that are difficult to maintain simultaneously in many parts of modern life.

Contemporary social forces in the United States and Europe suggest that both the collective and the individual should be celebrated, but there are strikingly few ways for both to happen at once. This is true even in the field of religion where one might suspect that such opportunities would be more readily available. The Emerging Church, they point out, manages to bridge this divide by drawing on the concept of co-operative egoism. For their respondents, and indeed I would venture to say for mine as well, the hallmarks of cooperative egoism are a way of blending the necessarily collective stance of organised religion with the modern impulse pushing people, especially in Western culture, to retain and celebrate individuality at all costs.

James Bielo (2009, 2011) has described this as the ancient-future stance of the Emerging Church. He very clearly analyses how the Emerging Church appropriates or adopts ancient Christian practices (for example, labyrinth walking, meditation, original liturgies, etc.) but situates them in a modern context that privileges the individual. It is this ancient-future stance, argues Bielo, which those in the Emerging Church use to construct a sense of authenticity regarding their collective religious practices in opposition to the facade of modern religion they believe over-emphasises either the collective or the individual. Bielo's work does an excellent job at deconstructing the concept of authenticity which, while it resides at the core of what attracts people to the Emerging Church, remains the thing they are least able to articulate when asked. My own interviews have explored this topic, and beyond vague references to people in the Emerging Church being 'real' as opposed to 'fake', there was very little concrete agreement about what it meant to be authentic, although all agreed that the Emerging Church was an authentic version of religion and that the other places they had visited were not. Bielo's work shows that the construction of the authentic relies on connecting people to the larger forces of religion while simultaneously accentuating their individual relationship with God.

The Emerging Church in the Religious Marketplace: A Home for the De-churched

The Emerging Church movement survives and thrives by doing exactly the thing institutional expressions of religion, including traditional denominations and modern mega-churches have so far been unable to do. Namely, the Emerging Church attracts significant numbers of young people and people who would not otherwise be going to church. Often characterised as a home for the de-churched, as opposed to the unchurched, the Emerging Church has become somewhat of a home for people who do not find a religious identity with other churches. The ability of the movement to attract this demographic is what gives the Emerging Church attention and influence beyond its size. In general, the implications of the Emerging Church centre around its ability to retain an anti-institutional stance in the face of powerful homogenising forces.

The de-churched generally desire to be a part of a collective, worshipping body, but are turned off by the overly slick, produced and/or rigid forms of institutional religion they encounter in much of mainstream religion (Packard and Hope 2015). The respondents in my own research consistently echo what

is seen in the work of others, namely that they spent a lot of time searching for a church that fit before just giving up or eventually landing at an Emerging Church when nothing else worked. The most common complaint is that the other versions of Christianity were all just slightly altered, pre-packaged versions of the same religion. What they objected to was not one particular version or even all of them, but rather the very notion that religion could come pre-packaged. The de-churched are not, in other words, simply looking for a religious expression that suits their preconceived theological ideas. Rather, they are seeking for a place without a ready-made theology. Disagreement does not bother them, homogeneity does. It is no wonder, then, that they so often find a home in Emerging Church congregations.

Bielo (2009) and Harrold (2006) both pick up on this trend among Emerging Church congregants and term the orientation of the congregants as one of "deconversion". That is, Emerging Church members consistently turn away from large, organisational expressions of religion in favour of, well, nothing. Harrold's (2006: 79) point is that the Emerging Church represents a "turning from" rather than a "turning-to" orientation. While Bielo (2009) is quick to point out that there are still some structures which give definition to this expression of religion, most notably the ancient-future stance and a focus on being missional, he does affirm the general undercurrent. His own analysis points to two forces which pushed the people in the Emerging Church away from dominant forms of institutional religion, the rise of the suburban mega-church and coalescence of conservative Evangelicalism with political power. To be sure, these two specific forces are more prominent in the United States than anywhere else, but the idea of the Emerging Church as a turning away from dominant institutional forces finds credibility with continental observers as well, most notably in the writings of Sarah Katharine Moody (2010) and in the collection of articles for a special issue of *The International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* (Hall and Rowell 2006).

While this description certainly does not account for everyone in the Emerging Church, it does characterise a broad subset of the population. Furthermore, it is this group that attracts so much attention to the Emerging Church because these individuals, by their very nature, are not being attracted to religious organisations which many organisational scholars would argue are in a much better position to attract them. Churches with vastly more money, professionally trained staff, programmes, marketing teams, welcoming committees, evangelising committees, alternative worship liturgies, small group ministries, new member ministries and a whole host of other resources are virtually helpless in the face of the typically small, under-resourced Emerging Church congregations which rely heavily on volunteer labour and

non-credentialed ministers. Of course, it is precisely because of their infrastructure that the modern mega-church and denomination struggle to reach the de-churched.

The de-churched, or disaffiliated Christians, thus play a crucial role for the Emerging Church. First, they make up a key component of the core identity of the movement. The 'turning-from' orientation is what gives the Emerging Church a distinctiveness nearly all commentators recognise when they advance the claim that the Emerging Church is a reactionary movement. This is something claimed, in one form or another, by nearly all of the serious academic treatments of the Emerging Church movement. Second, the de-churched provide a built in market, to use language not always common to religious studies, of potential congregants.

Although there has been some discussion lately about the death of the Emerging Church movement (see below), it is unlikely that the Emerging congregations will ever entirely cease to exist. This is, in part, because of their appeal to the de-churched. On the one hand, we know that the de-churched exist and desire a corporate religious experience, and we also know that this need is not being met very well by other expressions of religion. Additionally, to continue using marketplace language, since there are so few other options for the de-churched, Emerging Church congregations are under no real pressure to do anything particularly well, other than resist becoming institutionalised in order to retain this segment of the market. Thus, the Emerging Church could theoretically exist at some small level with a membership comprised nearly entirely of the de-churched. Given the growing number of religiously unaffiliated, especially in the United States, this could be enough to sustain the Emerging Church into the foreseeable future.

Criticisms and Controversies

There are two central criticisms leveled at the Emerging Church movement, one from religious insiders and one from religious outsiders. Religious insiders who are critical of the Emerging Church typically condemn the movement for engaging in theological relativism which borders on heresy. The impulse in the Emerging Church to examine and incorporate elements from non-Christian faiths and traditions into worship and discussion combined with the general abstention from claiming a definitive set of beliefs, opens up the movement and individual congregations to these kinds of attacks. In my own background research with religious leaders outside of the Emerging Church, I did not once

come across a leader who was unaware of the movement. In nearly every case it was reported to me that that it was important to know what the Emerging Church was doing because, as one pastor told me, "It appeals to young people, and it is dangerously relativistic. You know, Christianity is good, Buddhism is good, Hinduism is good. And they never really come out and say what they believe. So we have to keep an eye on it." These concerns were repeated again and again throughout my own research and show up as well in the popular press criticisms about the Emerging Church most notably by Carson (2005) and DeYoung and Kluck (2008).

Although social scientists are not theologians and typically shy away from engaging in insider battles about truth, there is little evidence in the existing research about the Emerging Church to suggest that they are, in general, anything other than Protestant Christians at the core. True, their expressions do often take into account the way other people and cultures encounter the sacred, but in all of my fieldwork, I have never encountered a congregation or leader espousing anything other than a Christ-centred narrative oriented around the Gospels, and a central message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Similarly, alternative inter-faith expressions do not manifest themselves in the other academic accounts of the Emerging Church to any great extent. Individual congregants would often express much different and ecumenical theological views, but these beliefs rarely if ever made their way into teachings or widespread practice. However, the general commitment to keeping an open dialogue and inviting people to a conversation about faith necessarily means that relatively few theological requirements are placed on people in the movement, and there is much more room for people to explore various elements of their faith.

This attempt to cast as wide a net as possible stems, in part, from what movement insiders will claim is a commitment to diversity. When this term is used within the Emerging Church it generally means diversity in terms of race, income and age. While I have no doubt after many interviews with people in the movement about the sincerity of the desire for diversity, it remains a movement that is startlingly homogenous. As Lloyd Chia (2011: 250–338) has pointed out, this desire for diversity is more than simply lip service. There are real efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity that centre around the Emerging Church concept of conversation. However, as movement outsiders frequently note, the Emerging Church remains an inescapably young, white and generally well-educated movement, especially in the United States and the UK where the movement is most prominent. The desire for diversity, then, more often plays out as a commitment to participation. As I discuss above, everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate, and this creates a much more diverse

experience, but very few Emerging Churches are demographically diverse. While there has not been a systematic surveying of those in the Emerging Church, the homogeneity in race and age has been noted by a number of observational researchers (Packard 2012; Marti and Ganiel 2014). These observations confirm that the movement remains largely, though not exclusively, young, middle-class and white. As one of my own respondents told me tongue-in-cheek, "We are very diverse here. We have every kind of white person you can imagine." This being said, there is a real celebration of diversity when and where it exists, particularly with respect to gender and age (Packard 2012; Marti and Ganiel 2014).

In part, the two issues above can be linked together. The general deconstructionist theological approach promoted in the Emerging Church demands significant amounts of time, energy and theological literacy not typically required in other denominations or congregations (Bielo 2011; Chia 2011). As I explain to my Sociology of Religion students, the Emerging Church is like a store where everything is free, but there is nothing on the shelves, just a bunch of people standing around willing to help you build something. This echoes the concept of collective institutional entrepreneurship that Marti and Ganiel (2014) use to explain how people in the movement deconstruct and reconstruct religion as a collective project. They describe this process as one where people strategically select practices, liturgies, and rituals which suit their theological understandings while doing away with those that do not work as well. This theological approach, which demands intense examination, might be appealing to a more diverse audience, but it would not be surprising to discover that the people who have the right combination of human capital and disposable time to spend on such a project would be generally young and, for a variety of social reasons, white.

Future Directions

As the Emerging Church movement enters its third decade of serious activity, it is worth thinking a little bit about its future. With original movement leaders moving on or turning attentions elsewhere, there has recently been much discussion about the death of the Emerging Church among many prominent movement insiders and bloggers (Marti and Ganiel 2014). I tend to agree with this assessment. Namely, what is at issue here is not so much the death and life of the Emerging Church as a movement, but of the spread Emerging Church and the various practices contained within the movement into other religious groups and forms. Whether the actual Emerging Church movement lives on or

sputters out, the burgeoning academic treatments of the Emerging Church all suggest that the movement is tapping into important social forces and it is likely that the spirit of the Emerging Church, as well as specific practices will live on long into the future. Indeed, I find compelling evidence to believe that it is even likely that these ideas and potentially even the movement itself will gain momentum in the coming years, but I am not a social movements expert, and thus far, there have been no systematic analyses of the Emerging Church as a social movement.

However, the collective lack of understanding among current social science treatments of the Emerging Church as a social movement provides an opening for future scholars to fill an area of need. Good scholarship is required to help us understand not just whether the Emerging Church will persist as a movement, a question perhaps only interesting to sociologists of religion. More importantly, creative analyses combining social movement theory and organisational theory are needed to determine how the ideas of the Emerging Church diffuse into other religious spheres and, indeed, into other fields altogether.

Additionally, there are still some very obvious holes in our understanding of the Emerging Church that need to be addressed. Perhaps chief among these is a better accounting of the scope and depth of the movement. We know very little about the number of congregations that could be classified as 'Emerging'. Longitudinal studies are also necessary to see how Emerging Church congregations deal with institutional forces over time. Are they able to sustain their resistant orientation indefinitely? If not, why? Relatedly, we still do not quite understand how the Emerging Church fits in with other contemporary religious trends (for example, neo-monasticism, house-church). There are many people who cross between these religious identities and good scholarship in this area would explore the Emerging Church identity as a potentially symptomatic response by some to living in an overly homogenised and commodified world.

Also, some basic questions about membership remain unanswered. How do congregants come to hear about and attend an Emerging Church? How long do they typically stay? How involved are they in their congregations relative to other religious people? What causes people to leave their Emerging Church congregation? Beginning to answer these questions will shed insight into the connection between Emerging Church ideology and practice. While most researchers find a strong connection between intention and activity in the Emerging Church, we need to know if this relationship persists over time.

Perhaps most importantly, there is an immediate need to identify the ideological and organisational elements of the Emerging Church fields other than

religion. Do we find these same trends in politics, business, education and other social institutions? Is it possible that the organisational strategies of the Emerging Church are being implemented elsewhere or is this peculiar to religion for some reason? Are the people who attend Emerging Churches also seeking out ways to avoid overly institutionalised organisations and processes in other parts of their lives? If so, is this a small subset of people who have always existed but been underserved by religion and other social institutions or is this a modern phenomenon?

Scholarship on the Emerging Church is growing quickly. When I proposed my dissertation to my committee in early 2006 they required, as good committees do, that I track down existing academic treatments of the Emerging Church. The complete absence of scholarship in this area nearly forced me to shift topics altogether. However, the special issue of the *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* referenced above appeared later that year and contained enough socially scientific material to get the ball rolling. The ensuing ten years has seen scholarship in this area move at a highly productive clip. There are now three full-length books on different academic presses devoted solely to the Emerging Church Movement. James Bielo's *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity* appeared in 2011, my own book *The Emerging Church: Religion at the Margins* came out in 2012 and Gerardo Marti and Gladys Ganiel have recently released *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*.

Additionally, recent years have seen journal articles about the Emerging Church in *The Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *Sociological Inquiry, American Ethnologist, Religion, Religions*, and *Review of Religious Research* among others. There have also been multiple papers presented at conferences over the years and a special session at the 2013 annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion about the Emerging Church. As well, I am personally aware of numerous manuscripts in the works that could easily see social science scholarship about the Emerging Church double in the next few years. All of this activity indicates that academics see the Emerging Church as worth studying because it is reflective of larger social forces. Indeed the inclusion of this essay in a Brill Handbook is a strong indication of the academic interest in the Emerging Church.

The continued interest in the Emerging Church by academics indicates that we learn something about broader trends within religion and modern society as a whole by continuing to examine this relatively small group of Christians. Every serious treatment of the movement concludes that the Emerging Church is a unique space in the field of religion which is somehow reflective of shifting societal norms. The proposed directions for future research laid out above are

not suggested in order to simply account for the Emerging Church better. Rather, it is clear that a more complete and accurate analysis of the Emerging Church movement is a potential key into a more complete and accurate understanding of how many people are experiencing life in our modern society.

Too often, the margins of a particular field get ignored as outliers or used to comment about mainstream practices. Scholarship about the Emerging Church has thus far largely resisted these directions, and instead we are learning a great deal about groups and organisations which intentionally exist at the margins of a field and why people in contemporary society are systematically drawn to these groups. In sum, the Emerging Church remains worthy of study and scientific inquiry not because of its size, widespread appeal or market penetration, and not because of its uniqueness and peculiarities, but because of what it represents, who it attracts, and how it manages to avoid both institutional co-option and irrelevance. In this way, the movement defies existing theories and opens up room for new theoretical insights.

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CHAPTER 15

Healed by Death

Santa Muerte, the Curandera

R. Andrew Chesnut

Introduction: Death Personified

Some readers will have come across Santa Muerte on trips to Mexico, while others will have encountered her as decals on cars and trucks or as votive candles in supermarkets in Los Angeles, Houston, New York, and other U.S. cities with large Mexican immigrant communities. But most, I suspect, are meeting Saint Death for the first time. I ask those already familiar with her to bear with me as I briefly introduce her to who have not encountered skeleton saint before.

As her name would indicate, Santa Muerte is a Mexican folk saint who personifies death. Whether as a plaster statue or on a votive candle, gold medallion, or prayer card she is most often depicted as a female Grim Reaper (Grim Reapress), wielding the same scythe and wearing a shroud similar to her male counterpart. Unlike official saints, who have been canonised by the Catholic Church, folk saints are spirits of the dead considered holy for their miracle-working powers. In Mexico and Latin America in general such folk saints as Niño Fidencio, Jesús Malverde, Maximón, and San La Muerte (the Argentine counterpart of Santa Muerte) command widespread devotion and are often sought out more than the official saints.

For the most part the Catholic Church in the region has looked the other way on these homegrown saints. However, when they have achieved a certain level of mass appeal the Church has moved to vilify and repress certain folk saints. Such is the case with Santa Muerte who in April of 2013 was condemned by the president of the Pontifical Council of Culture, Giancarlo Ravasi, who in a four day visit to Mexico City denounced the cult of the skeleton saint as 'anti-religion' and 'blasphemy' on four separate occasions (Chesnut 2013). Mexican bishops have recently followed suit with the archbishop of Oaxaca in October of 2013 threatening excommunication of Catholics who venerate Saint Death (Chesnut 2013).

The great majority of folk saints, unlike the official ones, were born and died on Latin American soil. Niño Fidencio, for example, was a *curandero* (folk healer) in early twentieth-century Mexico, while Pedro Batista led a religious commune in the backlands of Brazil during the same period. Thus folk saints

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are united to their devotees by nationality and often by both locality and social class. A Mexico City street vendor explained the appeal of Santa Muerte to her, saying, "She understands us because she is a battle-ax (*cabrona*) like us". In contrast, Mexicans would never refer to the Virgin of Guadalupe as a *cabrona*, which is also often used to mean 'bitch'. Where the Skinny Lady (*la Flaquita*, one of many of her common monikers) differs from other folk saints, including the skeleton saints of Argentina (San La Muerte) and Guatemala (Rey Pascual), is that for most devotees she is the personification of death itself and not of a deceased human being.

The very name Santa Muerte says much about her identity. *La muerte* means death in Spanish and is a feminine noun (denoted by the feminine article 'la') as it is in all Romance languages. A few casual observers of the White Girl (*la Niña Blanca*) have erroneously attributed her female identity to the feminine gender of the word 'la muerte' in Spanish. However, the fact that both the Guatemalan and Argentine saints of death are male figures shows there must be other explanations for the saint's female identity. In any case, she and the Argentine San La Muerte are the only saints in the Americas that actually include the word 'death' in their names. For devotees and non-believers alike, it is obvious that the hollow stare of the skeleton saint is the gaze of death.

'Santa', the first part of her name, is also revealing. It is the feminine version of 'santo', which can be translated as 'saint' or 'holy', depending on the usage. For example, *Espíritu Santo* is translated as Holy Spirit, while Santa Bárbara becomes Saint Barbara. While many mistakenly refer to the White Sister (*la Hermana Blanca,* yet another popular nickname) as Holy Death in English, I think Saint Death is a more accurate translation, which better reveals her identity as a folk saint and distinguishes her from the concept of good or holy death. Santa Muerte is first and foremost an unofficial saint who heals, protects and delivers devotees to their destinations in the after-life. The word 'holy' expresses her sacredness but lacks the personification implied by the term 'saint'. Having said this, there is a variant of her name, Santísima Muerte, which is best translated as 'Most Holy Death'. The difference here is the Spanish superlative suffix '-ísima'. Devotees tend to call her 'Santisma Muerte' in their rituals such as the Santa Muerte rosary. Thus her name, Santa Muerte, and her myriad nicknames, neatly reveal her identity as a female, Mexican folk saint who personifies death. Readers who speak Spanish will know that the 'San' (an abbreviation of the masculine 'santo') in San La Muerte denotes the male identity of the Argentine saint.

No introduction to Saint Death would be complete without brief consideration of one of her most unique characteristics—her gender. While folk saints

abound in the Americas, and other supernatural skeletons work miracles in Guatemala and Argentina, Santa Muerte stands alone as the sole female saint of death from Argentina to Canada. Her asexual skeletal form contains no hint of femaleness. Rather, it is her attire and, to a lesser extent, her hair that mark the saint as female. Devotees and manufacturers of mass-produced images of the Bony Lady usually dress her as a nun, the Virgin, a bride, or a queen. Red and black medieval tunics, white bridal gowns, and flowing bright coloured satin robes normally cover her skeletal body, leaving only her bony hands, feet, and face exposed.

Like her male cousins, San La Muerte and Rey Pascual, the Godmother typically sports a bald skull. However, following the lead of the great devotional pioneer Enriqueta Romero (affectionately known as Doña Queta), many devotees adorn their statuettes with brown and black wigs. In fact, one enterprising Santa Muertista runs a thriving business in Mexico City where devotees bring their statuettes to be dressed and coifed so they look like the Pretty Girl (*la Niña Bonita,* yet another sobriquet). But more than just a Pretty Girl, Santa Muerte is most importantly the Powerful Lady (*la Dama Poderosa*) whose miracle working skills make her the most potent of Mexican folk saints and a rival of the national patroness, Guadalupe and the wildly popular Saint Jude (Thaddeus), patron of lost causes.

Devoted to Death

It is precisely her reputation for being a prompt and efficacious miracle worker that has propelled the meteoric growth of her cult since 2001. A brief profile of the devotees of Saint Death will shed light on her tremendous popularity. Since her cult is generally informal and unorganised and only became public twelve years ago, it is impossible to know exactly how many Mexicans and Mexican and Central American immigrants in the United States are among her devotees. The other great devotional pioneer, 'Father' David Romo, founder of the first Santa Muerte church, in Mexico City, told me and members of the Mexican press, in separate interviews, that some five million Mexicans venerate the Angel of Death. When I questioned him about how he arrived at such a figure, he explained that he is in contact with believers throughout both Mexico and the United States who give him estimates of the size of the cult in their cities, towns, and regions.

That approximately five percent of the Mexican population of 100 million would be devotees of Saint Death doesn't seem far-fetched in light of other evidence of her popularity. Sales of her paraphernalia (votive candles, figurines,

prayer cards, etc.) at the thousands of shops (*hierberias* and *tiendas esotéricas*) and market stalls that sell religious articles, magic potions and powders, and 'medicinal herbs' across Mexico and in many larger cities in the United States dwarf those of other saints. One shopkeeper after another told me that for the past seven years or so clients have been buying more Saint Death products than anything else, including San Judas Tadeo (Saint Jude). In Morelia, Guillermina, whose father owns three esoterica shops in town, stated that since 2004 the Skinny Lady has accounted for approximately half of the total sales at their three stores. She occupies much more shelf and floor space than any other saint at each of the dozens of shops and market stalls that I have visited over the past five years. And the street vendors who sell a colourful array of goods to motorists stuck in traffic waiting to cross the border into the United States offer far more figurines of Santa Muerte than any other saint, even Guadalupe. Finally, the monthly worship service, called the 'rosary', at Doña Queta's landmark shrine in the rough-and-tumble Mexico City barrio of Tepito, attracts several thousand faithful.

For the past seven years the Bony Lady has been accompanying her devotees in their crossings into the United States and has established herself along the two thousand–mile-long border and in cities with Mexican immigrant communities. Unsurprisingly, it is border towns such as El Paso, Brownsville, and Laredo where evidence of her cult is strongest. Her Grim Reapress image, in the form of black and white decals, rides on the back windows (often darkly tinted) of countless pickups and SUVs, announcing both the occupants' devotion and her growing presence. At the same type of religious paraphernalia shops as those found in Mexico, merchants along the gritty border do a brisk business selling Santa Muerte incense, lotions, and, above all, votive candles. Much of the TV news coverage of her rapidly increasing cult in this country has been provided by local stations in these border cities. As one might imagine, these news reports tend to be sensationalistic, playing up Saint Death's alleged ties to drug trafficking, murder, and even human sacrifice.

North of the border area the Godmother hears the prayers and petitions of Mexican and (to a lesser extent) Central American immigrants who ask her for the favour of getting ahead in their new land. Los Angeles, Houston, Phoenix, and New York, with their large Mexican and Central American communities, are obvious places to find the Powerful Lady protecting her faithful. Home to the largest Mexican immigrant population in the country, Los Angeles is the American Mecca of the cult of the skeleton saint. In addition to at least two religious-article stores bearing her name (Botanica Santa Muerte and Botanica De La Santa Muerte), the City of Angels offers devotees two temples where they can thank the Angel of Death for miracles granted or ask her for the favours

of health, wealth, and love. Casa de Oracion de la Santisma Muerte (Most Holy Death House of Prayer) and Templo Santa Muerte (Temple Saint Death) stand as the first two temples dedicated to her cult in the country. The latter offers 'masses', weddings, baptisms, and rosary and healing services. The gothic-inspired Templo Santa Muerte website[1] broadcasts devotional music and some of the masses.

Houston, where I lived for eleven years, doesn't have any public houses of worship yet, but the White Sister appears on votive candles and packages of incense, among other products, on hundreds of shelves at local supermarkets and religious-articles shops. In June of 2009, as I was exiting the parking lot of Fiesta (a large local supermarket chain catering to Latinos, especially Mexicans) in central Houston, I spotted a four-feet-tall white statue of the saint riding in the bed of a late-model Ford pickup. The truck's tinted rear window also sported a decal of Most Holy Death. Devotees in the Bayou City can choose from at least three religious-articles shops that bear Santa Muerte's name.

Beyond these big cities, devotees and the curious can even find the skeleton saint in towns with relatively small Mexican immigrant communities. When I got the call to write this book I was sure that I wouldn't be able to find her in my new hometown of Richmond, Virginia. Unlike Houston and Los Angeles, where Latinos make up half the population, the capital of Virginia can't even claim a population of 10 percent. Nonetheless, to my great surprise I found both votive candles and even statuettes of the Pretty Girl in two mini-marts in a part of town that is not predominantly Latino. The Salvadoran clerk at the grocery store catering to her *paisanos* (compatriots) eyed me suspiciously (probably thinking of the DEA, ICE, or FBI) when I asked her about sales of Santa Muerte votive candles and statuettes, but she nevertheless revealed that the former sell well, much better than the more expensive plastic figurines. Across the street at Bodega Latina, which caters more to Mexicans, the affable young clerk from Guadalajara didn't seem to take me for an agent of the law and enthusiastically reported that the votive candles sell very well and that she sees more signs of devotion to Saint Death in Richmond than in Guadalajara. My wife, who was with me at the time, and I both suspected that she hadn't been back to Mexico for a while. In any case, over the past seven years, the Skinny Lady has accompanied tens of thousands of her devoted followers across the border and into the big cities and smaller towns of this country, wherever they try to make a new life for themselves.

Santa Muerte has devoted followers from all walks of life. High school students, middle-class housewives, taxi drivers, drug traffickers, politicians,

1 La Templo Santa Muerte, http://templosantamuerte.com.

musicians, doctors, and lawyers all are among the ranks of the faithful. Rodrigo is a successful twenty-something lawyer whom I met at Doña Queta's famous shrine in Tepito. He was there with a white candle in hand to give thanks to the White Girl for freeing him from kidnappers. Also at Doña Queta's was Claudia, a thirty-three-year-old accountant, who became a believer in the saint's miraculous powers on the operating table. Before an operation for a lung infection, Claudia's surgeon gave her a statuette of the Powerful Lady and suggested that Claudia invoke her healing powers. Like so many others who come to the Tepito shrine, Claudia was there to give thanks to Santa Muerte for having been cured of an illness.

Death, the Healer

In the 1960 Mexican film *Macario*, based on B. Traven's 1950 novella, death appears in the form of a fellow Mexican peasant to a starving *campesino*, Macario. Macario has gone on a hunger strike in his colonial-era village in protest against his own poverty, refusing to eat until he is able to sit down and enjoy an entire roast turkey by himself. Unwilling to let her husband starve to death, Macario's wife steals a big bird and roasts it to perfection for her severely debilitated spouse. The emaciated *campesino* finds a quiet spot outdoors to enjoy his turkey in peace. But three successive visitors won't allow the poor peasant to eat. The devil, disguised as a suave gentleman; God, looking like Father Time; and Death, appearing as a fellow *campesino*, all ask Macario to share his roasted delicacy with them. Figuring that both the devil and God have the wherewithal to get their own birds, Macario sends them packing. However, he accepts Death's request to share the turkey, and in gratitude the hungry Grim Reaper grants Macario the ability to heal the sick with holy water, with the proviso that if Death appears at the headboard of a sickbed, Macario must concede the life in question to Death. In no time, the impoverished woodcutter becomes a famous healer in the town, saving the apparently terminally ill from the clutches of the Grim Reaper. All goes well until Macario attempts to defy death, when he appears at the headboard of the sick son of the viceroy. The film ends with Macario's wife finding him dead, albeit with a contented look on his face, next to the half-eaten turkey.

Although in *Macario* death takes the form of the Grim Reaper of European lore and not of Santa Muerte, it's revealing that the power he grants the starving woodcutter is that of healing the sick. Of all the rich paradoxes present in the cult of the Bony Lady, perhaps her status as a powerful healer is one of the most intriguing. In stark contrast, death in western cultures has typically been

viewed as a bringer of disease and pestilence. Recall that the image of the Grim Reaper was born during the Black Death, which sent a large percentage of Europeans to early graves.

The idea of death as a healing agent, however, does exist in both Germanic and Mexican folklore. Indeed, B. Traven found inspiration for *Macario* in the German fairy tale 'Godfather Death', popularised by the Grimm brothers and also in a Mexican variant of the tale. The Grimm brothers' account casts Death in the role of godfather of a poor boy who becomes a famous physician using a healing ointment contained in a special flask given to him by his godfather. With the exception of the boy's romantic interest in the king's beautiful daughter, the tale is essentially the same as *Macario*. Interestingly, the poor boy's father chooses Death to be his thirteenth child's godfather after rejecting offers from both God and the devil. The boy's father rejects God for favouring the rich while letting the poor starve. And while the devil tempts the poor man with large sums of gold, he is sent packing for being a deceiver of humankind. The impoverished father, however, likes what he hears when he meets Death on the road and asks him who he is. "I am Death, who makes everyone equal". The father of thirteen responds enthusiastically, "You are the right one. You take away the rich as well as the poor, without distinction. You shall be my child's godfather".[2] Santa Muertistas echo the sentiment of the poor man in the Grimm tale when they say that one of the most appealing attributes of their Godmother is that she "doesn't discriminate".

In one of the Mexican variants of the story, "Godmother Death," the Grim Reapress is female (La Parca) and becomes the boy's godmother. As in the other versions, Death bestows healing powers upon her godson, who defies his godmother by attempting to prolong the life of the woman he loves. His punishment is swift and just. His gloomy godmother blows out the two candles that represent his life and that of his lover. In classic romantic tragedy form, the two young lovers perish at the same time.

Thus drawing on both European and Mexican cultural antecedents in which death possesses awesome curing powers and tapping into the well-established tradition of saints (both canonised and folk) who heal through faith, Santa Muerte in just over a decade has become one of the greatest healers on the Mexican religious landscape. Judging by the small number of purple votive candles at her altars and shrines, one would surmise that miracles of recovered health don't figure as an important part of the cult. Here, however, looks are deceiving. Many devotees seeking healing or giving thanks for restored health offer white or yellow candles instead of the newer and less popular purple

2 Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Godfather Death."

ones. The yellow jar candle has a specific association with recovery from substance abuse, while white tends to be employed for all types of health problems. That three different colours of candles are associated with the quest for health reveals the paramount importance of the Powerful Lady's role as a supernatural physician.

More than Death

The supreme importance of faith healing in the cult of Saint Death won't surprise readers who are familiar with popular religion in Latin America. In my previous work on Pentecostalism in Brazil, I showed how the dialectic between poverty-related illness and faith healing has catapulted this branch of charismatic Protestantism to the front and centre of the Brazilian religious landscape as well as much of the Latin American (Chesnut 1997). Convert after convert in the Amazonian city of Belém revealed to me how they had converted to the Foursquare Gospel Church, God Is Love or some other denomination in the midst of an acute health crisis, which in the case of women was just as likely to be that of a family member as their own. For impoverished Latin Americans, the Pentecostal Jesus is, above all, the Physician of Physicians, curing his patients of their earthly afflictions. In the same vein, one of the primary functions of the saints in Latin America, both canonised and folk, is to cure devotees of their ailments. Some Latin American folk saints, such as Niño Fidencio, who lived in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo León in the first decades of the twentieth century, were actually renowned faith healers in their eras. Moreover, it wouldn't be far-fetched to argue that the most acclaimed saints in the region are generally those that have earned a reputation for being powerful healers.

Death and Disease

Whereas the skeleton saint has quickly earned a reputation for being a formidable *curandera*, her male counterparts in Guatemala and Argentina were actually conceived as faith healers. Guatemalan folk saint Rey Pascual's foundation myth is an intriguing account of Catholic and Mayan syncretism in which the original Spanish saint, Pascual Bailón, morphs into the skeletal folk saint who is venerated today in Olintepeque and also Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state. The canonised saint, Pascual Bailón was a Franciscan friar from Aragón who lived during the second half of

the sixteenth century and was known as a mystic and contemplative. He was beatified by the Church in 1618, just a couple decades after his death, and then canonised in 1690. Although he never set foot in the New World, his apparition in Guatemala in 1650 to a deathly ill Mayan man is credited with ending a virulent epidemic.

According to legend, the Spanish saint appeared in the form of a tall skeleton in luminescent robes at the deathbed of a prominent Kaqchikel man and presented himself as Saint Pascual, even though it would be forty more years until he was canonised. In the classic quid pro quo relationship that pervades popular religion in Latin America, the skeleton saint offered to end the epidemic in the Kaqchikel region of present day Ciudad Vieja, Sacatepéquez, if the community adopted him as their patron saint. In proof of his saintly powers, Pascual predicted that in nine days the recipient of the vision would succumb to his high fever while at the same time the epidemic would run its course. As word of the Spanish saint's correct prediction spread, his image, much to the dismay of the Spanish Inquisition, became increasing popular in the region during the colonial period (Feldman 1999: 23–26). Over time Rey Pascual has expanded his repertoire to become the multi-tasking miracle worker that he is today. However, his first miracle as the new skeletal folk saint in Guatemala was one of healing, and this particular miraculous power remains at the core of the skeleton king's present-day mission.

In a similar vein, one of the most common myths pertaining to the origin of Argentine skeleton saint, San La Muerte, revolves around disease and healing. In the late Spanish colonial period a renowned shaman took care of abandoned lepers in a remote area of the present day province of Corrientes. Some accounts identify the shaman as a Franciscan friar or Jesuit who remained in the colony after his order's expulsion. His charitable work of bringing water and tending to the needs of the leper colony came to an abrupt halt with the return of the Catholic Church to the region. Upon entering a village one day to tend to the ill, the shaman, at the request of local priests, was arrested and imprisoned with the lepers. As a protest of his unjust punishment, the shaman refused to eat, sit, or lie down. Supported by a long upside-down L-shaped walking stick, the shaman slowly withered away. His erect, robed skeleton was discovered much later (Graziano 2007: 77).

Centuries later, San La Muerte still spends much of his time attending to the infirm. In August 2010, a devotee left the following petition at one of the online virtual altars:

> Glorious little saint, today I come to you in a bad state. At 5:00 they're going to take NRL to the hospital for his operation tomorrow. Please make

> everything turn out fine. And if this is the result of harm sent his way, allow me to see it, and use your scythe to get those responsible out of our way, so they disappear from our lives and from the world—all of them, but especially MBL. Amen.

This, of course, is really a twofold supplication involving the purple candle for healing and the black for vengeance. Quite often in the all three cults of the skeleton saints, one person's healing is another person's harm.

You will recall that the inchoate public cult of Santa Muerte has yet to establish a unified myth of origin. However, evidence of her importance as a faith healer abounds in the prayers, rituals, and testimonials of devotees. Along with prayers for protection and prosperity, those for health figure most prominently in *La Biblia de la Santa Muerte*. Many Santa Muertistas make a living doing manual labour, so keeping their bodies healthy is imperative. Physical illness that prevents the individual from working can have disastrous financial consequences. The Saint Death 'Prayer for Bodily Health' was surely composed with this in mind:

> Most Holy Death, protectress, owner and Lady of life. Angel whom our Father created in order to help and serve. Today I implore and beseech you to grant me health and life for (name of person). May his days on earth be long, may his body recover its vigor and energy. You, who can do everything, save him and restore his health. I implore you, I ask it to you on this day, at this time for the sake of Jesus Christ, victor on the cross, be moved by my plea and bring him back.[3]

Deadly Drugs

In addition to healing the broken bodies of her devotees, the Powerful Lady helps her flock overcome their abuse of alcohol and other drugs. That the cult of Saint Death offers a specific votive candle—the yellow one—and special prayers for devotees trying to kick the habit gives testament to the importance of her role as a supernatural rehab counselor. Precise figures on the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse among Mexicans and Americans don't exist, but most estimates indicate that between 5 and 10 percent of the United States population are alcoholics. Based on both academic studies and my own personal experience in Mexico and the United States, I can attest to a pattern of

3 *La Biblia de la Santa Muerte*, 27–28.

binge drinking among a sizeable minority of men. In contrast to the classic European pattern of consuming small quantities frequently, such as a glass or two of wine with dinner, millions of Mexican and American men imbibe vast quantities of hard liquor and beer in drinking bouts that tend to take place on weekends. I myself have joined male friends and relatives in such outings and have been ridiculed for calling it quits after a few rounds of drinks. In accord with my own personal experience, one study posits that 75 percent of alcohol available in Mexico was consumed by just 25 percent of drinkers (Bennett et al. 1998), while in a very similar pattern another claims that in the United States 20 percent of drinkers consume 80 percent of the alcohol.

Beyond alcohol, the most commonly abused drug, addiction to the very same psychotropics that the Mexican cartels export in great quantities is on the rise. While the U.S. illicit drug market remains the largest in the world by far, the Mexican domestic one has grown considerably since the 1980s. Hundreds of new rehab centres have opened in the past couple decades that specialise in the abuse of methamphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy, and heroin, among others. No longer is the abuse of stimulants and narcotics only an "American problem". A young inmate in one of the Mexico City penitentiaries for women who claimed to have painted over a thousand images of the Bony Lady for fellow prisoners hadn't yet asked her spiritual patroness for help with recovery but explained that she held her hand when she got high in her cell to protect herself from a lethal overdose.[4] Here again we see the appeal of Saint Death's non-judgmental attitude. Devotees who aren't ready or willing to kick their habit can ask the Godmother to watch over them as they drug themselves. Drug abusers who are ready to battle their addiction can recite the "prayer for breaking a habit," as can their loved ones:

> Most Holy Death of the light of the moon. You who control the earthly dimension. You who spread joy and remind us that happiness is the goal of life before your arrival. Most Holy Death, do away with liquor, drugs, and other vices and bring tranquility to my home. Help (the name of the person) so that the blindfold comes off his eyes and transformation takes place. Show him clearly the reasons why vice must not take hold of our hearts so that it doesn't extinguish his inner light, and may your moon-colored wings alight on his spirit so that he feels your powerful presence. Most Holy Death, do away with liquor, drugs, and other vices and bring tranquility to my home. I sow seven seeds in the ground and may it be your name that cultivates the decision that leads to new circumstances,

4 In Eva Aridjis, *La Santa Muerte*.

> which through respect will open the doors of light. Most Holy Death, do away with liquor, drugs, and other vices and bring tranquility to my home. Protective and Blessed Death, by the virtue that God granted you, I want you to free me from all curses, dangers, and sickness, and instead give me luck, happiness, and money. I want you to give me friends and free me from my enemies. Also make (name of person) come to me in a humble way, like a lamb that lives up to its promises, to ask me for forgiveness. May he always be loving and submissive for the rest of our lives. Amen. (Pray three Lord's Prayers.).[5]

The prayer is obviously intended for family members and friends seeking the recovery of a loved one. And though written in gender-neutral language, it seems aimed at wives and girlfriends who suffer the consequences of having a drug-abusing mate. The request for Saint Death to bring the addict back humbled and submissive recalls the classic love-binding prayer stamped on the red candles, which, of course, is primarily for jilted women. Moreover, Mexican men become substance abusers at higher rates than women, so more often than not it is the wives, girlfriends, and mothers who approach the Lady of the Shadows asking that she return their men to the place of light, free from oppressive addictions.

A former prayer leader at Doña Queta's monthly rosary service, Jesse Ortiz Piña, sounds like a Pentecostal convert in describing how the White Girl helped him overcome his habits of frequent partying and beer drinking. Santa Muerte, he says, made him "more responsible at work and home".[6] Indeed, in my previous research on Pentecostalism in Brazil I discovered that a search for sobriety is the primary reason why men convert to this charismatic branch of Protestantism. Forty percent of my male interviewees in the Amazonian city of Belém became Pentecostals as a result of a desire to sober up. In a similar vein, a substantial percentage of female converts came to the Pentecostal Jesus hoping that he could cure their husbands and sons of their drinking problems (Chesnut 1997: 58). What is salient here is that for some adherents the skeleton saint operates as an evangelical faith healer who offers radical personal transformation along with the promise of overcoming drug abuse. Addictions to alcohol and the stimulants methamphetamine and cocaine are notoriously difficult to overcome, so it shouldn't be surprising that many abusers find the promise of complete transformation an appealing and often necessary stage on their road to recovery.

5 *La Biblia de la Santa Muerte*, 28–29.

6 Quoted in Eva Aridjis, *La Santa Muerte*.

Nonetheless, it's intriguing to think that the same saint whose altars are awash in tequila and beer and is not exactly a model of sobriety is able to offer the same type of radical healing of substance abuse that is offered by the Pentecostal Jesus and Holy Spirit. Since Pentecostals conceive of Jesus as a teetotaler, it's easier to understand how this moral miracle worker would serve as a better model of sobriety than would a parched skeleton saint. But herein lies one of the great advantages of Santa Muerte in the increasingly competitive religious marketplace of Mexico and even in the greatest faith economy on earth, that of the United States. Much more than Jesus, the canonised saints, and the myriad advocations of Mary, Santa Muerte's present identity is highly flexible. For some devotees, such as Jesse Piña, the Pretty Girl is also a moral miracle worker who, like Jesus and the saints, offers and encourages positive personal transformation as part of her healing repertoire.

For others she serves more as an amoral sorceress offering healing without demanding behaviour modification and sometimes even in conjunction with causing harm to others. Recall the aforementioned Argentine adherent of San La Muerte asking the skeleton saint to both facilitate a successful operation for her loved one and to "use your scythe to get those responsible out of our way, so they disappear from our lives and from the world—all of them, but especially MBL". As her cult develops in the future it's quite possible that a more fixed identity will be established. However, at this particular historical juncture, the Godmother possesses both distinctly Christian and non-Christian identities depending on how individual devotees perceive her.

Doctor Death

In asking Saint Death to vanquish their ailments, devotees not only have specific prayers at their disposal but also a number of rituals. La Biblia de la Santa Muerte, for example, contains five such ritual recipes for recovering both one's own health and that of loved ones. The 'first ritual for health' is representative of the genre:

1 medium stalk of rue
1 meter of purple ribbon
1 votive candle for health (purple)
1 bottle of Santa Muerte lotion
1 cigar
1 maguey leaf
1 black pen

> Procedure:
> With the black pen write down all your ailments on the ribbon and then use the ribbon to tie up the rue in a bunch. Apply a bit of the Santa Muerte lotion to the bunch of rue. Light the cigar and blow smoke over the rue.
>
> Next, cleanse your entire body with the rue, starting with your head and working down to your feet, making sure you pass the rue several times over the part of your body that's most ailing. As soon as you finish, wrap the rue in newspaper and throw it away.
>
> Take the sharp tip of the maguey leaf and write your full name along the width of the candle. Now cleanse your whole body with the candle, starting with your head and ending with your feet, again making sure to pass over the most affected body part several times. Light your candle and recite the prayer printed on it. It should burn in front of your Santa Muerte or place it on your altar, but always ask her to take care of your health.[7]

This ritual would seem very familiar to many Santa Muertistas, since, with the exception of the Santa Muerte lotion, both the ingredients and the act itself come directly from Mexican folk healing practices, or *curanderismo*. *Curanderismo* syncretically draws on Spanish, indigenous, and, to a lesser extent, African healing practices to offer ailing Mexicans a cheaper and more holistic alternative to Western medicine. Rue is a plant that was brought by the Iberians to the New World, where it continues to serve the same purpose that it did in Spain and Portugal, and even in ancient Greece. Much as garlic was believed to ward off vampires, rue was used in ancient Greece and is used in modern Mexico and much of Latin America to protect against witchcraft and the evil eye, which continues to be a widespread belief among the working classes of Ibero-America. Many Mexicans also brew the bitter herb into a medicinal tea that is thought to cure a wide range of maladies including headaches, dizziness, stiff neck, and inner ear problems.[8] Here in the Saint Death health ritual, rue serves as a kind of cleansing sponge that absorbs sickness as it's passed over the body of the afflicted. After the cleansing ritual, the contaminated rue is tossed in the garbage, where it won't be a potential contagion.

Two other ritual ingredients serve to enhance the cleansing power of the rue. Since purple is the cult's primary colour of healing, the ribbon of this hue, which is tied around the rue, reinforces the herb's curing power. Of all the

7 *La Biblia de la Santa Muerte*, 53–54.

8 Cosmetic Laser Universe website, http://www.cosmeticlaseruniverse.com/Herbal-Medicines-and-Cosmetic-Laser-Treatments-188.html.

ritual ingredients, the cigar has the most powerful link to healing, despite being a carcinogen. Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas smoked, chewed, and drank tobacco tea for inter-related medicinal and spiritual purposes. Today the use of cigars and cigarettes in both folk healing practices and African-diasporan religions is ubiquitous. I myself have had tobacco smoke blown over my body on two occasions, once in Ecuador by a Quechua-speaking shaman and more recently by an aggressive Santa Muerte cult leader in Puebla, Mexico, who performed an unsolicited ritual on my wife and me. In any case, for most practitioners of the Saint Death health ritual, the cigar serves as a powerful agent and symbol of healing.

Like tobacco, maguey, also known as the century plant, links Mexican Santa Muertistas to their pre-Columbian past. The Aztecs used the plant for various maladies, such as topical wounds and gout.[9] Moreover, the Aztecs and other indigenous groups in central Mexico brewed the juice of the plant into a fermented drink called pulque, which contains substantial quantities of vitamin B and still serves as an important source of nutrition for a significant but diminishing number of impoverished *campesinos* in rural central Mexico (Steinkraus 1996, 394). Seeking stronger drink than pulque, Spanish colonists distilled the juices of the maguey and blue agave plant into mescal and tequila, respectively. Of course in the Santa Muerte healing ritual, the leaf of the plant serves as a writing instrument, not as a medicinal salve. Thus the multi-purpose maguey functions as an essential ingredient in this recipe for healing by lending its curative fibers to make an inscription on the votive candle. Like the rue, the purple votive candle also serves as a cleansing agent, absorbing affliction as it traces the body of the petitioner. The contagions collected in the purple candle are then symbolically incinerated as the wax is left to burn at the altar of Doctor Death.

As I reflect on Santa Muerte's role as a faith healer, I'm struck by two important final points. First, the mass media have systematically ignored her status as one of the most important healers in the Mexican religious marketplace. Always highlighting the sensational and the sordid in an effort to gain more readers and viewers, newspapers and TV networks focus almost exclusively on the black Saint Death candle of crime and violence. If I had limited my study of the Pretty Girl to journalistic sources, I would have ended up writing a monochromatic book presenting only the skeleton saint of the darkest of votive candles. Second, I continue to be intrigued by the fascinating paradox of the saint of death who heals broken bodies and in doing so adds a few more grains of sand to the hourglass of life.

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9 "Maguey—A Plant for Many Purposes," http://www.plu.edu/~owenam/maguey-plant/home.html.

FIGURE 15.1
The Grim Reapress, recalling Santa Muerte's Spanish female forebear, La Parca.

FIGURE 15.2 *Gold Santa Muerte of abundance and prosperity at the famous shrine in Tepito, Mexico City's most notorious barrio.*
PHOTO: TONI FRANCOIS

FIGURE 15.3 *Death and Dollars - Mexican devotees prefer to regale Santa Muerte with the American currency since it's stronger than the Mexican peso.*
PHOTO: TONI FRANCOIS

FIGURE 15.4 *Dressed in Dollars - Many devotees are looking for prosperity so effigies cloaked in dollars bills are common. This one was at the famous Tepito shrine.*
PHOTO: TONI FRANCOIS

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PART 4

Outside of the 'Mainstream'

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CHAPTER 16

The Brethren Movement

*From Itinerant Evangelicals to Introverted Sectarians**

Bernard Doherty

Introduction

The loose-knit group of evangelical Christians today referred to as the Brethren movement, whether one is referring to the mission-oriented Open Brethren or the sociologically sectarian branches of the Exclusive Brethren, all trace their roots to the early years of the nineteenth century and a period of political, cultural, economic, and religious change which left an enduring legacy on the group's beliefs and practices.[1] The events of the late eighteenth century surrounding the French Revolution shook European and especially British society to its very foundations. Perhaps at no other time in recent memory had the cherished values and beliefs of the ruling classes come under such blatant threat as a new and revolutionary fervour stalked across Europe and certainly in no earlier period had the unfolding of contemporary events been so easily plotted by prophetic enthusiasts on an end-times time-table which seemed to be racing inexorably toward the millennium. Not surprisingly the period from the 1790s through to the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 was to have a profound effect on British religious culture and play a fundamental role in forming the attitudes of the social elites, who more than any other sector of society felt most threatened by what many saw as the encroaching apocalypse and the radical ideas it left in its wake (Sandeen 1970; Shaw 2012).

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1 The phrases Open Brethren and Exclusive Brethren are often little utilized by members of either broad groupings and must be understood as etic terms. Open Brethren in particularly will often simply designate themselves as 'Christians' as a protest against what they see as undesirable division of Christians into various churches, denominations and sects.

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In Ireland, a region which was to play a profound role in the early Brethren movement, the evangelical party of the Protestant ascendency shuddered at the United Irishmen rebellion of 1798 and the very real threat of a French invasion. Meanwhile the spectre of Catholic Emancipation and the rise of political organisations like Daniel O'Connell's (1775–1847) Catholic Association in 1823, coupled with the piecemeal repeal of certain restrictions in the Penal Laws from the 1770s, were seen by many as a threat to what many evangelicals had begun calling a 'second reformation', an aggressive campaign to evangelise Ireland's overwhelmingly Roman Catholic population (Bowen 1978; Acheson 2007). In such a climate it was unsurprising that this led to a situation of uncharacteristic co-operation between evangelicals across traditional denominational divides, in the words of the important early Brethren figure Anthony Norris Groves (1795–1853) "deep-rooted prejudices gave way. I saw those strongly marked distinctions that exist in England little regarded; the prevalence of the common enemy, Popery, joined all hands together" (1859: 38).

Against this dramatic backdrop the first three decades of the nineteenth century saw a marked rise in the study of Biblical prophecy and from Devon to Dublin groups of eschatological enthusiasts gathered at conferences—like those at Albury Park (1826–1830) and Powerscourt House (c. 1830–1833)—to debate and speculate on how far along in the seventy weeks of *Daniel* 9 the world had progressed and whether the events of the 1790s were those foretold in *Daniel* 7 and *Revelation* 13. At the same time organisations like the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy (founded 1826) and later the Prophecy Investigation Society (founded 1842) cut across denominational boundaries helping propagate this new found enthusiasm for prophetic speculation through the writings, meetings, and pulpits of their widely dispersed membership (Coad 1966; Sandeen 1970).

Over this same period benevolent and evangelical societies like the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (founded in 1808) sought the conversion of the Jews, fascinated by biblical prophecies about the restoration of the Jews to Palestine (for example, *Zech.* 12–14) and their connection to the events of the End-Times. Meanwhile the households of the Evangelical elite were awash with periodicals, with names like the London-based *Morning Watch* (published 1829–1833), the *Prophetic Herald* (1845–47), and the Dublin-based *Christian Herald* (published 1830–1835), teeming with arithmetic and argumentation as clergy and laymen alike tried their hand at deciphering the secret plans of God which they believed lay hidden within the Scriptures (Sandeen 1970).

Meanwhile groups of radical evangelicals disenchanted with the establishment church seceded in increasing numbers with figures like John Walker

(1769–1833) and Thomas Kelly (1769–1855) forming their own sects whilst others like Robert Haldane (1764–1842) and the 'Recordites' maintained itinerant ministries each embracing patterns and ideals from the New Testament which were to find their most enduring expression in the Brethren movement (Rowdon 1964; Rowdon 1967a; Carter 2001). Others, pursuing the same ambition to return to a pristine New Testament church, began eagerly expecting the return of charismatic gifts vouchsafed in passages like *1 Corinthians* 14: 12–15, with figures like Hugh McNeile (1795–1879) and Edward Irving (1792–1834) eagerly embracing what appeared to be renewed outbreaks of tongues, bringing with them a new emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church which was to leave an important, if sometimes downplayed, legacy in the Brethren movement (Stunt 1965; Sandeen 1970; Bebbington 1989; Rennie 1992).

It was amid this social and religious turmoil, in the drawing-rooms of the upper-class and highly-educated evangelical party of the Irish Protestant ascendency, that a series of groups of devout self-described "evangelical malcontents" (Bellett et al. 1884: 18) began arriving at a radical and distinct set of ideas regarding ecclesiology and eschatology which developed into the loose-knit group of evangelical Christians today referred to as the Brethren. As W. Blair Neatby described them the early Brethren "sought to effect a fresh start without authority, precedent or guidance beyond the letter of the Holy Scriptures" noting further that the movement was "the child of the study of unfulfilled prophecy, and of the expectation of the immediate return of the Saviour" (1902: 4, 163).

What developed from these small Irish groups was a Biblicist movement *par excellence* which aimed to eschew all the accretions and accumulated ecclesiastical sediment which they saw weighing down the Established Church and the dissenting sects and sought a unity of Christians which transcended the contemporary denominationalism and sectarianism. What also emerged was a group with distinct understandings of ecclesiology and eschatology which were to reverberate far wider than this nascent group could have imagined, laying the foundations for Christian movements ranging from modern Protestant Fundamentalism to Christian Zionism (Bass 1960; Sandeen 1970; Wilkinson 2007).

While today the Brethren movement is fragmented to a bewildering degree, often bitterly divided between Open Brethren and various Exclusive Brethren, and like other Christian groups in advanced societies it has seen some numerical decline, its place in contemporary Christianity and especially evangelicalism far outweighs its at best modest size. To give one example, recent 2011 statistics recorded by the *International Brethren Conference on Mission* (IBCM), the largest international Open Brethren organisation, there are:

> [C]hurches of the Open Brethren in 130 countries of the world. There were in 2010 some 27,350 such congregations and preaching points, compared with about 25,300 in 2005, a growth in five years of about eight percent. World-wide, regular adult attenders in those congregations amounted to some 2.06 millions, compared with 1.7 millions in 2005. About 70 percent of these are baptised. If child attenders are included and assumed to be one-fifth of all attenders at the main meetings, the total number of attenders would be likely to be about 2.5 millions. Put another way, one in every 2,900 people in the world attends a Brethren fellowship (Newton and Chan 2011: viii).

While compared to larger international Christian bodies these numbers may seem quite modest, especially when some statistically more significant nations which have experienced marked growth like Angola or historical Brethren strongholds like New Zealand are excluded, it will become apparent below that by their very nature Brethren of all shades and degrees are a group whose beliefs and life-style demand a strong commitment and nominal adherence is a rarity. Similarly it will also become apparent that the distinctive nature of Brethren ecclesiology, eschatology and history have significantly complicated the task of identifying these diffuse groups of Bible-based Christians who gather together in Christ's name alone (*Matthew* 18:20) to break-bread in memorial until his near-return (*1 Corinthians* 11:25–26) or distinguishing them from similar churches from the wider free church, fundamentalist and independent evangelical milieus. Brethren places of worship go under a variety of names including Gospel hall, chapel, fellowship, assembly, meeting room, and rarely feature the name Brethren at all and indeed many Brethren today strongly dispute the designation (cf. Grass 2006: 425–431).

What follows will be divided into two sections. First, it will give an introduction to the history, major figures, and major divisions within the wider Brethren movement. Second, it will give a brief overview of the contemporary Brethren movement and outline some of their distinguishing features and distinctive beliefs associated with both Open and Exclusive Brethren.

History, Major Figures and Major Divisions

Perhaps more than any other nineteenth century Protestant group, the early Brethren were initially drawn from a particular elite sector of English and Irish society described by Ian Rennie as "the aristocracy, the landed gentry and military officers, the most conservative sectors of society… young, well-bred,

well-educated and well-travelled new Evangelicals [who] were inevitably exposed to current movements of deep-cultural change, but without in any way changing their conservative social orientation" (1992: 190). These 'New Evangelicals', as Rennie designates them, were marked from their evangelical forebears by a strong embrace of Calvinism,[2] a more literalist approach to the Bible, an enthusiasm for new approaches to biblical prophecy, an attachment to pre-millennial eschatology, an openness to charismatic forms of ministry, and an often far more pessimistic view of the world and the Established church than that of their more respectable predecessors (Bebbington 1989; Carter 2001; Wolffe 2006). Among this group were six men whose lives, writings and personal interactions were to leave an enduring mark on the subsequent history of the Brethren movement and whose writings and experiences provided the blueprint for subsequent Brethren beliefs and practice.

John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) was an Anglican cleric turned itinerant evangelist whose name and voluminous writings and correspondence on ecclesiology and eschatology have left their stamp on all the subsequent divisions within the movement; especially amongst various Exclusive Brethren. Anthony Norris Groves was a successful English dentist turned missionary whose desire for Christian unity and devotedness have won him an enduring reputation for holiness even outside Brethren circles and the frequent title of "the father of faith missions" (for example, Dann 2004). Edward Cronin (1801–1882) was an Irish convert to Independency from Roman Catholicism whose personal experiences with what he called "special membership" (Bellett et al. 1884: 15) in 1820s Dublin led to one of the first fledgling Brethren assemblies but whose twilight years saw him embroiled in one of the Exclusive Brethren's major divisions and who died excluded from fellowship with the movement to which he had devoted his life. George Müller (1805–1898) was a Prussian who, like so many of his generation was inspired by biblical prophecy to convert the Jews of England but instead founded a series of orphanages and other Christian works from Bristol to as far afield as Spain and garnered an enduring reputation as an Evangelical philanthropist. Henry Craik (1805–1866) was a gifted Scottish biblical scholar and lifelong collaborator of Müller. And finally, Benjamin Wills Newton (1807–1899) was the brilliant scion of Quakers who went from being a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, to the first leader of the Brethren at Plymouth but whose tempestuous relationship with Darby occasioned the first major rift in the Brethren movement between 1845–1849 and who spent his days living down the theological imprecisions which so riled Darby. The early history of the

2 While space does not warrant a detailed account here the vast majority of early Brethren embraced some form of Calvinism though this is less universal today (cf. Stevenson 2010).

Brethren, while featuring an equally affluent cast of other minor characters, is largely the story of the interactions between these key figures and their close associates in four cities which each came to play a key role in the development of the movement: Dublin, Oxford, Plymouth, and Bristol (Embley 1966; Rowdon 1967a; Grass 2006; Introvigne and Maselli 2008).

While the exact dates remain disputed practically all commentators would agree that the earliest assemblies of Brethren were founded in the mid-to-late 1820s in Dublin in Ireland. Almost simultaneously a number of non-denominational meetings for the "breaking of bread" emerged, sometimes referred to as "drawing room meetings" (for example, Stokes 1885: 542). Of these meetings the most notable were those associated with Edward Cronin, John Vesey Parnell (later Baron Congleton) (1885–1883) and Francis Hutchinson (1802–1833). At these meetings a sense of Christian brotherhood emerged which transcended denominational distinctives and the much lamented practice of 'closed communion' whereby the cooperation between members of the Established church and dissenting bodies was stifled by an inability to break bread together simply as Christians. As an early historian of the Brethren William Collingwood put it "it appeared to them to be anomalous and wrong that, though they were personally united as children of God, they could not publicly join together in recognition of their common brotherhood" (1899: 5).

Almost simultaneously, then, a group of loosely connected men, which a various times included Groves, Cronin, John Gifford Bellett (1795–1864) and a host of others, began meeting according to the simple principles of gathering in Christ's name alone to break bread according to biblical precedent in the absence of a set-apart church building or ordained ministry. Not only did these groups gather to break-bread but also to pour over and discuss scriptural prophecy, which had taken on new meaning in the current political climate.

In addition to these concerns over Christian unity and biblical prophecy these early groups were also united in their opposition to the perceived Erastianism of the Established Church. Fearing for the future of Protestantism in Ireland as Catholic Emancipation fast approached, Archbishop of Dublin William Magee (1766–1831) published a charge in 1826 in which he sought to tighten the already strong links between the Established church and the Irish administration, requesting that converts be expected to swear allegiance not only to the Church but also to the crown. While it seems a majority, even among Evangelicals, supported this action it brought a swift rebuke from a young cleric whose name was to become forever linked to the Brethren: John Nelson Darby.[3]

3 While a number of popular biographies of Darby have been published (e.g. Field 2008; Stokes 1885; Turner 1944 [1926]; Weremchuk 1992) no scholarly account has been written. For a scholarly discussion of his early career see Stunt (2003; 2004; 2006b).

In 1827 Darby privately circulated his pamphlet *Considerations Address to the Archbishop of Dublin and the Clergy Who Signed the Petition to the House of Commons for Protection* in which he critiqued Magee's charge and the subsequent 1827 petition to Parliament for their Erastianism and the detrimental impact it would have on the evangelistic efforts being made by Darby and other clergy to convert the Irish people. This pamphlet signalled the first sign of Darby's growing unease and sense that the Established church preferred worldly authority and the trappings of the State protection to the demands of the Gospel. Darby was certainly not alone in his concerns and coupled with the large number of absentee clergy, misgivings about the liturgical rubrics for Baptism and Church funerals, and canonical strictures on 'irregular' forms of evangelism such as lay preaching and itinerancy, this unease led to numerous secessions and served to feed the sense of pessimism and disenchantment already widely spread among Irish evangelicals (cf. Carter 2001).

Sometime later in 1827 Darby suffered a riding accident during his pastoral duties amongst the Irish peasantry of Calary in County Wicklow and while resting at the Delgany and Dublin homes of his sister Susan and her husband, the future chief justice of Ireland Edward Pennefather (1773–1847), he underwent something of a second conversion. While hitherto Darby had been a stickler for precise churchmanship in both following liturgical rubrics and in his adherence to the Westminster Confession, he now began to drift further toward a more radical Evangelicalism. By this time (and probably earlier) Darby had clearly become acquainted with members of the groups holding the drawing-room meetings and while it is unlikely he actively participated in the breaking of bread at this early stage the impress of his thought was already clearly being felt in wider circles.

During this period of convalescence Darby encountered the tutor to the family's children Francis Newman (1805–1897), brother of the far-better known John Henry, who had recently been appointed a fellow of Balliol College. Darby, referred to throughout Newman's autobiography as "the Irish clergyman" left a lasting (if not entirely positive) impression on Newman for his stringent defence of verbal inspiration and his personal charisma and it was through their acquaintance that Darby was first invited to visit Oxford in early 1830 forging bonds with a series of figures who were later to play a key role in establishing the first Brethren assembly at Plymouth (Newman 1874).

Oxford at this time had been undergoing a minor Calvinist revival amongst undergraduate students largely associated the charismatic pastor of St Ebbe's Henry Bulteel (1800–1866), who like so many associated with the early Brethren movement soon seceded from the Established church (Rowdon 1964; Carter 2001). Among the students involved in this revival was Benjamin Wills Newton, who had been privately tutored and studied biblical prophecy with Newman

and who upon meeting Darby instantly warmed to him. Newton soon seceded from the Established church and returned to his native Plymouth where he was to play a key role in subsequent Brethren history.

The first assembly in Plymouth was formed around the nucleus of George Vicesimus Wigram (1805–1879), Newton, Captain Percy F. Hall (1804–1884) and later James L. Harris (1793–1877), and began meeting at the unused Providence Chapel in 1831. This group began breaking-bread privately at first but later publicly much to the distaste of 'Gospel clergy' from the neighbouring parishes of the Established church who had hitherto privately supported the initiative (Carter 2001). From 1831 onwards Darby became increasingly involved in the loose-knit assemblies at Plymouth, famously remarking that "Plymouth has altered the face of Christianity to me, from finding brethren, and they acting together" (*Letters of J*[*ohn*] *N*[*elson*] *D*[*arby*] 3; 230, 271).[4] While Plymouth was to give the movement the name by which it is most commonly known it was at Bristol that many of its distinctive practices were to find their first expression.

The final link in the early Brethren movement in Britain was established at Bristol by Müller and Craik. The two met in 1829 at the Ebenezer Baptist Chapel in Teignmouth becoming fast friends united by their love of learning and a mutual acquaintance with and admiration for Groves. In 1832, following a successful campaign of itinerant preaching, the two figures were called to a joint pastorship of the Baptist Gideon Chapel in Bristol. Their ministry proved extremely popular and by July 1832 they began to hold additional services at the larger Bethesda Chapel, which Müller described in August of that year as "without any rules—desiring to act only as the Lord should be pleased to give light through His word" (1929: 60).

While originally a Baptist congregation, under the influence of Groves, Müller and Craik had committed to the principle of 'living by faith' (see below) and refused any stipend or pew rents and spurned any official designation as pastors which might be interpreted as clericalism. As time progressed the two instituted additional reforms which brought them closer in practice to the congregations already established in Plymouth and elsewhere, with an increased emphasis on the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and a degree of open ministry. Müller and Craik also demonstrated many of the ascetic tendencies which were to become a hallmark amongst the Brethren, forgoing worldly accoutrements and relying on God alone for their daily bread, even after Müller established the first of his famous orphanages at Ashley Down in 1845.

4 Particularly among Exclusive Brethren leaders are often referred to in publication titles and writings by their initials, for example, JND for John Nelson Darby, JTS for James Taylor Senior etc.

The Plymouth, Bristol, and Dublin assemblies grew and established themselves as vibrant new presences in their respective locales, forming relationships with a wider body of seceding believers and independent Gospel chapels across the British Isles throughout the 1830s. The movement consolidated its growth through the Powerscourt Prophetic conferences in Ireland, where nearly all the major figures of early Brethren history gathered annually to discuss matters pertaining to biblical prophecy and the publication of *The Christian Witness* (1834–1841), both initiatives solidifying the importance which biblical conferences and periodical literature were to have in subsequent Brethren history. Brethren assemblies could soon be found in Barnstaple (1832), Tottenham (1840) and other regions across England and in Ennis in County Clare (1832), Westport in Country Mayo (1836) and elsewhere in Ireland and later Scotland (Embley 1966; Dickson 2002; Grass 2006).

However, even at this early stage not all was well in the fledgling movement and differences of opinion over church governance and prophetic interpretation were already emerging, as indicated by Newton's decision in 1834 to hold a rival prophetic conference at the Mechanics Institute in Plymouth at the same time as the annual Powerscourt meeting. Despite these simmering internal tensions throughout the 1830s the Brethren became an increasingly identifiable presence in the evangelical milieu soon attracting the label 'Plymouth Brethren' or 'Plymouthism' and quickly drew the ire of both the Establishment and dissenting groups who began to accuse them of everything from 'sheep-stealing' to antinomianism (Rowdon 1988; Grass 2006).

While Newton had assumed *de facto* control of the Plymouth group and Craik and Müller expanded the ambit of their Bristol ministry, Darby became far more involved in itinerancy particularly on the European continent, founding assemblies in Switzerland and southern France amongst the Christians inspired by the early nineteenth century 'awakening' (*le Réveil*) associated with the Scotch evangelist Robert Haldane. However, even while distance stalled wider conflict, theological divergences over matters of prophecy and church governance continued to fester, especially between Darby, whose clashes with leaders in the Swiss Free Churches (the *Ancienne Dissidence*) had led to the development of far more radical views on church governance, eschatology, and the current status of the Christian churches; and Newton who (initially with Darby's blessing) had taken on an authoritarian ministry over the congregation in Plymouth and who vigorously opposed what he saw as Darby's unscriptural systematising.[5]

5 For detailed information on Darby's work in Switzerland see Embley (1966); Introvigne and Maselli (2008); Smith (1983) and Stunt (1981; 2000).

When revolution broke out in the Swiss canton of Vaud in 1845 Darby was forced, for his own safety, to return to Britain and to a long overdue confrontation with Newton. The precise events and arguments which occasioned the final break between these two figures have been narrated in painstaking detail elsewhere,[6] suffice to say here that Darby charged Newton with behaving in a dictatorial manner which stifled the working of the Spirit amongst members of the congregation during worship and writing against Brethren worldwide (meaning against Darby's dispensational eschatology and beliefs concerning the Rapture); whilst Newton charged Darby with heresy over his developing eschatological system. The dispute simmered over the months of 1845 rending the congregation in Plymouth into two parties, despite the attempts of more irenic Brethren to negotiate a truce, until on Sunday 26 October 1845 Darby announced that he had withdrawn from fellowship with Newton and his assembly at Ebrington Street, Plymouth.

While figures like Parnell tried to heal the breach in 1847 Harris brought certain notes taken by some Brethren sisters on Newton's sermons to Darby's attention in which the latter detected the whiff of Christological heresy regarding the nature of Christ's earthly suffering. While the theological matters are far too complex to satisfactorily outline here,[7] Newton recognised his error and retracted his statements, however, by this stage it was too late and on 8 December 1847 Newton left Plymouth and the movement's history for good. Darby and his supporters excommunicated the assembly, citing the principle of 'separation from evil'[8] which Darby had developed in his earlier tract *Separation from Evil God's Principle of Unity* (1834) and refused to have further fellowship with any members of the Ebrington Street assembly, a decision which was to provide the basis for the subsequent Exclusive Brethren approach to perceived doctrinal and moral error.

These events at Plymouth had occasioned an irreparable fissure between the assemblies who supported Darby and what was seen as the need for Brethren to judge the evil within assemblies and those who had either supported, or at least remained neutral, regarding Newton's teaching and behaviour. The question, then, came down to whether individual assemblies would recognise Brethren from Ebrington Street on an individual basis, providing that they did not hold Newton's theological errors, or whether Newton's actions

6 For detailed narratives of these events see Burnham (2004); Embley (1966); Rowdon (1967a).

7 For a detailed survey of these Christological matters see Rowdon (1962).

8 The principle of 'separation from evil' draws especially on the text of 2 *Timothy* 2:19–23 and is of particular importance among Exclusive Brethren.

had tainted the entire assembly and thus members could not be received at all (or without strict further conditions). It is this question which remains central to the division of Open and Exclusive Brethren and even today it is *de rigueur* for Exclusive Brethren to demand that any Open Brethren seeking fellowship in their assemblies 'judge the Bethesda Question' or to accuse them of 'neutrality to Christ' (cf. Grass 2006; Shuff 1997).

In April 1848, however, these questions came to the fore when a certain Captain Woodfall and his brother, both members of the Ebrington Street assembly, sought fellowship at the Bethesda Chapel in Bristol. After careful examination by Müller and Craik it was decided that they did not hold Newton's suspect theological opinions and they were permitted to break-bread at Bethesda. Within weeks Darby visited Bristol and made it clear that he would have no further involvement with the Bethesda assembly until a church investigation had taken place and Newton's heresy had been condemned. In response Craik, Müller, and eight leading members of their assembly issued a document which has come to be known as *The Letter of the Ten*, where they made it abundantly clear that even were Newton's tracts heretical (and subsequent events indicate that both Müller and Craik held that they were) "this would not warrant us in rejecting those who came from under his teaching, until we were satisfied that they had understood and imbibed views essentially subversive to foundation-truth" (Coad 1968: 299).

Darby was infuriated and began travelling between assemblies demanding they either side with him in withdrawing from Bethesda or share in its fate, in August 1848 issuing *The Bethesda Circular* where he accused the Bristol assembly of "opening the door now to the infection of abominable evil from which at so much painful cost we have been delivered" and warning that those assemblies "receiving persons from Bethesda [are] morally identified with evil, for the body so acting is corporately responsible for the evil they admit" (*Collected Writings of JND* 15.165, 166).

After an abortive meeting between Müller and Darby (of which conflicting accounts survive) it became clear that Müller and Craik did not agree with Darby's extreme position and the Brethren movement was split into the two major branches which exist today the Open Brethren who trace their lineage through Müller, Craik and the Bristol assembly back to Groves and the earliest groups in Dublin; and the Exclusive Brethren (sometimes referred to as Darbyites) who trace their lineage through Darby to these same roots. Over the subsequent one-hundred and fifty years both groups have expanded worldwide following paths of migration and missionary work to former British colonies and farther afield (cf. Dickson and Grass 2006; Lineham 1977;

Newton 1999).[9] Along the way the movement discovered other movements in places such as Italy which had begun meeting on similar principles and slowly the Brethren Movement established itself as one of the major subgroups within the worldwide Free Church milieu, as well as playing an important role in mid-Victorian revivalism (cf. Dickson 2002; Grass 2006; Ronco 1996; Stunt 2000; Introvigne and Maselli 2008).

However, the principles laid down by Darby in *The Bethesda Circular* and increased tensions over different understandings of questions of centralised authority and local autonomy within the Exclusive Brethren led to a series of extremely complex further divisions (often associated with a single assembly or leader) in 1881 (the Kelly/Ramsgate split), 1884 (the Grant split), 1885 (the Reading split), 1890 (the Raven split), 1908 (the Glanton split), 1909 (the Lowe-Continental split), 1920 (the first Taylor split), 1959–60 (the second Taylor split) and 1970 (the Aberdeen split) which has resulted in an extremely fragmented melange of Exclusive groups the largest being the Reunited Brethren and Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (henceforth PBCC).[10] Similarly the Open Brethren split further in 1892–4 with a small group forming the Churches of God (cf. Dickson 2002; Oxley 1964; Willis and Wilson 1967).[11]

The Brethren Today

In this extremely divided state today it is difficult to talk meaningfully about the Brethren Movement without constant qualifications. Instead of attempting the impossible what follows below will focus mainly on the situation as it relates to the numerically more significant Open Brethren, though with frequent reference to where beliefs or practices differ amongst Exclusive Brethren; with regard to the latter particular reference will be made to the PBCC which remains internationally the largest and the most well-known of the Exclusive Brethren groups.[12]

Since at least the 1950s the Open Brethren in Western societies, especially their more academically-inclined members, have been undertaking a period of

9 It is important to note that today Brethren find their highest percentages in areas which were not British colonies e.g. Angola and the Faeroe Islands.

10 For a simplified narrative overview of these complex divisions see Introvigne and Maselli (2008), Piepkorn (1970) and Shuff (1997).

11 The Churches of God are sometimes referred to as the 'Needed Truth' Brethren after the magazine Needed Truth founded in 1888.

12 The PBCC estimates it has around 45,000 members worldwide with the largest concentrations being found in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and North America.

soul-searching amid what has been called an "identity crisis" (Rowdon 1986: 1; Grass 2006: 431). As a result a situation has arisen in which no two Brethren writers can easily settle on which features are essential and which are merely incidental to 'Brethren identity' and many of the practices hitherto seen as distinctively Brethren have been brought into question. As Brethren historian Harold H. Rowdon noted in his reflectively titled *Who are the Brethren and Does it Matter?*

> There was a time when it was not difficult to define the term 'Brethren' ('Open' variety). For the most part they believed and practised the same things, and those beliefs and practices were highly distinctive. Unlike almost all other groups of Christians they managed without full-time workers resident in a particular locality, the breaking of bread accompanied by open worship was their major corporate activity, their main evangelistic thrust was a gospel meeting every Sunday evening (supplemented by occasional missions lasting for a week or more) and their chief teaching method was a regular conversational Bible reading, held on a weeknight. Their theology was dispensationalist, with an almost universal belief in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church prior to the return of Christ in glory with his Church to set up his earthly kingdom. On the whole they worked in isolation from other Christians, many being led to believe that there were few, if any, fully committed Christians in 'the denominations'. They maintained a fairly rigid view of separation from the world in terms of minimal contact with society. (1986: 1)

For Rowdon, in the absence of denominational structures, Open Brethren identity had hitherto been defined not by over-arching creeds or centralised institutions but by a combination of local autonomy and trans-local cooperation through a matrix of loose-knit mediating structures. Brethren engaged in national and often international cooperation and mutual support in the fields of evangelism and missionary work through organisations such as *Echoes* (formerly *Echoes of Service*) (UK) and *Christian Mission in Many Land* (USA). Brethren subscribed to the same magazines such as *The Harvester* (UK), *Echoes* (UK), *The Believer's Magazine* (UK), *Letters of Interest* (US), *Australian Gospel Tidings* (Australia), *Precious Seed* (UK) or *Assembly Testimony* (UK) from which "the uniformity of… teaching helped materially to create a common body of belief and practice" (1986: 8). Finally, Brethren identity was maintained by frequent conferences held in different locales to which "all other assemblies were invited—and expected—to attend *en masse*" (1986: 8). Through these historic channels the Brethren established and maintained a coherent position within

the broader evangelical milieu throughout the late nineteenth-to-mid twentieth century, however, around the mid-century a series of both internal and external factors combined to bring Brethren identity in advanced societies into question.

From the early-twentieth century a number of other churches in these societies, notably Baptists and various independent evangelical churches had begun to increasingly adopt practices hitherto seen as Brethren distinctives such as "shared leadership, open worship—often associated with the breaking of bread—and clear evangelistic preaching on a regular basis" (Rowdon 1986: 10). The Brethren, whose strength had always been in its intense lay-involvement[13] had to many both within and outside the movement become seemingly redundant and many assemblies began losing members to other Evangelical congregations, whose genuine Christian *bona fides* many younger Brethren had discovered whilst serving alongside other Evangelicals during the Second World War or through cooperation in pan-evangelical student organisations whilst attending university.

The prior emphasis among both Open and Exclusive Brethren on the need to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 *Corinthians* 6:17) especially as this applied to worldly education and pan-evangelical cooperation was brought into question and some Brethren found themselves drawn to the vibrant and more outward focused ministry of other churches; providing an escape route for many idealistic young Brethren who wanted to serve Christ but found their assemblies to be stifling, insular, and even irrelevant Victorian-era anachronisms. Indeed, around this time frequent commentary in Brethren literature began to address the topic of 'Why I left the Brethren'.[14]

A second factor contributing to this unease was the increasing amount of negative press received by the group of Exclusive Brethren under the leadership of James Taylor Junior (1899–1970) from the late 1950s onwards (Wilson 1967; Shuff 2005). Members of the Open Brethren, who had been separated into a distinct movement since the late 1840s were tarred with the same brush as the strictest separatists. The very label of Brethren, as Rowdon noted in reference to newspaper coverage at the time, had "became associated with crackpot regulations, ostracism of non-conforming relatives, broken marriages and broken homes, inhumanity and even suicide" (1987: 13). As the public scrutiny of this group has continued over subsequent years (cf. Doherty 2012; Doherty 2013) many Open Brethren in advanced countries have abandoned the name

13 On the centrality of lay-leadership among Brethren see Dickson (2002b).

14 An entire issue of the *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* was dedicated to this matter in 1965.

Brethren altogether and other Exclusive Brethren groups have found themselves scrutinised over popular outsider confusion over nomenclature (Grass 2006).[15]

While this sense of identity crisis has pervaded much literature, those who remained involved in the Open Brethren have continued as an active and often vibrant spiritual and intellectual community in many ways as engaged as any Evangelical group with contemporary issues and there is some truth in historian Tim Grass's comment that too much "navel-gazing" among Brethren may be counter-productive and that much of the talk of crisis smacks of "spiritual hypochondria", even if the Brethren are being affected to some extent by the wider social processes associated with secularisation and the declining role of religion in many hitherto Brethren strongholds (2006: 434).

It is clear, however, that the fundamental question of who are the Brethren is considerably harder to answer today than it may appear and the boundaries of this group must remain at best fuzzy and in need of frequent qualifications. While other Christian groups have built extensive institutional edifices over centuries and refined their doctrinal positions and organisational structures into creedal statements or articles of faith, the Brethren have from the outset expressed an antipathy toward almost all forms of ecclesiastical organisation for which they cannot find an explicit Scriptural warrant. Indeed there is some truth to the words in the autobiography of the English poet Edmund Gosse *Father and Son* (1907) (an otherwise dubious source for Brethren history) that Brethren assemblies gather "on terms of what may almost be called negation—with no priest, no ritual, no festivals, no ornament of any kind, nothing but the Lord's Supper and the exposition of Holy Scripture drawing these austere spirits into any sort of cohesion" (1973 [1907]: 9)

While writers like Rowdon doubt whether today it is possible to speak of Brethren distinctives, noting that "there are now few, if any, distinctive Brethren practices" (1988: 174), historically speaking it is possible to identify certain features like those outlined by the Rowdon in the quote above which while not fool-proof certainly provide sufficient "family resemblances" to be of some heuristic value in understanding contemporary Brethren beliefs and practices and which can be applied with certain qualifications across the spectrum of Open and Exclusive Brethren groups.

Put most broadly the Brethren today remain a localised movement of evangelical Christians, who exhibit in varying combinations and emphases the regular hallmarks of evangelical Protestantism identified by Bebbington (1989):

15 In non-Western countries the name Brethren is still commonly used by Open Brethren assemblies.

biblicism, conversionism, activism and crucicentrism. Brethren assemblies exhibit a marked biblicism in their emphasis on the abiding authority of scriptural writ in its entirety which manifests itself through extempore assembly preaching and regular 'Reading meetings' but also through the way in which they order their entire ecclesial practice according to scriptural precedent. Both Open and Exclusive Brethren continue to apply a strict biblical lens to matters of life and worship, with many Open assemblies for instance continuing to regard scriptural passages like 1 *Corinthians* 11:2–16 as binding on assembly practice; whilst the negative press often elicited by the Exclusive Brethren stems largely from their rigourist interpretation and implementation of scriptural passages like 2 *Timothy* 2:19–23 regarding communal discipline (Doherty 2012: 165 f.).

Open Brethren assemblies in particular emphasise a strong sense of conversionism, particularly as evidenced through their rejection of infant baptism and many Exclusive Brethren, despite their practice of household baptism, often speak of profound and heartfelt conversion experiences. Brethren of both the Open and Exclusive varieties are marked by activism, in the case of the former in their disproportionate commitment to both local and foreign evangelistic and missionary work; among the latter in their frequent and active program of 'Street Preaching' and tract distribution. Finally, Brethren of all varieties are highly crucicentric as exhibited especially in their rich hymography and the centrality of the Lord's Supper in Brethren communal life, especially as this is understood according to the words of 1 Cor. 11:26; "For as often as ye eat this break, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come".

In terms of other features of Brethren belief and practice, while other authors might abridge or augment his list Robert Baylis (1995: 21–28) offers what he calls the "Ten Cardinal Principles of the Brethren", which for the purposes of this chapter offers a useful guide for marking out the Brethren from other Evangelical Protestants. What follows does not pretend to be a complete summary of key differences between Brethren groups or the often marked divergence found between individual Brethren writers and assemblies[16] but rather offers some important themes which are historically important in considering the vexed questions surrounding contemporary Brethren identity.

The Lord's Supper[17] is the central communal act of Brethren life and along with the centrality of personal devotion to Christ and the sole authority of scripture is the foundational marker of Brethren communal identity. The theology

16 In particular note should be made here of the marked internal polarisation between 'tight' or 'conservative' Open Brethren assemblies and 'progressive' assemblies (cf. Grass 2006).

17 Sometimes referred to as the Lord's Table, breaking bread, or the Remembrance meeting.

behind the seemingly simple act is surprisingly rich,[18] however as in all Brethren understanding it rests on a simple but radical understanding of scriptural passages like *1 Corinthians* 10: 16–17—"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread". From their origins, and across the whole Brethren spectrum, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper has become the visible expression of the invisible unity of believers, a unity which transcends theological and denominational difference.

Unity: The concept of unity may appear, given the often fractious events of Brethren history outlined above, out-of-place in a discussion of Brethren distinctives, however, one must here reckon with the nature of the earliest Brethren secessions from the Established and dissenting churches. While early Brethren assemblies were comprised predominantly of seceders from the Established church the purpose of these secessions was not the conscious establishment of a new sect or denomination. Brethren unity instead focused on the simply principle set out in *Matthew* 18:20—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". The centre of the Brethren understanding of Christian unity is not in the adherence to a set confessional statements or creedal ascent but on the person of Christ. For Brethren, the Church (understood in its broadest sense) is the body with Christ as its head (*Colossians* 1:18; *Ephesians* 1:22–23; *1 Corinthians* 12:12–13) and it is through the believer's connection to Christ alone that unity is manifest. It is for this reason that many Brethren will refuse any label but that of Christian.

The Sole Authority of Scripture: As with all Evangelicals the principle of biblicism is of immense importance to Brethren and some of the major contributions of Brethren to wider Christian life both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are to be found in their contribution to the study of scripture.[19] However, unlike many earlier evangelicals who took a plenary view of scriptural writ, from their beginnings the Brethren adopted a position of the verbal inspiration of scripture borrowed from writers like Robert Haldane, whereby every word and book of scripture holds equal authority as divinely inspired; with the corollary that Brethren exegesis has often been marked by a literalist hermeneutic. While other evangelicals may sometimes question the relevance

18 For a useful overview of the wider theology of the breaking of bread see Bristow (2007).

19 The most well known exemplar here was the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester F.F. Bruce (1910–1990) cf. Grass 2011.

or authority of certain minutiae the Brethren have continually oriented their entire life from worship to family life on a keen and exhaustive look at what scripture says in its entirety.

Church Truth: The fourth cardinal principle is 'Church Truth', what might better be termed Brethren ecclesiology. While clear differences, particularly in practical regards exist between different kinds of Brethren,[20] with regard to ecclesiology the core principles are the same and feature the emphasis that the Church needs to be understood in a two-fold sense as both (1) the universal body of believers from the day of Pentecost until the Second Coming, in the words of *Ephesians* 1:22b-23 "… the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all", and (2) the as the assembly of believers 'called-out' to meet in a given locality, for example in the sense of the "seven churches which are in Asia" (*Revelation* 1:4). Brethren ecclesiology is based on the balancing of these two ecclesiological principles, which manifests in their understanding of the autonomy of the local assembly as acting as the church in a particular locale and the trans-local unity of believers as the body with Christ as the head. Open Brethren are emphatic about the autonomy of the local assembly and stress the second of these principles; Exclusive Brethren often emphasise the first of these principles and subsequently have developed a far more centralised and trans-local understanding of ecclesiology based on 'circles of fellowship'[21] and in the case of the PBCC on a united testimony centred around the teachings of a single spiritual leader.[22]

Devotion to Christ: Under this principle would be included the important, though in some modern assemblies seldom practiced, Brethren emphasis on 'separation from the world' and scriptural exhortations like *Matthew* 6:19 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (cf. *John* 17:11, 17 and *1 John* 2:15–17). Just as Brethren are united as the body with Christ as the head, the unity of the individual believer with Christ is manifest in personal devotion through obedience to his teachings and in particular the idea that they "come out from them

20 Exclusive Brethren tend to be more pessimistic and believe that the 'church is in ruins' and that as such assemblies should not attempt to follow New Testament precedents; whilst Open Brethren tend closer to a restorationist position (cf. Callahan 1996).

21 'Circles of fellowship' refers to a trans-local connexion of assemblies who hold the same doctrines (cf. Piepkorn 1970).

22 This has been the case with the PBCC whose development has been guided by a series of leaders from Darby until the present leader Bruce D. Hales (1953-) who have been recognised for their spiritual authority.

and be separate" (*2 Corinthians* 6:17). Brethren neither accede to any creed or confession established by human ecclesiastical institutions nor do they seek to conform themselves to the standards of 'the world' but instead search the Scriptures and adhere to the words of Christ alone.[23]

While a degree of liberty in interpretation exists, especially amongst Open Brethren, this principle of devotion to Christ has at various stages in Brethren history manifested itself in a penchant for asceticism and simplistic living, particularly amongst the often wealthy early Brethren, a refusal to engage in military service, vote, hold public office, or to engage in 'worldly' amusements such as music, art, the theatre, or any other practice which Brethren deem to be in conflict with the demands of Christ as revealed in Scripture (cf. Grass 2006).

The Priesthood of All Believers: While this might seem the self-evident result of the Brethren's Protestant roots the Brethren take the concept of the priesthood of all believers based on scriptural passages like *1 Peter* 2:9 and *Revelation* 5:10 extremely seriously. Brethren make no distinction between clergy and laity and acknowledge no form of ordination or process which would set apart a clerical class from other Christians (Dickson 2002b; Stunt 2006). However, Open Brethren do acknowledge church elders who function with the consent of the congregation in a largely organisational and pastoral capacity and the PBCC does recognise the spiritual guidance of a single leader referred to during different periods as the 'Elect Vessel', 'Man of God', or 'Minister of the Lord in the Recovery' who is charged with the maintenance of what they refer to as the 'recovery of truth'.[24] The practical corollaries of this principle are particularly apparent in the Brethren celebration of the Lord's Supper where no presiding minister is required to oversee this ordinance and in the extempore nature of Brethren worship in which all brothers[25] who feel moved by the Spirit may engage in biblical exposition or prayer within the assembly are encouraged to do so.

Freedom to Exercise Gifts: Tied up with the strong emphasis on the priesthood of all believers is an equally strong emphasis on the freedom to exercise the gifts of the Spirit as outlined in scriptural passages like *1 Corinthians* 14:15.

23 However, it is important to note that for legal reasons Brethren may include a statement of faith in the trust deeds of their assembly halls or chapels.

24 The 'recovery of truth' refers to the recovery of New Testament truth by Darby and subsequent Brethren leaders through a process of 'progressive revelation' (cf. Wilson 1967).

25 Many Brethren assemblies continue to hold a literal view of passages *1 Corinthians* 14:34 "Let your women keep silence in the churches" and thus exclude women from ministry during assembly worship.

For Brethren the Holy Spirit indwells in every believer (*1 Corinthians* 6:19) and thus Brethren are encouraged to foster their individual spiritual gifts and to encourage the spiritual gifts of others "… forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (*1 Corinthians* 14:12), basing their understanding on passages like *Ephesians* 4:11–12 "… and he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (cf. Rowdon 1967b). However, unlike contemporary Pentecostals, the earliest Brethren were suspicious of the more sensational spiritual gifts (such as speaking in tongues) associated with figures like Edward Irving and as such the freedom of the Spirit in worship, especially over the period of the 1830s when a number of former Quakers entered Brethren assemblies (Stunt 1970), only gradually became a central aspect of Brethren belief and a safeguard against any taint of clericalism or what Brethren call 'one-man ministry' (cf. Stunt 2006).

Dependence Upon God for Financial Needs: One of the foundational insights of early Brethren writers was a distinct emphasis on the principle of 'living by faith' whereby Brethren engaged in full-time pastoral, evangelistic, or missionary work were exhorted to rely solely on God for their financial needs and forgo any salary or stipend (Rowdon 1995; Larson 1998). This notion, originating from the principle of devotion to Christ as first outlined in Groves' 1825 pamphlet *Christian Devotedness* found its most memorable historical expression in Müller's philanthropic work and has continued to played a profound and often debated role in the subsequent history of the Open Brethren. Amongst Exclusive Brethren, who hold a more ambivalent or negative attitude toward Groves, this principle is less emphasised but not entirely absent (cf. Wilson 1967).

Expectation of the Soon Return of Christ: If there is one area where the Brethren's influence on evangelicalism has been most felt it is almost certainly with regard to the important emphasis they placed on the 'soon return of Christ' (cf. *Revelation* 22:7). While Brethren eschatology is far less uniform than has frequently been alleged, especially amongst Open Brethren, the expectation that Christ will return soon and the subsequent Brethren fascination with prophetic interpretation and aversion to organisation on any long-term basis has played a profound role in Brethren history (Bass 1960). While the specifics of Brethren eschatology are far too complex to survey here,[26] it is important to

26 An excellent overview of this can be found in Coad (1966). See also Stunt (2003b) and Sweetnam and Gribben (2009).

note that generally Brethren have followed a futurist, pre-tribulationist and pre-millennialist understanding of biblical prophecy, which played a strong influence on the development of fundamentalist Dispensationalism (Sandeen 1970). Among Exclusive Brethren the dispensational schema as outlined by Darby continues to be virtually the universal norm.

Imperative of the Gospel: The final, and for many the most recognisable feature, of Brethren practice has been their steadfast devotion to the spread of the Gospel following the words of *Matthew* 28:19–20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age". From the early missions of Groves to Iraq and India and Darby to the European continent Brethren have been an indefatigably mission-oriented movement and it is often noted how disproportionate the number of Brethren missionaries is to their modest size compared with other evangelical groups (for example, Coad 1968). Even amongst the more inward-looking Exclusive Brethren street-preaching and proclamation of the gospel remains an important facet of Christian witness.

Conclusion

While compared with other forms of contemporary Christianity the Brethren might appear numerically insignificant the insights of individual Brethren figures is rightly acknowledged as far out-of-proportion to their numbers. From their origins as a largely pessimistic and negative reaction to developments within early nineteenth century British and Irish society they have developed into an international and strongly activist presence in the wider evangelical and free church milieu whose emphasis on the local church and the working of the Spirit through non-ordained individuals has allowed them to develop along a variety of diverse trajectories. While some Brethren writers have expressed concern about the future of the movement and its ongoing relevance within advanced societies, across the spectrum between Open and Exclusive Brethren the movement continues to show signs of vitality especially in non-Western countries and its distinct insights into ecclesiology, eschatology and missiology while born from a specific historical context continue to bear fruit in the present and warrant far more analysis from both historians and scholars of contemporary religion than they have often received.

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CHAPTER 17

Seventh-day Adventists

An Apocalyptic Christian Movement in Search for Identity

Christian Feichtinger

Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventists (henceforth SDA, although the church advises against the use of this abbreviation for its ambiguity) are a Protestant Christian denomination with a strong apocalyptic emphasis. They are one of the fastest-growing and most widespread churches worldwide, with an estimated number of nearly eighteen million baptised members, which means a doubling of membership since the 1990s (see Lockhart and Bull 2007: 155; Kellner 2013). This remarkable growth is due to their missionary success in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is owed to a combination of strong missionary efforts, doctrinal clarity and broad supply of educational and health institutions that are especially attractive to people in poorer regions as they help to improve everyday life and educational opportunities. Their doctrine, although clearly rooted in the tradition of Protestantism, features a variety of unique teachings, such as the observation of Sabbath, the 'heavenly sanctuary', the 'investigative judgment', and the prophetic role of Ellen G. White (1827–1915). This chapter will give an outline of Adventist history, an explanation of the core teachings, an overview of organisational and practical features, and a discussion of current debates and international developments.

Church History

The SDA have their roots in nineteenth century US-American Protestantism in the context of the Second Great Awakening and the Restoration Movement, the latter a campaign to restore a purer form of 'original' Christianity based on the authority of the Bible alone. In this period of increased religious attentiveness, William Miller (1782–1849), a Baptist farmer from Low Hampton, New York, calculated Christ's Second Coming to occur during the years of 1843/44 by using passages from the biblical book of *Daniel*. His findings provoked a massive response across the various Protestant denominations. Inspired by his public lectures and his tract Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second

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Coming of Christ, about the Year 1844 (1842), 'Millerism' rapidly evolved from an "obscure, regional movement into a national campaign" (Rogers 1991: 110). With the year 1843 approaching, tensions between Millerites and non-Millerites among the churches and denominations grew stronger.

Against Miller's own will, his follower Charles Fitch provoked a separation between the Millerites and their churches of origin, urging all believers to leave their congregations, which in Fitch's opinion resembled the eschatological Babylon. By the end of the Jewish year in April 1844, the obvious failure of Miller's prophecies seemed to be the end of the movement. Then, fellow preacher Samuel Snow believed to have found a hint for the Lord's delay in Jesus' parable of the ten virgins and their "delayed" bridegroom in *Matthew* chapter 25. At a camp meeting in Exeter, New Hampshire, Snow finally set the date of the Second Coming to be October 22, 1844. When the day arrived, nothing visible happened, and the day came to be known as the 'Great Disappointment'. A vast number of former Millerites now returned to their parishes, and others ceased to believe at all. Some smaller groups, however, opted for a theological explanation of the situation and thus provided the basis for the development of the SDA: "Like every other millenarian movement, Millerism met with obvious failure, and yet out of this failure eventually emerged another of the American sectarian success stories" (Butler 1993: 190).

The leaders of one of these post-Millerite groups, which was to grow into the Seventh-day Adventists, favoured Hiram Edson's (1806–1882) idea that all calculations had been correct, but that the term "cleansing of the sanctuary" in *Daniel* 8:14 had been misinterpreted. While Miller identified "sanctuary" with the earth and was expecting Christ's triumphant return to it, Edson related the term to the "heavenly tabernacle" in which Christ serves as a High Priest according to *Hebrews* 8. Edson was convinced that the event expected in 1844 had occurred in heaven, not on earth: Christ's Second Coming was still imminent, but first he "had a work to perform in the Most Holy" (Nichol 2000: 458), this work being an 'investigative judgment' on all Christians' worthiness of salvation. This concept of a heavenly prelude to the Second Coming proved to be a convincing explanation for the Great Disappointment. In the meantime, fellow post-Millerites J.N. Andrews (1829–1883) and Joseph Bates (1792–1872), "the real founder of Seventh-day Adventism" (Knight 2004), had adopted the practice of observing the Sabbath as God's true holy day. Bates then linked together his Sabbath observance with Edson's apocalyptic concept by making the Sabbath the symbol of true faith in the wake of Christ's Second Coming. These sabbatarian Adventists now developed a huge sense of mission, they, "came to see themselves as fulfilling what the Protestant reformation had begun,

bringing Christianity full circle back to true biblical belief and practice" (Land 2005b: 5). They recognised themselves in the biblical 'three angels' messages' of Revelation 14: By observing the Sabbath they showed that they were the ones "that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (*Revelation* 14:12). In addition, the spiritual influence of fellow Adventist Ellen G. White was fundamental for the further development of the new community. Her visions and prophecies served as guidance and inspiration for the young community and offered counsel in theological and pastoral matters.

The movement, now named *Seventh-day Adventists* after their distinguishing beliefs, began a period of formal organisation in the 1860s. With the establishment of the first *General Conference,* held in Battle Creek, Michigan, they became an official organisation that quickly made an effort for worldwide mission. During this period the SDA also saw a theological paradigm shift by adopting the Christian belief in Trinity that was initially rejected as "unbiblical" (Moon 2003). After White's death in 1915, conservative theologians gained a certain power of interpretation, thus shaping a "golden age" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 106) of Adventism in America that has influenced Adventist identity until today. This period ended in the 1950s with the emergence of evangelicalism, whose leaders openly questioned the Christian identity of the SDA by criticising a number of the church's "unscriptural doctrines". The church reacted with a progressive orientation towards evangelicalism, as seen in the publication *Questions on Doctrine* (1957) that initiated a rather liberal period in Adventist history. This period was characterised by Adventist doctrine's orientation towards evangelical beliefs. However, this process provoked massive criticism from conservative Adventist theologians: "Official Adventism may have gained recognition as being Christian from the evangelical world, but in the process a breach had been opened which has not healed in the last 50 years and may never heal" (Knight 2003: v). After the *Glacier View Controversy* on progressive influence in Adventist theology in 1980, which resulted in the dismissal of liberal theologian Desmond Ford, a conservative backlash can be diagnosed in the church.

What could turn out far more important for the church's future than theological disputes is the process of globalisation. The dramatic increase in numbers in the last thirty years is almost exclusively due to increased membership in developing nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Less than two of almost eighteen million members now are located in the developed countries of North America, Europe, Oceania, and Japan. Although the North American influence on theology, organisation, and finance is still predominant, the successful worldwide mission might result in a stronger cultural diversity not only

in questions of organisation, but also of theology. From the ashes of the Millerite Movement, the SDA have emerged as a global Christian community. Although they see themselves as a part of the Protestant tradition, certain theological characteristics and core beliefs draw a boundary between Adventism and other denominations.

Core Beliefs

The SDA share many basic beliefs with the Christian world but also hold to a number of distinctive doctrines that shape the church's theological profile and self-understanding. Adventist teaching is grounded on the so called 'Pillars of Adventism'—the investigative judgment, the sanctuary service, the law of God and the Sabbath, the faith of Jesus, the three angel's messages, the state of dead, and the gift of prophecy—and is officially described in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. This core set of doctrines is an agreement on principal theological statements, but always "open for revision by the General Conference under the guidance of the Spirit" (Knight 2000: 24). In 2005, a twenty-eighth belief was added to the original twenty-seven defined by the General Conference in 1980.

James White and Joseph Bates were strongly influenced by the restorationist movement of the nineteenth century that promoted a radical view on the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura* ("by Scripture alone"). Consequently, "early Adventists rejected tradition, church, authority, and even the gifts of the Spirit in their doctrinal formation. They were a people of the 'Book'" (Knight 2000: 60). The church's doctrine states clearly that "the Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history" (*28 Fundamental Beliefs* 2010: 1). As a result, SDA reject the historical-critical method of exegesis in favour of a historical-biblical approach that accepts the divine origin and the historical truth of the text, although progressive Adventist scholars partly have made use of historical-critical methods (McIver 1996). SDA accept certain human influences on the text, such as language, style, cultural roots, or theological concerns, but nevertheless, the Bible is regarded the inspired Word of God, and its words "are to be taken literally unless it is clear that a symbol is being used" (Heinz 2000: 46). This approach to the text also justifies the belief in young earth creationism: The creation of the earth is seen as a recent event that took place in "seven historical, contiguous, creative, natural 24-hour days" (Davidson 2010: 8), although a number of scholars are slowly opening up to evolutionist theories (Land 2005a: 74).

After a period of a stronger exegetic dealing with the scripture, newer Adventist interpreters "stopped trying to take the text apart and accepted it at face value" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 35). This results in an approach where the biblical text provides the system to interpret itself (*scriptura sui ipsius interpres*) and means a renaissance of a rather literal reading. The interpretation of the Bible is guided by the *Biblical Research Institute*, a service department that serves as the church's theological and biblical consultant.

The Three Angels' Messages and the 'Remnant'

The so-called 'three angels' messages' in *Revelation* 14:6–12 were the early Adventists' key to define their historical role, they became the "central text in Adventist history" (Knight 2000: 24). The third message that speaks of the "saints […] that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (*Revelation* 14:12) is particularly important. This message is seen as a biblical reference to the church's development, and the Sabbath functions as the ultimate test of faithfulness to these commandments. Based on this biblical interpretation, the SDA see themselves as the 'remnant', a small group of believers called out by God in the last days. In accordance with *Revelation* 12:17 "from its very beginning, Seventh-day Adventism has viewed itself as a called out people with a prophetic mission. Adventism has never seen itself as just another denomination" (Knight 2008: 29). Although liberal scholars criticise the bold claim that is made with being the 'remnant', the church still upholds this self-concept but differentiates between a 'visible remnant' (the SDA themselves) and an 'eschatological remnant' that will also include true believers from other Christian denominations who will join the visible remnant when Christ's return is imminent. On the other hand, members of the SDA might also fall out of this eschatological remnant in the last days (Rodriguez 2000b).

The centre of Adventist theological thinking lies in an elaborated premillennial concept of the apocalypse and the Second Coming of Christ. From its Millerite roots on, the SDA have always viewed the world from the perspective of an imminent return of Jesus Christ. Consequently, an Adventist is defined as "a person who lives in the expectancy of a soon-Coming Savior" (Bacchiocchi 1986: 398). Adventist eschatology is grounded on the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation and is embedded in Ellen G. White's concept of the 'cosmic conflict' described in her influential work *The Great Controversy* (final volume: 1911). Here, cosmic and human history are defined as a great conflict between the satanic forces of evil and God that will finally come to an end with the Second Coming of Christ. The prelude to Christ's return is a heavenly event

defined as the 'investigative judgment' or 'pre-advent judgment'. In accordance with William Miller's calculations, the SDA believe that 1844 was a turning point in salvation history. That year, Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary in his role as eternal high priest. This claim is based on *Hebrews* 8 that describes an 'original' heavenly tabernacle of which the earthly temple is just a reproduction. Christ's work there is that of a judgment process, meaning that 'books of record', containing the works of every human being, are opened and closely examined in order to determine whether the person being judged is worthy of eternal life (White 1990a: 483). This pre-advent investigative judgment only takes Christian believers into account. On earth, Christ's return will be preceded by the tribulation, when the righteous will suffer intensified political and religious persecution.

With the judgment accomplished, Christ will return personally, visibly, suddenly, and triumphantly to earth. At this time the righteous deceased will be resurrected and the righteous living will be translated and taken to heaven (Bacchiocchi 1986). Thereafter starts the 'millennium', when mankind is eradicated from earth and Satan and his demon angels are bound to an earth devoid of humanity. During the millennium the righteous, together with Christ, conduct a second judgement, this time of all those who did not believe in Christ, including Satan and his demon angels. Finally, all unrighteous will be resurrected to face their sentence and final annihilation in the fire. SDA, therefore, do not believe in the doctrine of hell as a place of eternal punishment or the existence of an immortal soul, but rather advocate a concept of mortalism with a soul sleeping until the day of the bodily resurrection. Eternal life then is only given as a reward to the righteous.

Sabbath

For SDA the seventh-day Sabbath is not only a name-giving feature and a salient symbolic boundary between themselves and other Christian denominations, but also the decisive watershed of keeping or not keeping God's commandments in the 'Last Days'. Sabbath-keeping is grounded in the Ten Commandments. The commandments are not regarded as merely inspired biblical word but "the only law personally proclaimed by God Himself to His people" (Rodriguez 2000a: 107). Within the Decalogue, the "fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath" (*28 Fundamental Beliefs* 2010: 9). This means that Adventist self-understanding as being the 'remnant', keeping all of God's commandments, and strict observance of the Sabbath are inseparable.

Historically, the notion of Sabbath observance within the spectrum of Protestant denominations dates back to the seventeenth century and was promoted by individual pastors and authors as well as communities like the Seventh Day Baptists, who held the Ten Commandments in high regard and saw the observance of Sabbath as an expression thereof (Bebbington 2010: 51). Some of these sabbatarian Baptists participated in the Millerite movement, and one of them, Rachel Oakes Preston, familiarised Adventist founding fathers like T.M. Preble with sabbatarian ideas. Preble's writings then again inspired Joseph Bates, who would become the foremost proponent of Sabbath in early SDA history (Knight 2004). Bates' belief that God's law required the observance of the Sabbath met with wide response, the early Adventists quickly established the significance of the Sabbath and defined its observance as a day of rest from Friday's to Saturday's sundown, following the example set by orthodox Jews (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 43).

Ever since, the Sabbath has been of enormous theological and practical importance for the SDA. It marks a significant boundary between themselves and other Christian denominations, thus contributing greatly to self-understanding and boundary making. Observing the Sabbath is a practical of the 'remnant', of those being faithful to God's commandments. Furthermore, Sabbath is seen as a "memorial of creation and a memorial of redemption, not just a legalistic concerning" (Rodriguez 2000a: 116) : It is a symbol of the literal six days of creation, of salvation and sanctification, of God's holiness, of justification by faith alone (as this faith includes the Sabbath) and a foretaste of the eternal rest in God after Christ's Second Coming.

Consequently, the change from Sabbath to Sunday observance in Christian history is seen as an aberration, a work of forces inimical to God. This interpretation is based on the biblical figure of the 'little horn' that would "change times and laws" (*Daniel* 7:25). The 'little horn' traditionally has been identified with the Catholic Church and its papacy. Therefore, Sabbath observance is not only a question of the 'right' day of rest and worship service, but a future test for the true believers in the time of tribulation, as it is widely believed that one day a union of Christian Churches dominated by the Catholic pope and political forces will enact a 'Sunday law' which forces all people to observe Sunday alone. Sabbath holders would then be persecuted: "While the observance of the false sabbath [Sunday] in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator" (White 1990a: 605).

While progressive Adventist thinkers opt for a historical revision of the traditional condemnation of the Catholic Church, which "today is a much different

institution than it was during Ellen White's time" (Seibold 2010: 22), official SDA church leaders still "expect that world religions—including the major Christian bodies as key players—will align themselves with the forces in opposition to God and to the Sabbath", although they "recognize some positive changes in recent Catholicism" (*Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents* 2010: 94 f.). For influential Adventist theologian Hans Heinz, White's verdict on the Catholic Church is "of lasting currency and justification" (Heinz 2012: 645).

Ellen G. White

Ellen G. White (1827–1915) played a decisive role in establishing the SDA church, and her writings are of continuing relevance for Adventist theology as well as for popular belief, "a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction" (*28 Fundamental Beliefs* 2010: 8). White, raised in a Methodist family, is regarded as an inspired prophet in Adventist history, a manifestation of the biblical gift of prophecy, who received direct communications from God. Her visions gave the early Adventists a confirmation of their self-understanding as a called out people, and White's reports and writings of what she had seen in her visions played a crucial part in the development of SDA doctrine and pastoral praxis: "No Christian leader or theologian has exerted as great an influence on a particular denomination as Ellen White has on Adventism" (Samples 1988: 9). Her great number of writings, among them works as *The Great Controversy* and *The Ministry of Healing* (1905), shaped Adventist theology and eschatology to a great extent. Moreover, she encouraged a formal organisation of the community, the establishment of an educational system, and initiated the so called 'health reform' that would become a cornerstone of Adventist life praxis (Land 2005a: 325).

White's role within the church has not been undisputed and is a major question between traditional and progressive Adventists. Her position ranges from almost equal authority with the Bible over critical reading to even denial of her prophetical status (Corson 2002: 18). The *28 Fundamentals* underline the role of White's prophetical gift. Although her name is not mentioned in the baptismal vows, the stated belief that "the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church" is a clear reference to her.

Until the 1950s' discourse with evangelical leaders, White's role in relation to the Bible was that of a symbiosis, "White's writings clarified and elaborated the scriptures: the scriptures confirmed and clarified her prophetic role" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 31). However, evangelicals began to question White's huge

doctrinal influence as undermining the principle of the *sola scriptura*, resulting in the church's relativisation of her role in *Questions on Doctrine*. As a result of a certain conservative renaissance in the church since the 1980s, White has regained her role as a doctrinal authority and clarifier of the biblical text (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 35), a process also furthered by the *Ellen White Estate*, an organisation based at the General Conference to preserve and spread White's heritage.

Lifestyle and Health Reform

White and also Joseph Bates promoted an elevated position of health and dietary questions in the Adventist way of life. In the early nineteenth century context of increased attentiveness towards matters of health, nutrition, and abstinence, White and Bates became concerned with these questions and began to integrate them into the church's doctrine. After her famous vision at Otsego, Michigan, in 1863, White underlined the strong relation between physical welfare, spiritual health, and personal holiness. She began to develop a more and more complex system of directives and recommendations regarding what she called 'health reform'. This allowed for a new biblical hermeneutics, namely the interpretation of biblical laws and commandments as advices and instructions for bodily health and care, resulting in a recommendation of vegetarianism, abandonment of pork meat according to the biblical laws, and abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and other stimulants, as in White's words "health does not depend on chance. It is a result of obedience to law" (White 199b: 128). For Adventists thus it became "a part of *religious duty* to care for the body" (Robinson 1965: 79) in ways of nutrition, exercise, and life-style. A very prominent outcome of this process is the invention of corn flakes by the Adventist physician and reformer J.H. Kellogg, a product later made an American breakfast standard by his enterprising brother Will.

In a historical time when moral norms became more rooted in nature and less in divine authority, the SDA reproduced this process of naturalisation without dropping the role of divine authority. Instead, they interpreted biblical commandments and narratives in a naturalistic way, reading the dietary laws of *Leviticus* as dietary advices to improve physical health. Nature, natural laws and medicine thus were directed towards belief and religious practice (Feichtinger 2014).

The Adventist concept of a heavenly life-style is greatly owed to White's Methodist background. White adopted the Methodist ideas of sanctification and perfection that were for her a lifelong task for every believer (Knight 2000: 33).

Based on her scriptures, SDA have developed a unique sense for questions of health and nutrition that appear very modern in the context of recent social trends in society where questions of health and nutrition could be defined as a kind of post-modern religion (Williams 1998). Therefore, Adventist mission aims not only at spiritual conversion, but also at a lifestyle change and well-being. A healthy lifestyle contributes much to Adventist self-understanding and "has remained an important element of the denomination's outlook" (Land 2005a: 130). Adventists regularly point to a number of scientific studies that suggest that they have a longer and healthier life span than others, although there is variation in Adventist practice. Consequently, healthcare professions are highly regarded among SDA and many members work as physicians, therapists, or nurses.

Organisation and Congregational Life

The SDA have developed a complex and well-considered organisational and pastoral system that is codified in the *Church Manual*, a guideline that helps to preserve and standardise practices and polity in a now worldwide church.

Although early Adventists opposed any church organisation beyond the local congregation, a rapid increase in membership led to the adoption of a Presbyterian system of church organisation, with a five-leveled hierarchical structure that is interconnected via delegates. The governing organisation and highest ecclesiastical authority is the *General Conference*. It is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, and headed by an elected president and nine general vice-presidents, and supported by a number of administrative entities and departments. In intervals of five years, the General Conference meets in a *General Conference Session* with delegates from all over the world to discuss and decide on the church's policy, doctrine, and mission. The world church is composed of thirteen Divisions that coordinate a greater region and are each led by a vice-president. The Divisions are composed of Union Conferences (or Missions) that are again composed of local conferences that finally unite a number of local churches and parishes (*Church Manual* 2010: 26). In contrast to congregational models of church organisation, it is the local conference that employs the pastors, owns the church buildings, and governs various institutions. In addition to congregations, SDA have founded a large number of hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, publishing houses, media centres, radio and TV stations, and food factories as well as the humanitarian organisation ADRA (*Adventist Development and Relief Agency*) to support the church's mission. It is also noteworthy that the tithe, which provides the financial basis of the SDA, is paid to the conference, not the local parish.

Congregational Life

Adventist churches are led by a pastor (minister) who is ordained and employed by a local conference and then allocated to a specific congregation. Pastors therefore are not bound to their congregation and usually conferences will not allow their pastors to remain with a certain parish for longer than a few years. (*Church Manual* 2010: 34). Pastors are responsible for administration, sermons, worship, ministry, and development of the church. Church members elect a number of elders from their own ranks to assist the pastor, people who are "recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community" (*Church Manual* 2010: 71) and are capable of guiding a congregation in the absence of the pastor. Furthermore, deacons and deaconesses are lay officers that contribute to pastoral care. Both, elders and deacons are elected for one-year terms and must be ordained by a pastor. Notably, women are also approved for the position of an elder or deacon, but SDA are still split over the ordination of women as pastors. While progressives and 'western' conferences tend to open ministry to women, conservatives and 'southern' conferences blockade such advances. In 2012 two North American Union Conferences approved the ordination of women, causing upstir among world leaders who underlined the necessity of unity within the world church (Banks 2012).

In addition to worship service, Adventist congregations offer a number of activities for their members. They may engage in poor aid or in Pathfinder Clubs, attend courses in vegetarian cooking and healthy lifestyle, or undertake communal trips and holidays. Church members are encouraged to build friendships and relationships within the church and spend time together beyond worship service. This custom goes back to Ellen G. White who stated that "Christian sociability is altogether too little cultivated by God's people" and that "by social intercourse acquaintances are formed and friendships are contracted which result in a unity of heart and an atmosphere of love" (White 1980: 457). Sabbath is usually spent with worship, prayer, communal meals, and family trips. As a day of rest, any kind of work or study should be avoided and Adventists consistently face difficulties at workplaces, schools, or universities that are demanding their presence on Saturdays.

Baptism

As most early Adventists have their roots in the Christian Connexion and Baptist churches, believer's baptism by immersion has been from their

beginning the only acceptable mode for the SDA (Land 2005a: 32). Baptism therefore is "contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin" (*28 Fundamental Beliefs* 2010: 7) and preceded by doctrinal instructions and Bible lessons. Candidates should then demonstrate their willingness and acceptance of the church doctrines in a public or board examination. The baptism itself contains a baptismal vow by which a candidate publicly displays his personal faith and becomes part of the church community. Baptism is optional for converts that have already received a believer's baptism by immersion in another Christian denomination (*Church Manual* 2010: 50).

Although children participate in church activities and Sabbath school, they are not baptised before they have expressed their willingness to do so. The SDA do not define a minimum age for baptism. Children may be baptised if their parents consent with their request and if they are capable of comprehending the meaning of baptism, the basic doctrines, and the responsibility and significance of church membership. Until their baptism they are not counted as official church members.

Worship

"Adventist worship is generally restrained and carefully organized" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 221) and charismatic 'celebration Adventists' find themselves outside or on the margins of the Adventist spectrum, although emotions and spontaneity may vary due to culture and mentality. Worship rooms are of simple design to help participators to concentrate on the sound of lectures, sermons, hymns, and prayers. Worship occurs on Saturday and consists of two parts, Sabbath school, where participants build small groups to discuss biblical texts, and a typical church service with a sermon, hymns, scripture readings, prayers, offerings, announcements, and information on developments in the world church.

For Sabbath school, church members are quarterly provided with the *Adult Bible Study Guide* that covers a certain topic and contains biblical texts and questions that are to be studied every week for a common basis of discussion. Children meanwhile attend classes for their specific age. After a short break, worship continues with the church service that starts with set hours, so members have the possibility to skip Sabbath school and go to service only. SDA lay great emphasis on festive clothing that underlines the Sabbath as a holiday and the character of worship service as a formal encounter with God. Music has been central to SDA worship since its Millerite beginnings, and gospels, world music, local traditions, and contemporary Christian music have since

been added to the classical Adventist hymnal, although the official church advocates a rather conservative approach to sacred music (Land 2005a: 207).

The Lord's Supper takes place four times a year and is a service open to non-Adventist Christians. It commences with a foot-washing taking place in separate rooms. In this 'ordinance of humility', two church members of the same sex or a married couple wash each other's feet in memory of Christ's example and as a symbol of humility and service. After this intimate act, members return to the church interior to receive Lord's Supper in both kinds, unleavened bread and grape juice. As any kind of alcoholic beverage is prohibited, SDA reject the Gospels' image of Jesus drinking wine and even miraculously turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana, arguing that the Greek word *oinos* "could refer equally to fermented or unfermented grape juice" (Bacchiocchi 2006: 48) and that Jesus as the healer of mankind would have used grape juice and not alcoholic wine.

Family and Sexuality

In the context of the Victorian era, Ellen G. White has led an extensive discourse on matters of sexuality. Shaped by her contemporary language and morality, White's choice of words concerning desire and sensuality is mostly negative, and positive statements are made in a rather restrained manner (Schaidinger 2010: 295). Influential Adventist physician J.H. Kellogg promoted sexual abstinence and issued warnings of diseases that would derive from inappropriate sexual behaviour and passions. For decades, SDA were coy on reacting to developments that favoured a more positive approach to marital sexuality. It was not before the social liberalisation process of the 1960s and 1970s that Adventist authors and theologians would become more open to sexual matters and started to look upon marital intercourse as a personally fulfilling and joyful component of Christian marriage.

As much as "Adventists now celebrated human sexuality" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 175), pre- or extra-marital sex and homosexuality have consistently been rejected as sinful forms of desire. Homosexuality is seen as "a manifestation of the disorder and brokenness in human inclinations and relations caused by sin" and gay and lesbians are to be "offered caring ministry and words of solace", but should be encouraged to abstain from their wrongful sexual behaviour or to seek help in God to change their orientation (*Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents* 2010: 61.97). While individual gays or lesbians may experience loving pastoral care, homosexual activities or relationships are not accepted by the official church. Homosexual Adventists thus face severe problems; a situation documented in Daneen Akers' and Steven Eyer's movie *Seventh-Gay Adventists*

(2010). Progressive Adventist groups like the *Intercollegiate Adventist Gay-Straight Alliance Coalition* attempt to promote more tolerance within their tradition.

One reason for the condemnation of homosexuality is the view of marriage as "divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship" (*28 Fundamental Beliefs* 2010: 10). Marriage is seen as the natural order of society and must therefore be protected. Referring to the biblical notion of 'unity' between a man and a woman, SDA strongly discourage their members from marrying partners outside of the Adventist tradition and urge their pastors not to perform such marriages (*Church Manual* 2010: 148), although they do occur in practice. This strong emphasis on endogamy led to a large number of singles, as many believers that could not find a decent partner within the limited ranks of their own tradition were reluctant to date non-Adventists. The church had to react to these developments with a new estimation and pastoral support of singleness as a valued form of life and not as deficient to marriage and family (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 177).

SDA uphold the biblical ideal of marriage as a life-long commitment but grant the possibility of divorce and remarriage to a person whose spouse committed adultery or fornication. Although this is seen only as a last resort and couples are strongly encouraged to reconcile, divorce rates have risen in the last decades, and a study conducted in North America in the 1990s states that "at least 272 per 1,000 Adventist marriages ended in divorce",[1] that becoming a major issue for ministry.

Changes in society and the church's new-found positive approach to sexuality have also resulted in a broader acceptance of premarital sex, although the official church is still clear in condemnation of any form of sexuality other than marital intercourse between a man and a woman (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 176). Unlike a number of other Christian traditions, SDA are open to various ways of birth control and do also accept abortion for "serious reasons" (*Statements, Guidelines & Other Documents* 2010: 135), although this matter is controversial among church members.

Developments and Issues

Ever since the debates with evangelicalism in the 1950s and the social liberalisation in the 1960s, SDA range between two wings. First, a progressive revisionist

1 At http://family.adventist.org/home---divorce-and-remarriage-in-the-seventh-day-adventist-church.html. Accessed 22/12/2013.

wing that aims for a constructive role in society and questions traditional doctrines in favour of being more compatible with other Christian denominations and evangelicalism, and second, a fundamentalist wing that can be identified with so-called *historic Adventism* (Morgan 2001). The church's adaption of a more mainstream Christianity with the controversial document *Questions on Doctrine* opened up more liberal ways of interpreting Adventist doctrines and life-style, but on the other hand provoked massive criticism from conservative thinkers around influential theologian M.L. Andreasen, who demanded the preservation of specific Adventist beliefs concerning Christology, soteriology, eschatology, and the role of Ellen G. White. The most critical voices among these conservatives are subsumed under the term 'historic Adventists'. This term is used to describe those disagreeing with developments in the mainstream church and uphold the ideal of a historical, 'true' Adventism unaffected by the changes in the 1950s. Some of these historic Adventists have a strained or even broken relationship with the official church.

Although a radical 'historic' interpretation of Adventism might be a minority position, it can be stated with Lockhart and Bull (2007: 107), that conservative theologians have regained their influence on the world church since the 1980s, resulting in the authority of Ellen G. White being reaffirmed and controversial doctrinal views remaining intact. This development corresponds with a general revival of conservatism in American Christianity in the same time, but paradoxically, this parallel conservative development leads to Adventism "becoming less like conservative evangelicalism" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 107) due to the distinguishing doctrines being reaffirmed by this process. The mainstream church now faces a "struggle for a balanced Adventism" (Knight 2008: 13) between a fundamentalist overemphasis of doctrinal distinctiveness and apocalypticism on one hand, and a progressive alignment with evangelicalism on the other, that might result in removing possible doctrinal 'obstacles' like the sanctuary, the judgment, and Ellen G. White.

A small progressive segment within the church has adopted charismatic styles of worship or practices like speaking in tongues. These 'celebration churches' are outside or on the margin of official Adventism and church authorities have taken disciplinary actions against charismatic Adventist pastors whose practices and teachings are perceived as inappropriate (Tinker 1998).

As a result of a schism in the early nineteenth century, the *Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement* emerged as an independent branch of Adventism that upholds Adventist core teachings but advocates a stricter and more conservative interpretation of the faith. This includes, for instance, closed communion, a literal interpretation of the only 144,000 redeemed by God (*Revelation* 14), the identification of the 'remnant' with their own reformed tradition only, and vegetarianism as a test of fellowship. Adventist history has further seen a

variety of smaller offshoots, of which David Koresh's *Branch Davidians*, derived from the schismatic *Davidian Seventh-day Adventists*, became infamous for the Waco siege where 76 members of the radical group died during an assault by US-American law enforcement and military in 1993.[2]

Imminent Expectation

From their Millerite beginnings, Adventists have now lived more than 170 years in the expectancy of a soon-Coming Saviour, and now "that 'very soon' may turn into a burden, a time bomb that Ellen G. White has left her community with" (Obst 2000: 385). Although Helmut Obst's verdict might be exaggerated, questions arise concerning "an end of time that just won't end" (Knight 2000: 197) and the possible responsibility of the church. George Knight diagnoses a certain downplay of apocalypticism among progressives, who prefer to instead "preach the gospel" (Knight 2008: 11). This is another indicator for an orientation of progressive Adventists towards evangelicalism and away from 'adventism' in a literal sense. A different approach to the problem goes along with a revival of the so-called Last Generation Theology (LGT), a concept promoted by theologian M.L. Andreasen. LGT assumes that a number of Adventists will reach a state of perfection, of holiness and sinlessness, thus causing a hastening of eschatology according to *2 Peter* 3:9 ("the Lord is not slow […] [but] patient with […] everyone to come to repentance"). In this logic, SDA themselves and their failure in repentance and sanctification can be held responsible for Christ's delay. General Conference president Ted N.C. Wilson himself promoted this idea in his "urgent appeal" at the annual council of 2010, stating that "we acknowledge that the coming of Jesus has been delayed and that our Lord longed to come decades ago. We repent of our lukewarmness, our worldliness, and our limited passion for Christ and His mission" (Annual Council 2010: 13). This verdict is endorsed with the hope for a "last mighty revival" when the "church will experience a spiritual revival and the fullness of the Holy Spirit's power like never before in its history" (Annual Council 2010: 13), thus making the decisive step towards perfection and laying the ground for Christ's return.

Between a certain resignation and the hope for a final uplift, it remains an open question how the church and its members will deal with a further delay of Christ's Second Coming in the future. With the presence of LGT, now "the

2 It is also noteworthy that Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916), the forefather of *Jehovah's Witnesses*, was greatly inspired by Millerite and Adventist teachings, although not being an Adventist himself.

timing of the Second Advent is understood to be in the control of the movement called upon to await it" (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 68).

Globalisation and Cultural Diversification

Once a very 'American' church, the SDA have now become a worldwide movement with less than six percent of global membership being located in North America, although this division still has a dominant role in leadership, theology, and finance. While the church keeps growing dramatically in developing nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, recent research "shows major disturbing trends in Adventism in the North American Division in the area of church growth" (Beckworth and Kidder 2010: 21). The US-church hardly attracts young believers and has become an "alternative social system", being disproportionately female, old, black, and immigrant (Lockhart and Bull 2007: 114). New members are mainly immigrants from countries where SDA have established themselves. The influence of evangelicalism and progressive thinking has led to new interpretations of classic doctrines and new forms of self-understanding. On the other hand, the revival of historic and conservative Adventism has left unsettled and unresolved theological problems originating with the infamous *Glacier View Controversy* concerning the theses of liberal theologian Desmond Ford. His subsequent dismissal remains a symbol of dissent between progressive and conservative thinkers.

Outside of America, it is exactly the set of traditional Adventist core doctrines and the scriptural literalism that are very much valued by converts in developing nations. The Adventist view of the 'cosmic conflict' and eschatology has been attractive to people in the southern hemisphere as a pattern of interpretation for human history and social developments, and there is a clarity in doctrine that provides precise and reasonable advices and explanations in questions of theology and lifestyle. In addition, health reform and Adventist schools offer possibilities of education in poorer regions of the world and thus contribute to the improvement of everyday life and educational opportunities. This change in the ethnic composition of the church will also have increasing importance for leadership and church polity. The new influence first became visible in 1995 when the divisions of Africa and Latin America opposed the North American effort to gain authorisation for the ordination of women as pastors (Land 2005b: 8). As more and more theologians aim to relate Adventism to their native traditions, SDA are likely to develop a certain variability regarding different cultures. At the centre of this cultural pluralism, the General Conference will seek to preserve doctrinal unity. Time will tell how this multicultural impact will shape the church's future development.

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CHAPTER 18

From the Children of God to the Family International

A Story of Radical Christianity and De-radicalising Transformation

Eileen Barker

Introduction

The Family International (TFI), as it has called itself since 2004, has operated under a number of different names throughout its 50-year history. It first became widely known as the Children of God (CoG) after being founded in 1968 as part of the Jesus Movement in California by David Berg (1919–1994), known to his followers as Moses David, Mo, or 'Dad'. Embracing a literalist brand of revolutionary Christianity, CoG/TFI shares many of its beliefs and practices with other fundamentalist Christian groups. It has, however, differed quite radically from mainstream Christianity in Berg's interpretation of 'the Law of Love', which has encouraged an uncommonly open attitude towards sexual relationships.

From its early beginnings, the movement received notoriety as one of the 'cults' or 'sects' that were becoming increasingly visible in the West at that time, and, like the other 'world-rejecting movements' (Wallis 1984) that were giving rise to public concern, it has been treated with suspicion and distrust throughout most of its existence. Some of these new religions, such as the Unification Church (the Moonies) and The Way International, drew much of their theology from the Christian tradition; others, such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), The Divine Light Mission, Soka Gakkai, and the neo-sannyasins of Bhagwan Rajneesh (later known as Osho), owed their origins to non-Christian beliefs. Characteristically, all were founded by leaders who wielded a charismatic authority over their followers, and all tended to appeal disproportionately to middle-class youth. Frequently they held a dichotomous worldview, drawing sharp distinctions between Godly and Satanic; right and wrong; and 'them' and 'us' (Barker 2013). Common allegations levelled against the movements have included 'brainwashing', the breaking up families and then, with the arrival of a second generation, they have frequently found themselves (as, indeed, have traditional religions) accused of the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of children.

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A further characteristic of new religions is that they tend to change far more rapidly and radically than older, more established religions and in this the CoG/TFI is certainly no exception. Most recently, in 2010, with the advent of what it refers to as 'The Reboot', the Family International underwent a radical transformation. This chapter will describe the movement's shifting history, its beliefs, organisation, lifestyle and finances, briefly documenting the ways in which it has changed over the years from a tightly controlled, millenarian, community-based, world-rejecting movement to a more or less virtual community in which individuals and nuclear families are encouraged to accept personal responsibility for their own material and spiritual welfare whilst living within the wider society and associating with mainstream Christianity.

Early History

David Berg was born into a family, the maternal side of which had given birth to several pastors and evangelists. David's mother, Virginia (1886–1968), who became a notable missionising preacher in her own right, had eloped in 1910 with his father, Hjalmer Berg, a Swedish tenor who was to become a minister in the Disciples of Christ. However, after Virginia had experienced a miraculous healing, the couple began working independently as itinerant evangelists, and became ordained ministers in the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA).

Their second son, David, after being discharged from the army for health reasons, devoted himself to evangelical work with his mother. Then, at one of the Bergs' revivalist meetings in 1944, David met Jane Miller (1922–2011), a young woman from a Baptist background, and they, as his parents had done before them, eloped. During the next few years, Jane (who was later to become known as Mother Eve) gave birth to four children: Linda, known by her Biblical name of Deborah, was born in 1946;[1] Paul, known as Aaron (1948–1973); Jonathan, known as Hosea (1950–); and Faith (1951–).

Between 1949 and 1951, David served as a pastor to a CMA church in Arizona, but after being dismissed, he spent some time studying Socialism and Communism at a university in Phoenix and taught in a junior high school. Disaffected with the churches and organised religion, which he termed 'Churchianity', he attended a three-month 'personal witnessing course' at the American Soul Clinic under the direction of Fred Jordan (1909–1988), then, for

1 Deborah was later to leave the movement and accuse her father of committing incest (Davis 1984).

the next fifteen years, he worked with Jordan to promote the latter's TV programme, 'Church in the Home'.

There followed a short period when Berg and his family travelled round the States, witnessing to young people and converting the first of his teenage followers. The team then joined Virginia, who had established a small ministry in Huntington Beach, Southern California, and it was there, operating out of an evangelical coffeehouse called The Light House, that 'Teens for Christ' was established as a mission to the young hippies and drop-outs who had been experimenting with drugs and free love. By the summer of 1969 the number of those prepared to join the team as full-time, live-in disciples, cutting secular ties, and forsaking all,[2] had reached fifty.

The movement was becoming more militant, with disciples seeing themselves as 'storm troopers of the Jesus Revolution'. From late 1969, they could be seen in public, warning Americans that they were soon to experience the wrath of God; dressed in red sackcloth, with wooden yokes round their necks and ash smeared on their foreheads, they carried long staffs and Bibles and shouted 'Woe' (Van Zandt 1991: 35; Melton 2004: 6). Increasingly, the group was attracting the attention of police, pastors, and parents of young teens who had disappeared into the movement.

Berg decided to move his family and followers and, while they were travelling in teams around North America, a reporter dubbed the group the Children of God, and the name stuck. In 1970, Berg persuaded Jordan to let the CoG have use of the 'Texas Soul Clinic' (TSC), a 425-acre property some seventy-five miles west of Fort Worth, and around 200 members established a colony as a training centre where they would spend hours studying and memorising long passages from the Bible and acquiring the variety of skills needed for life in a missionising communal society. Then, in November 1971, following a disagreement with Jordan, the colony was evicted from the property. The residents were once more on the road, many eventually joining communes that had been established in various parts of the world.

Berg himself was travelling between the USA, Israel and England around this time, surrounded by just a few trusted disciples and his secretary/mistress, Karen Zerby (1946–), known as Maria, who was to play the role of Berg's wife.[3] By now very few members ever saw him or even knew where he lived. Berg's physical isolation, not only from 'the System' (as the rest of society was known) but also from the vast majority of his followers, was more than compensated

2 "… whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (*Luke* 14: 33).

3 More recently Maria has used the name Maria Fontaine, in her public writings.

for by his regular communications through a variety of publications, but primarily his 'MO Letters'. These could be anything from a couple to a score or so pages in a mixture of colloquial language and King James' English, and were typically presented with a generous spattering of capitalised words and exclamation marks, interspersed with comic-style drawings.[4]

Back in California, the then-Governor Ronald Reagan's Special Representative for Community Relations in San Diego and Imperial Counties in Southern California, Theodore 'Ted' Patrick, became concerned when his son and nephew were late in returning from a 1971 July Fourth celebration after having met the Children of God. A few days later a worried mother reported to Patrick that her son had disappeared. Eventually the son rang to tell her that he had joined a commune run by the CoG. By this time Patrick had learned of other mothers who had 'lost' their children; and two weeks later, he writes, he had interviewed fifty-two families with offspring who had disappeared into the movement and he decided to investigate further (Patrick 1976: 28–34). Frustrated by the lack of official action, Patrick founded an organisation of parents called FreeCoG (Free the Children of God) and instigated the practice of deprogramming'—that is, of kidnapping children (most of whom were legally adults) and holding them against their will until they managed either to escape or to convince their captors that they had renounced their faith. The methods that Patrick employed and which are described in graphic detail in his 1967 book were frequently traumatic, involving violence and some quite brutal behaviour. Patrick insisted that it was not the CoG's religion that was the issue: "Psychological kidnapping was the issue—brainwashing, white slavery, prostitution, fraud, false advertising, alienation of affection" (Patrick and Dulack 1976: 57). Over the next two decades, the so-called anti-cult movement was to develop into a nationwide and, indeed, worldwide movement, and numerous deprogrammers were to charge parents thousands of dollars to 'rescue' their offspring from not only the CoG, but also a wide range of alternative groups throughout the world. Following a number of court cases, the practice all but died out in the West, but still continues in Japan and a few other countries.

One of the most significant happenings to affect the entire 'cult scene' and which gave the anti-cult movement public credibility, was the suicides and murders of over 900 members of the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana in 1978. This, combined with several internal changes (see below), contributed to

4 It has been estimated that there were over 3,000 such Letters, which appeared in different forms for different audiences. Letters marked GP were for the general public; DFOs for disciples and friends only; DOs were restricted to disciples; LTOs for leadership trainees; and LOs for leaders only.

the CoG becoming increasingly secretive and going underground, living in special colonies whose whereabouts were known only to a few, so that it became difficult for some relatives to have any contact with converts—although there were disciples who did keep in touch with their families and a few scholars also had some contact, most notably Roy Wallis (1976; 1982), Rex Davis and James Richardson (1976), and David Van Zandt (1991).

Beliefs

In most respects, the theology of the CoG/TFI differs little from that of most Evangelical Christians. Taking the message of salvation to as many people as possible is of primary importance. The beliefs are based on a more or less literal interpretation of the Bible, with a particular focus on the New Testament. Members believe in the Genesis account of Creation, in the existence of Satan and of angels.[5] Their official website includes the following statements:

> We believe that God is a living God who continues to speak to His people today and to impart His message through ongoing revelation, prophecy, and words of spiritual direction and counsel…
>
> God exists eternally in the Trinity of three distinguishable but inseparable Persons: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit…
>
> Jesus was miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary…
>
> He suffered the death of crucifixion in order to atone for the sins of humanity, so that humankind could be reconciled to God…
>
> He will return to the world in the future to establish His kingdom of love and righteousness on Earth…
>
> [W]e are now living in the period of time known in the Bible as the "Last Days," which refers to the era preceding the return of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:1). His return to Earth will usher in a new millennium of peace, cessation of war and violence, and justice and equity for all mankind.[6]

Prophecy: The concept of prophecy within the movement has been used not only to portend great future events, but also, in the sense of being an 'inspired utterance', as an everyday phenomenon; it would not be unusual for disciples to announce that, for example, they have received a prophecy that they should

5 See Chancellor (2000) Appendix A (255–270) for a full Statement of Faith.

6 http://www.thefamilyinternational.org/en/about/our-beliefs/. All web links in this chapter were accessed on 19/4/2014.

go to a certain town to witness on a particular day, or even that they should have spaghetti for dinner that evening. Whilst religions have frequently tried to control prophecies that might compete with and thereby threaten the leadership, the CoG/TFI developed what Gordon and Gary Shepherd (2010) have referred to as a democratisation of prophecy whereby multiple prophetic channels can reach a consensus by repeatedly asking the Lord for clarifications. Not surprisingly, some prophecies have received more weight than others, and even for a short time after his death Berg was accorded a voice in defining the movement's beliefs and practices. Since the Reboot, however, prophecy has no longer played any role in directing the movement.

The Endtime: Berg declared himself to be 'God's Endtime Prophet'. At one time there was a suggestion that Jesus would return in 1993; however, there was always room for doubt about the exact timing (May 2013: 157). But even if the date was uncertain, there can be no doubt that the general expectation among the vast majority of disciples was that the time was nigh, and signs and wonders were continually exposed in the movement's literature and videos.

Relying heavily on the Bible, especially the Books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Revelation, the CoG/TFI explain that they do not base their expectations on a particular year, but on a sequence of events. The signs heralding the seven years leading up to the return of Jesus include wars, famine, drought, plague and pestilence, earthquakes, extensive surveillance, computer chips, globalisation, cloning, and the breakdown of the family. First, the Anti-Christ will appear as a world leader; after three and a half years of rule he will declare himself God incarnate and demand to be worshipped. There then follows the Great Tribulation, when the world is plunged into social chaos, one cannot buy or sell without being branded with the 'mark of the beast', and those who refuse the mark suffer terrible persecution. At the end of these three and a half years, Jesus will return and gather up all those who have accepted Him as their Saviour. Next, Jesus and His heavenly armies will exterminate the Anti-Christ's forces in the Battle of Armageddon, after which will follow a thousand-year peaceful and harmonious rule of Christ on earth. At the same time, those who had been raptured will live in transformed bodies in the Holy City. The millennium ends with the release of Satan who is then defeated in the Battle of Gog and Magog and thrown into 'the lake of fire', at which point God creates a new heaven and a new earth "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (*Revelation* 21:4).

Salvation is not through good works but through belief in Jesus.[7] It is, therefore, seen as vitally important that CoG/TFI missionaries should save as many

7 http://www.thefamilyinternational.org/en/about/our-beliefs/salvation-grace/.

people as possible before the arrival of the Endtime by persuading them (minimally) to say a short prayer, accepting Jesus as their saviour.

The Law of Love: Arguably, the beliefs that have most distanced the CoG/TFI from the rest of their fellow Christians have been Berg's antinomian outlook based on "All things are lawful unto me" (*I Corinthians* 6:12), combined with his interpretation of the Law of Love (based on *Matthew* 22: 36–40), when the injunction "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" came to be understood to mean that to be truly Christian is to extend one's love for one's fellow human beings by serving their sexual as well as their purely spiritual needs.[8]

In the movement's early days, a Spartan lifestyle was accompanied by strict regulations, with no dating permitted until converts had completed their sixth month of membership, and no sexual contact before marriage (Van Zandt 1991: 39). However, unbeknownst to the grass-root membership, some leaders, following Berg's example, were experimenting with new or multiple partners (Van Zandt 1991: 44). In a 1972 MO Letter, *One Wife* (#249), Berg wrote "We do not minimise the marriage ties. We just consider our ties to the Lord and the larger Family greater and more important" (Berg 1976: 1367).

The use of sexual relationships as a means of witnessing began in England in 1973 with Maria's success in attracting lonely men on the dance floor. When Berg and Maria moved to Tenerife the following year, they formed a secret ('selah') colony with a few trusted women disciples frequenting bars and nightclubs and, as 'Flirty Fishers' (FFers),[9] sleeping with potential converts.[10] In 1976, the practice became more widespread within the movement, with a series of MO Letters, *King Arthur's Nights* (#501), encouraging (male and female) disciples to adopt the new 'ministry'—and to complete detailed monthly FF Witnessing Reports.[11] James Chancellor (2000: 16) reports that the movement's records indicate that from 1978 to 1983 an average of 9,000 persons a year were led to Jesus through FFing, but his research led him to the conclusion that "Far more disciples were lost to the System as a result of Flirty Fishing than were ever gained". But it was not only souls that the so-called 'Hookers for Jesus' collected; wealthy and influential individuals were happy to provide money, various material goods, and help in such as matters as legal advice and immigration.

By no means all members engaged in FFing but, although it was stressed that it should only be conducted voluntarily and out of love with the consent

8 One practice that Berg unambiguously forbade was male homosexuality.

9 A MO Letter (#293, 3 Jan 1974), *Flirty Little Fishy*, provides an early depiction of this practice (Berg 1976: 527–534).

10 Later, escort agencies were also used.

11 http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/File:Ff-witnessing-report-late1970s.jpg.

of all involved so that no one would get hurt, quite a few members reported that they felt pressured into complying and admitted to feelings of guilt if they did not partake and/or of jealousy when their partners were sleeping with others.

Whilst many outsiders were shocked to learn of FFing, the aspect of Berg's interpretation of the Law of Love that was to cause particular revulsion was the effect it had on the movement's children; not only were they encouraged to experiment with their sexuality at an early age, the general culture of sexual liberty resulted in some adults engaging in sexual relations with children. In 1986, complaints from teenagers about unwelcome advances from older members, led to Berg's stipulating with whom (and minimum ages at which) teens could have intercourse, with more stringent policies being instituted in 1989, making sex between an adult and a minor an excommunicable offence.

But by then there were disturbing stories circulating in the media and the anti-cult movement. These resulted in a series of raids on Family homes, starting in Argentine in 1989.[12] These were severely traumatic for both the children and their parents. Despite their best efforts, however, the authorities were unable to produce any evidence that any of these children had been abused, and eventually they were all returned with, in some cases, compensation being awarded.

There is, however, little doubt that some children and adolescents had been abused. They were certainly exposed to literature with sexually explicit language and illustrations, and several have testified that they were molested or raped by their elders (Ward 1995).

By 1982, sexually transmitted diseases, particularly herpes, had begun to spread through the movement and the following year a MO Letter, *Ban the Bomb* (DFO1434), announced that sex between disciples should be confined to others in their own homes. FFing that involved intercourse declined and was officially ended in 1987 (Melton 2004: 22–26). 'Sharing' did, however, remain as a key feature of the movement, and sexual relations amongst adults within the homes were still endorsed, although new members were not permitted to participate during the six months after joining, and then only after producing a clear HIV test.

12 Further raids included one in July 1990, when police entered two homes in Spain, keeping 22 children in institutions for 11 months. In Australian pre-dawn raids in May 1992, over 100 children were taken into custody. A June 1993 raid in southern France removed 140 children. In September 1993, Argentine police seized 137 children and dozens of adults in dawn raids on five CoG communes. Adults were also imprisoned, some being kept for months in appalling conditions (Bainbridge 2002: 1–19; Borowik 2014).

Communal Living: From its origins, one of the core beliefs of the CoG/TFI was that, following the example of the early Christians, members should practise communal living: "And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need" (*Acts* 2: 44–45). Biblical names were adopted and, unlike hippies on the one hand or many other fundamentalist Christians on the other hand, CoG/TFI disciples presented themselves both as well-groomed and as sexually attractive young people. In the early days, women favoured long flowing hair and wore low-cut long flowing dresses;[13] men have usually been clean-shaven and neatly attired, at least in public.

Each day, time would be set aside for studying the Bible and the continuous flow of MO Letters. Singing, usually accompanied by guitars, and extemporary prayers also played a large role in worship. Household duties would be allocated on a rota basis, though disciples might specialise in particular tasks such as cooking, child care, translating literature, or 'provisioning' (see below). Compared to many fundamentalist Christians, women have played a relatively prominent role. Most homes were run by a married couple and although there was some conventional division of labour, men did their share of washing up and cooking.

Given the urgency of having to save as many souls as possible before the Endtime, the core role of disciples was missionising. Reporting the results of his covert participant observation of the CoG in the 1970s, Van Zandt (1991: 83–116) describes how teams of two to six members would be sent to establish a new centre in a town where they would rent accommodation to which they could bring back potential converts whom they had met through street performances or a combination of witnessing and distributing literature for donations, known as 'litnessing'—a practice in which almost all disciples were expected to partake. Once a second generation arrived, however, significant resources of time and money had to be diverted to bringing up the children and trying to socialise them into the beliefs and practices of the movement.

Finances

Unlike several other NRMs that emerged around the same time, the CoG/TFI has never accumulated wealth in the form of money, real estate or other financial assets. Whilst a movement like the Unification Church has acquired

13 Illustrations in public CoG literature were adjusted in countries where women are expected to dress modestly.

billions of dollars worldwide, full-time CoG/TFI missionaries could not normally take secular work, and they have tended to rent houses on a temporary basis. This, however, does not mean that forsaking all has meant that they have lived in abject poverty such as in another Christian-based new religion referred to as 'the garbage eaters' or the Roberts' group (Guerra 2000).

On joining, it was expected that converts would donate whatever material possessions they had, which the movement would either keep or sell; credit cards would be used until they were cancelled, and although frequently cut off from their relatives, there have been parents supporting their offspring. Another source of income was the Fellow Members, many of whom had jobs in 'the System' and tithed some of their income to assist the missionary activities of core members.

In the early days in Huntingdon Beach, the CoG initiated a practice known as 'provisioning', which has continued to be an invaluable resource. Initially collecting unsold sandwiches from lunch truck drivers (Bainbridge 2002: 4), the procedure became developed to a fine art, by which members would obtain not only food that had passed its 'sell-by' date, but all manner of material goods and services. Bunk beds, clothing, sofas, electrical equipment, washing machines, trucks, medical care, hotel rooms, community homes, airfares, and meals in friendly restaurants were among the many goods and services that the movement became skilled in securing from people who, although not members themselves, were impressed by the young Christian missionaries. As intimated above, the practice of FFing also became a source of provisioning during the nine years (1978–1987) that it was practised (Williams 1998).

Around the mid-1970s, a primary source of currency was 'litnessing'. Van Zandt (1991: 83–95), describes how well-groomed litnessers would take a bus to a nearby town where, in pairs, they would make for populated areas such as shopping precincts or railway stations, and approach 'sheep' (those likely to be receptive), while avoiding 'goats' (who would reject the message outright) and 'Romans' (police and other officials). Ideologically, the purpose of litnessing was to spread the kerygma (proclaiming the good news). The leaflets, which usually carried a Zurich box number, primarily emphasised personal salvation and God's love, but also carried messages of the impending Endtime. Each evening, litnessers had to fill in a report form detailing such information as the amount of literature they had distributed; the total money they had collected; the number of people who had accepted Jesus; and the hours they themselves had spent reading the Bible or MO Letters. At that time (the mid-1970s), a quota they were expected to meet was £10 per day and the distribution of a hundred pieces of literature, though some regularly achieved twice that amount.

As well as meeting the immediate needs of the homes, the proceeds of fundraising activities were sent as regular tithes to the movement's headquarters, which would use the money to support the administrative sections of the movement, including 'service homes' in which the disciples were engaged in specialist tasks such as producing material for distribution—primarily literature (such as MO Letters, posters and a variety of magazines, such as *Activated* or *Endtime News Digest*, which were translated into numerous different languages), but also numerous CDs and videos featuring religious songs, children's stories (*Kiddie Viddies* and *Treasure Attic*), or graphic depictions of the impending Endtime (*Countdown to Armageddon* and *The Final Stand*).

Money has also been acquired by disciples dressing as clowns and asking for donations for balloons they skilfully twist into various shapes for fascinated children in shopping malls. The clowns and singing troupes also visit hospitals and schools, but not every service the disciples provide is necessarily for financial gain. Provisioning is organised not only for themselves but also for others. For example, one of the homes in South Africa makes weekly collections from supermarkets of food that they take into the black townships to give children and others in need. This, they do in conjunction with providing literacy classes, giving information about HIV/AIDS and other services for the residents. Members also visit prisons, helping young offenders to find work once they are released.[14]

Organisation and Authority

Initially the movement consisted of Berg's immediate family, with a few disciples who lived with them. As the numbers increased and it became expedient for the main body of the group to move away from California, teams were formed, each with its own second-level leadership, often living in caravans, trailers or brightly painted buses. Later several large colonies housing fifty or more disciples were established in various countries around the world.[15]

With the growth in membership and the increasingly negative attention the CoG was receiving, the leadership became more authoritarian, stressing the need for obedience and security. A hierarchical structure was created, with Berg's extended family as 'Directors' at the top, then 'Regional Shepherds' who supervised the colonies in their geographical zone, and, below them,

14 http://www.thefamilyinternational.org/en/work/africa/#project_highlights/.

15 A Filipino complex, known as the Jumbo, had between 200 and 350 in the late 1980s (Kent 2000: 69).

'Shepherds', who led their individual colonies (Van Zandt 1991: 40).[16] By 1978, this structure had become unwieldy, however, and Berg, feeling that local leaders were exerting too much personal power, disbanded the entire structure—an event named the Reorganization Nationalization Revolution (RNR).

Berg declared that the Children of God no longer existed, and the movement used the name 'the Family of Love' for a short time, then simply 'the Family' until 2004, when it began calling itself 'The Family International'. The colonies were replaced by smaller homes, with fewer members who elected their own shepherds, who reported directly to Berg himself. The changes resulted in a significant loss of members and, three years later, in 1981, there followed the Fellowship Revolution, which introduced a new structure with communal homes being organised into Local Fellowship Areas that met weekly and were connected with District Fellowships, which met monthly and were in turn connected to National Fellowships, which met annually. At each level the leaders were elected rather than appointed, enabling the movement to become more responsive to the growing challenge of a second generation and problems such as those resulting from the movement's sexual mores (Shepherd and Shepherd 2010: 10).

Like the whereabouts of Berg and Maria, the locations and, to some extent, the personnel of the chief executive body of the movement, known as World Services (WS) from the mid-1970s, remained a well-kept secret from the rest of the membership. WS served as the main intermediary between Berg and his followers, receiving and sending communications throughout the movement. A rare insight into the way it operated in the days just before the Reboot is provided by the Shepherds' book, *Talks with the Children of God*, (2010).

Demographics

In the past, many new Christian movements have attracted the economically, politically or socially oppressed by offering them a better life in the hereafter. The wave of new religions that appeared in the West around the 1960s tended, however, to appeal disproportionately to well-educated, middle-class youth. The CoG was no exception. What had begun as about 50 members in California in 1968 had grown to about 300 in 1970, and romped to 1,475 full-time members by 1971,[17] By 1973, there were 2,244 disciples in 180 homes (Ward 1995).

16 Leadership positions have also included 'bishops', 'archbishops', 'ministers' and' counsellors', all being more or less directly responsible to 'King David' and 'Queen Maria.'

17 This growth was helped by about 175 joining through the incorporation of two groups of radical Christians (Van Zandt 1991: 39).

In a survey of 1,025 members in 1997, Bainbridge (2002: 25–62) found that the vast majority of early converts were born in the 1950s and had joined the movement when they were around eighteen years old. By far the largest proportion (just under a third) of members had met the movement and been born in the United States (24; 28). Of the other seventy-six countries from which converts in the survey originated, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany were among the most represented, with the movement's own statistics suggesting that members had come from ninety-three different countries (26–27). Half the respondents had lived in six or more countries and a quarter in nine or more (27).

It has been estimated that, over the years, about 35,000 people have lived in the movement, with the membership reaching its peak in the summer of 1999, when 10,219 core or 'Charter Members' (CMS) were spread across all five continents, living in 840 homes with an average occupancy of twelve,[18] and a further 2,750 'Fellow Members' (FMS) were living in 532 FM homes with an average of five persons.[19] South America was the most densely populated (20 percent of the total membership), followed by North America (18 percent) and the Pacific (15 percent). By that time, only 37 percent were adults.[20]

While studies on new religions have tended to focus on why people convert to the movements, relatively few have focussed on their leaving (Wright 1987 provides a notable exception). It is, however, important to recognise that there is usually a significant turnover rate, with converts most likely to leave within a short period of their joining, or when substantial changes have occurred. There have been several events resulting in defections throughout the history of the CoG/TFI, the RNR, the introduction of FFing and the Reboot being among them. Most commonly, disciples have left as individuals or with a partner, although there have been a couple of cases when small schisms were formed.

Orizzonti Nuovi (New Horizons) was a breakaway group led by Domenico Di Maio (1956–) in Italy in 1980 following the RNR. It never had more than around sixty members and, following Di Maio's conviction for sexual child abuse, the group had all but disappeared by the late 1990s (Caparesi 2002: 105–117). Another schism, the Jesus Christians, was founded in Australia in 1981 by Dave MacKay (1944–) following disagreements over practices such as flirty fishing.

18 CMS were fully committed to a life of missionising and living according to the rules of *The Charter* (see below).

19 FMS were fully committed to the movement's beliefs but not living under the strict rules of *The Charter.*

20 Statistics compiled from June 1999 report forms.

It established small missionary branches in a number of countries, but it too never attracted more than a few dozen members. Frequent disagreements and breakups eventually led to the movement being officially disbanded in 2010. However, the official website still exists at the time of writing,[21] and it has been reported that MacKay continues to operate at a covert level (Ross 2013).

The Family membership continued to fall as further changes were introduced, and by 2013 only 3,070 were still members, a noteworthy fact being that by now well over half were aged fifty or older (Borowik 2014).

The Second Generation

When in the 1960s and early 1970s the average age of family members had been around 23, with almost no children or over-thirties, this had meant there were few dependents and the members were free to travel round the world. By the 1990s, the average age was still around 23, but there were almost no disciples of that age, the younger ones being second-generation children born into the movement, and older ones being the now-ageing converts who had joined in the 1970s. The movement's statistics for 2002 reported a total of 8,789 Charter Members, of which 2,882 were converts and 5,907 had been born or raised in the movement. The majority of these second- or third-generation members had been born after the late 1970s, reaching a peak of around 300 per annum in the late 1980s and early 1990s,[22] due, in no small part no doubt, to the proscription of the use of contraceptives and the prevalence of the practices of sharing and FFing in the 1980s.[23]

Children were home-schooled, most of them following the internationally recognised CLE (Christian Light Education) or A Beka curricula. Given the proximity of the Endtime, they would not expect to proceed to further education as there was no point in preparing for a time that wouldn't exist.[24] There was also an assumption that those who were going to have time as adults would be spending their lives as missionaries. As they grew older, however, several

21 http://jesuschristians.com/.

22 Statistics compiled from January 2002 report forms.

23 It was not uncommon for female disciples to give birth to a dozen or more children. Those born as a result of FFing were known as Jesus babies.

24 I once casually asked a second-generation teenager who had been looking after a sick dog whether she had considered becoming a veterinary surgeon when she grew up. She looked at me in surprise at my lack of Endtime awareness as she replied "There won't be time".

expressed a desire to attend public schools and/or train for a skill or profession—and not all of them believed in, or viewed an imminent Endtime with enthusiasm.[25]

Not surprisingly, several children started to question then revolt against the demands of the movement. This resulted in a number of disciplinary practices being introduced. One of those to have suffered most severely was Berg's own granddaughter, Merry (Mene) Berg (1972–) (Ward 1995: 124–133). Between the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of 'Teen Training Camps', 'Teen Detention Camps' and 'Victor Programmes' were established to correct miscreants and ensure their full commitment to the movement. Children could find themselves punished by beatings with wooden paddles, being placed on 'silence restriction' for weeks at a time, and/or solitary confinement for as long as three months. Several also suffered sexual abuse in the camps (Kent 2000; Ward 1995).

A particularly tragic incident concerned the son Maria had conceived with a waiter whom she had flirty fished in Tenerife (Sara 1997: 50). 'Ricky' Rodriguez (1975–2005), known in the Family as Davidito, had served as an example for Berg's theories about child-rearing practices, with detailed accounts of his childhood documented in numerous MO Letters, including illustrated descriptions of sexual encounters with his carers.[26] In 2005 Ricky killed one of his childhood carers who had refused to tell him where to find his mother, then, after making a video in which he described his rage about the children who had been abused in the movement,[27] he killed himself.

The harm that children suffered was acknowledged in several letters expressing regret from 1993 onwards. After Berg died in 1994 the mantle of leadership passed on to Maria and her new partner Steven Kelly (1951–), known as Peter Amsterdam. In 2007, a three-part letter from Peter, *The Family's History, Policies, and Beliefs Regarding Sex* (#3671–3) detailed practices that had become accepted as wrong and for which he and Maria wished to apologise without reservation.

Further Changes

One of the characteristics of new religions is that they tend to change more rapidly and radically than older, more established religions. This certainly

25 One young second-generation mother confessed to me that she wanted to see her children grow up.

26 http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/Story_of_Davidito.

27 http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/Ricky_Rodriguez_Video_Transcript.

applies to the CoG/TFI. Internal changes can be the result of a revision or adaptation of beliefs and practices such as (in the case of the CoG/TFI) the imminence of the Endtime or the practice of FFing; alternatively, they may be a consequence of well-nigh inevitable demographic changes, such as the death of a charismatic founder, the ageing of original converts and the arrival of second and subsequent generations. External changes can be the result of general social change, such as the collapse of the Berlin Wall, which opened up new opportunities for witnessing to a traditionally Christian population,[28] or because of social reactions directly focussed on the movement by, for example, the media and anti-cult groups. One such significant event was the UK Court case.

In 1993, a woman, on learning that her daughter (who was in the movement) was pregnant, went to court to gain custody of the child in order to protect him from the child abuse that had been widely publicised in anti-cult circles and in the media. There followed what was then the longest family court case in British history.[29] Scores of members, former members and expert witnesses gave evidence. Before the final judgement, the movement published *The Charter of Rights and Responsibilities* (The Family 1995),[30] which, like the rules of monastic institutions, laid down details of practice that had evolved within the community on subjects such as the raising of children, health and hygiene rules, financial rules, and reiterating the rules about who could have sexual relationships with whom (at what age), as well as the authority structure of the movement, and definitions of different levels of membership.

The eventual outcome of the case was that Lord Justice Ward imposed a number of demands relating to such matters as the child's education, his domicile and having free access to his grandmother. He also ruled that:

> [The Family] must denounce David Berg. They must acknowledge that through his writings he was personally responsible for children in The Family having been subjected to sexually inappropriate behaviour; that it is now recognized that it was not just a mistake to have written as he did

28 It is worth noting that Eastern Europeans who converted in the 1990s were the same age as many Western second-generation members, but had a very different experience of the movement, which was becoming far more conventionally Christian.

29 The trial lasted from January to July 1994, with a further ten months for the Judge to prepare his 295-page-long Judgment, delivered in May 1995.

30 A second edition was published in 1998 as *The Love Charter*; a third edition in 2009 as *The Family Discipleship Charter*; and a fourth edition in 2010, as *Charter of the Family International*, which was updated in 2012. http://tficharter.com/.

> but wrong to have done so; and that as a result children have been harmed by their experiences.
>
> WARD 1995: 293–294

On behalf of The Family, Peter Amsterdam accepted the conditions and apologised for what he admitted had been the harm Berg had caused children, and custody was granted to the mother.

The Family underwent a number of fairly radical changes as a result of the court case and Berg's death. It now had a thriving public relations network, and social workers, the press, and scholars were invited to visit or even stay at special Family homes. However, at the same time, former members, particularly second-generation adults, had become increasingly vocal and organised in their attempts to tell their stories and warn people against the movement by writing books, appearing in the media, attending anti-cult meetings and setting up websites and networks offering help to second-generation leavers.[31]

The Family had been explicit about protecting children from sexual abuse since the late 1980s, but belief in the Law of Love was by no means abandoned, as was evident in a 1995 series of Letters from Maria, *Loving Jesus* (#306+), which encouraged adult disciples to imagine they were having sex with Jesus during intercourse and masturbation. Edited versions were written for 'Young Teens' (aged 14–16) and 'JETTS' (Junior Endtime Teens, aged 12–13). Since the Reboot, however, not only *Loving Jesus*, but all Letters with sexual references have been withdrawn, leaving only a statement on TFI's current website that reads: "… the marital metaphor used in the Bible to describe the intimate spiritual relationship between Jesus and His Church is meant to represent the passionate union of heart, mind, and spirit that Jesus seeks with each of His followers…"[32]

By the end of the millennium, it was becoming clear that not all those living in the communities were pulling their weight. Maria's Letter *Shake-up 2000* (#502) was an attempt to purge the movement of those who were not fully committed by telling disciples they should sign a contract pledging to live according to the rules of *The Charter*, or they were to become FMS or leave altogether.

In 2002, 'The Board Structure' was introduced, with six boards at national, regional and international levels, enabling grass-roots members to be more involved in decision making.[33] In 2004, the name The Family International was

31 http://www.safepassagefoundation.org/; http://archive.movingon.org/.

32 http://www.thefamilyinternational.org/en/about/our-beliefs/bride-christ/.

33 The boards covered children and parenting; education; JETTS/Teens; outreach; public relations; and visitation and shepherding.

adopted, and the category of Missionary Member (MM) was introduced for those who no longer lived in communities, could take secular jobs and/or send their children to secular schools.

The Reboot: Arguably the most radical change that TFI was to undergo, the Reboot might most appropriately be termed 'a radical deradicalisation'. A series of documents in 2010, followed by a series of videos in 2013,[34] spelled out the decision reached by Peter and Maria that there would, henceforth, be only one level of membership, and this would be open to any adults who accepted Jesus as their Saviour, were aware of TFI's history and of their responsibilities as spelled out in the updated *Charter*, and had completed a short reading course on the fundamentals of TFI's faith. Members would be expected to report regularly by email and to tithe or donate an unspecified sum to TFI headquarters or a member in need. It would no longer be a requirement to live in communities; members could work in the outside world, interact freely with non-members and were to be responsible for their own and their immediate family's futures, bearing in mind that the Endtime might not be as soon as they had once expected.[35]

The Bible was now to be considered the predominant source of revelation, with corporate prophecy de-emphasised. Past literature was withdrawn from circulation in order to undergo a radical reappraisal, with only teachings that reflected core beliefs and were aligned with the Bible being reintegrated (Borowik 2013: 21; Shepherd and Shepherd 2013). World Services and the Board structure were all but phased out, with only a minimal support for Peter and Maria, who referred to themselves as Directors. Peter began studying theology and has written posts on a number of issues, drawing on the writings of mainstream Christian theologians.[36]

Meanwhile, acknowledging the isolation that several members have felt by losing communal support and fellowship, Peter has told them that it is now their responsibility to get together with other Christians, either by relating to others through social networking and/or by getting involved with a local church.

What TFI will look like as/if it reaches the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, no one can as yet tell. It would seem, however, that it is likely to follow the by-no-means-inevitable but nonetheless common trajectory of 'denominationalisation' (Niebuhr 1929) as the early antinomian communes, with their

34 http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/Reboot_Documents/;http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbxqrLEh29I&list=PL8D8JvPMs5pzmGrruv8gZoQRmSYzWmM8K.

35 It had become apparent that TFI just did not have the financial resources to assume full responsibility for the needs of an ageing membership (Barker 2012: 8–11).

36 http://portal.tfionline.com/en/pages/getting-to-the-heart-of-it-all/.

millennial expectations and pressure to subsume the individual for the greater good of the group, have become a predominantly virtual community, set to become yet another member of the broad Evangelical church. But this is a movement that has always been full of surprises.

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CHAPTER 19

Jehovah's Witnesses
Anticipating Armageddon

George D. Chryssides

Introduction

Despite the fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses are probably the best-known religious minority worldwide, there is surprisingly little academic study of the Watch Tower organisation. There are many mainstream Christian critiques of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but most of these seek to rebut presumed doctrinal errors and allegedly faulty understandings of scripture, and do little to explore the somewhat complex origins and intricate worldview of their supporters. The few independent academic studies that have appeared in recent times tend to be either sociological (Beckford 1975; Stark and Iannaccone 1997; Voas 2008) or explore legal or historical issues relating to the Society (King 1982; Hesse 2001; Peters 2001; Henderson 2010).

Originally known as the International Bible Students Association, the movement was established by Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916) in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Although Russell denied that he was an Adventist (Russell 1894), his movement grew up within that context, and not long after the Great Disappointment of 1844, when William Miller—often regarded as the father of Second Adventism—wrongly predicted Christ's return. Adventists were coming to terms with the failed prophecy. Some of Miller's supporters, most notably Hiram Edson and Ellen G. White, had spiritualised the unfulfilled event, claiming that 1844 marked an event that took place in the heavenly realm, where Christ had gone to cleanse the sanctuary in preparation for receiving the faithful, while many Adventists continued to calculate dates. It is against this background that the Jehovah's Witnesses, then known simply as Bible Students, must be understood. In common with many Adventists, Russell came to believe in the heavenly event, but continued to calculate dates relating to past and future earthly events.

Adventism was characterised by a number of presuppositions. It was customary to divide human history into a number of Ages or 'dispensations': the antedeluvian world, the present world, and the world to come, the second of which was characteristically divided into a Patriarchal Age, a Jewish Age, and a Gentile Age. The Gentile Age was regarded as having a correspondence with the Jewish Age, giving rise to the Adventist theory of 'doubles'—events in the

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former prefiguring the latter, known as types and anti-types. Biblical prophecy, to which Adventists attached considerable importance, could therefore have more than one fulfilment, sometimes referred to as a 'lesser' and a 'greater', and several of the 'greater' fulfilments could still be expected in modern times. Special attention was given to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, which contained enigmatic references to numbers and time periods, and Adventist writers characteristically attempted to decode these prophecies, thus giving rise to an interest in end-time calculations. Above all, Adventists held that humankind was living in the last days, and that, notwithstanding Miller's failure, Christ would return soon to gather his faithful into heaven.

The Adventists', and subsequently Russell's, end-time calculations are not arbitrary, as critics such as Walter Martin (1985: 110–111) have suggested. They are complex, and are mainly based on several time periods referred to in the book of Daniel, where the author mentions 'seven sevens' and '62 sevens' (*Daniel* 9:25), '70 weeks', 'seven weeks and threescore and two weeks' (*Daniel* 9:24–27), 'a time, times and half a time' (*Daniel* 7:25), 2300 days, and 1335 days (*Daniel* 8:14 and 12:12). The early Adventists had speculated about these prophecies and the time periods to which they referred, and devised a number of principles for interpreting these time periods. One such principle was the 'year for a day' rule, which treated certain biblical references to days as years; each day of creation was reckoned as a 1000 year period, and God's 'Great Sabbath'—the period of the earth's completed creation—being equivalent in length to the six preceding creative days.

Charles Taze Russell and the Bible Students

In a brief autobiographical article, Russell relates that he was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, where he was brought up, first as a Presbyterian, and subsequently as a Congregationalist. Russell had problems with the teachings of mainstream Christianity: in particular, he could not accept Calvinist ideas of predestination, and the notion that an all-loving God would subject the wicked to eternal punishment in hell. Having had his faith utterly shaken by his doubts, Russell was passing a rather dingy building one evening in 1869, and, hearing singing coming from inside, decided to go in. There he heard the Adventist preacher Jonas Wendell (1815–1873), who had been one of Miller's followers (Russell 1906).

Inspired by Wendell's preaching, Russell gathered together a small group of men, who met regularly between 1870 and 1875 to study the Bible. They came to believe that Christ would return, not in physical form, but rather as an

invisible presence. Russell explained that the meaning of the Greek word *parousia*, typically translated as 'coming', more accurately meant 'presence', or literally 'being alongside'. When Christ returned, he would gather up his followers to heaven, 144,000 in all, many of whom still remained on Earth, and were known as the 'remnant' or the 'anointed class'.

Applying the Adventist principles and time periods to historical events in biblical and modern history, three dates emerged as significant for Russell: 1874, 1878, and 1914.[1] It should be noted that Russell championed these three dates simultaneously: contrary to popular belief, each successive date does not replace the previous one. The first of these dates signified Christ's entry into heaven, with the period lasting three and a half years in which he prepared the heavenly sanctuary in readiness for the saints. Those who had died would be translated into heaven after the preparation of the sanctuary, to reign with Christ, while the remaining saints on Earth would progressively be transported into heaven upon death, until 1914, when the last member of God's Church would be glorified. The year 1914 would be heralded by a time of increasing trouble, at the height of which God would set up his kingdom on earth. Many Adventists had held that, after the faithful had been translated into heaven, the earth would be destroyed by fire. Russell departed from Adventism on this point, insisting that Christ would return, not to destroy, but to bless the earth and establish his everlasting rule there.

The Watch Tower Society[2] was set up as a small publishing house for the distribution of tracts and the *Zion's Watch Tower* magazine, and initially known as Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society. Colporteurs were given the task of travelling the country, and later abroad, to distribute tracts and booklets. As the literature circulation increased, small congregations met to study Russell's material. In 1880 Russell began to visit various congregations in Pennsylvania and in New York, and in 1890 started to send his sermons to various newspapers in the United States, Canada and Britain. The following year he travelled to Europe—the first of many visits abroad on speaking engagements. Russell's major writing was his six-volume *Millennial Dawn*, later re-titled *Studies in the Scriptures*, the first volume of which appeared in 1886, entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (Zydek 2010).

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1 For more detailed discussion of Watch Tower Society dating, see Crompton (1996), Jonsson (1998), and Chryssides (2010).

2 I have used the term Watch Tower Society as a convenient abbreviation of the full names of the organisation, which are the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York. For complex reasons, the name Watch Tower is sometimes spelt as two words, and sometimes as one.

His main themes were the imminent end of the present order, Christ's ransom sacrifice, and the errors of mainstream Christianity. In particular, Russell taught that after the death of the first generation apostles, Christianity became corrupt, and absorbed ideas from pagan philosophies, and in particular from Greek thought. This had led to the mainstream churches creating a separate class of clergy distinct from the laity, devising elaborate rituals, formulating creeds that lacked strict biblical warrant, and teaching doctrines like the immortality of the soul, rather than the resurrection of the body, which he believed to be the authentic biblical teaching. Coming from a Protestant background, as he did, Russell had much to say against Roman Catholicism, which he construed as part of Babylon, and which is doomed to destruction, as foretold in the book of Revelation. However, Russell widened his target to include 'Christendom' or 'nominal Christianity'—the two terms which he typically used to describe mainstream Christian religion.

Rutherford's Leadership

In 1916 Russell died aboard a train in Texas, on one of his many speaking tours. He was succeeded the following year by Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869–1942), an attorney who was at the time the Society's legal adviser. Sometimes referred to as Judge Rutherford, he assumed office in 1917, the year in which America entered into the Great War.

Rutherford's period of office brought about a number of significant changes that altered the face of the Society, making it into the kind of organisation that is known today. During Russell's presidency, the International Bible Students Association had been a kind of federation of autonomous congregations, or 'ecclesias', as they were known. The *Watch Tower* magazine carried articles that were recommended for study, and suggested items for congregational singing. Rutherford wanted a more tightly structured organisation, requiring that congregations complied with the authority of the Watch Tower administration. Rutherford also emphasised house-to-house evangelism, for which Jehovah's Witnesses are possibly best known today. He stipulated that, in order to be an elder in a congregation, one had to undertake regular and substantial weekly commitment to this ministry.

Rutherford regarded technological advance as confirmation that humankind was living in the end times (1927: 297–298), and was keen to use the latest technology to further the aims of the Society. This included the use of sound cars (loudhailer vans), gramophones on which households could listen to Rutherford's sermons, and the Society's own radio station (WBBR). Like Russell,

Rutherford also wrote prolifically, and his writings came to replace those of his predecessor, whose books ceased publication in 1927 (Watch Tower 1973: 347). Rutherford's writings tend to be shorter and lighter, aiming at a popular and less theologically-motivated readership.

Other notable developments under Rutherford's leadership included the ending of Christmas celebrations, which the Society regards as pagan. A further significant innovation was the introduction of the name 'Jehovah's Witnesses', launched in 1931 at a convention in Columbus, Ohio, at which Rutherford gave an address entitled 'A New Name' (Watch Tower 1931: 291–297). This name, by which members are generally known, does not designate any legal entity: the name Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society continues to be the name of the legally incorporated organisation.

A further significant development occurred in 1935. At that time, there were substantial numbers of people who showed an interest in the organisation's work, but did not formally commit themselves. Rutherford referred to them as the Jonadabs: this was an allusion to the foreign king Jonadab, who came aboard the chariot of the Israelite king Jehu, and rode with him (*2 Kings* 10:15–16). By analogy, these twentieth-century Jonadabs were committed to the Society's aims, but did not formally belong. The Book of Revelation mentions a 'great crowd' (*Revelation* 7:9), apparently distinct from the 144,000, and there had been some speculation regarding their identity. At the Society's Assembly in Washington that year, Rutherford asked the audience, "Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?", whereupon over half the audience rose to their feet. Formerly the great crowd was regarded as those outside the organisation who were worthy of resurrection, such as the ancient Hebrew patriarchs, but from this point both the 144,000 and the great crowd included Jehovah's Witnesses.

It is sometimes claimed that the year 1935 marked the closing of the 144,000 anointed class. This is not strictly true. Although the numbers were reckoned to have been substantially completed by that year, Jehovah's Witnesses hold that it is possible to forfeit one's membership by falling away. It is therefore necessary for Jehovah to replenish the number, since 144,000 is construed as an exact total, and not an approximate or symbolic number.

Nathan Knorr and Frederick Franz

Rutherford died on 8 January 1942. He was succeeded by Nathan H. Knorr (1905–1977), who had been the Society's vice-president, and who had accompanied Rutherford on various journeys. Unlike his predecessors, Knorr did little by way of writing, although he had spoken extensively at various

Conventions. Knorr was more of a business administrator, and his main contribution to the Society was to strengthen its structure for overseas missionary work and, importantly, to ensure that those who engaged in mission, at home and abroad, were appropriately trained for their work. Knorr's major achievement was the Gilead School of Ministry, which opened in 1943 with an intake of 100 students, aiming to increase their Bible understanding together with their public speaking skills. This emphasis on training devolved down to congregational level, and congregations continue to offer extensive training in house-to-house ministry work and giving public talks. A short booklet entitled *Course in Theocratic Ministry* was issued, together with a small book entitled *Equipped for Every Good Work*. In 1946 *Let God Be True* was published, which remained the key study book for decades. Knorr's leadership also saw the introduction of the periodical *Awake*!, which continues to circulate, and which replaced the magazine *Consolation* (previously *The Golden Age*).

Nathan H. Knorr was succeeded in 1977 by Frederick W. Franz (1893–1992). Previously a convert from Roman Catholicism to Presbyterianism, Franz had begun training for the Presbyterian ministry, but became convinced of the truth of the Watch Tower Society's teachings after reading Russell's *Studies in the Scriptures*. Having worked at the Brooklyn Bethel since 1920, he became vice-president in 1945. Under Franz's leadership, the Society's Ministerial Training School was developed in order to train single men for missionary work and, as a result, the numbers of pioneers and congregations grew substantially (Weddle 2006: 70). During his period of office, a two-volume Bible Encyclopaedia was brought out, now entitled *Insight* (1988), and which continues to be used by Jehovah's Witnesses. However, Franz's most important contribution was the publication of the *New World Translation*—the Society's own distinctive translation of the Bible. The identity of the translators, appointed in 1949, is undisclosed, in accordance with Knorr's policy of anonymity, and the translators requested that their identities should never be revealed at any time in the future (Chryssides 2016: 164). It is speculated that Frederick Franz was largely responsible for the translation work, at least of the Greek. The translation was released progressively, starting in 1950, and completed in 1960 (It was subsequently revised in 1981, 1984 and 2013). It is important that scripture should be interpreted rightly, and Witnesses regard the Watch Tower Society as the authoritative custodian of divine teaching as revealed in scripture.

The Bible

Jehovah's Witnesses hold that the Bible is the supreme source of authority, and is ultimately of divine authorship. Some of the authors such as Moses, they believe,

had direct access to God and related their direct revelations, while the authors of the Greek-Christian scriptures belonged to the first generation of Jesus' followers. Writers who were not the recipients of first-hand direct revelation, they hold, drew on reliable sources that were able to claim direct access. The Bible is therefore inerrant on all matters of doctrine, ethics, and history. It is somewhat misleading to describe Jehovah's Witnesses as fundamentalist, if this term is equated with the five principles of fundamentalism formulated in the early twentieth century, and which included belief in the deity of Jesus Christ, and his bodily resurrection. (The Watch Tower Society teaches that Jesus was resurrected in a spirit body.) They have never produced any binding creed in addition to scripture, holding that the ancient creeds were the creations of an apostate Church, and that doctrines such as the incarnation and the Trinity are unscriptural.

Being in the Protestant tradition, the Society acknowledges the Protestant canon, but not the Apocrypha. However, it does not use terms Old Testament and New Testament, but rather Hebrew-Aramaic scriptures, and Greek-Christian scriptures. This is for two reasons. First, the Society rightly acknowledges that the word 'testament' is more accurately rendered as 'covenant'. Second, the Society teaches that there are not two covenantal periods in human history, but rather four, relating to the various dispensational periods in human history. There was an Abrahamic covenant relating to the period before Moses, and it is believed that humanity has still to await the period of the 'new covenant' which lies beyond the current Christian period.

The New World Translation has a number of distinctive features, as one might expect. It corrects certain errors in the King James Version that favoured mainstream Christian doctrine which the Society rejects. For example, 1 John 5:7 reads "Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these three are one", whereas the NWT, with justification, renders this text as "the spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement". More controversially, the first verse of John's Gospel is translated, "the Word was a god"—a rendering that has been much criticised by mainstream critics. One important feature of the New World Translation is its use of the word Jehovah to refer to God: Witnesses have deplored the failure of mainstream translators to employ God's personal name—Jehovah—which they have 'reinstated' 237 times in the Greek-Christian scriptures, and 6827 times in the Hebrew-Aramaic.

The Concept of God

Jehovah's Witnesses attach supreme importance to the divine name Jehovah, which they regard as God's personal name, by which he should always be addressed. Other words such as God, or the Lord, are generic names, and to use

such names when addressing God is to distance oneself from him. Jehovah is therefore spoken to like a friend, and prayers addressed to him are always extempore, rather than borrowed from tradition or prepared in advance and read aloud during worship. To view God as Trinity is to perceive him as a mysterious being, and, equally important to Jehovah's Witnesses, the doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere to be found explicitly in the Bible.

Jesus is therefore acknowledged as the son of God, but not God the Son. He was the first-born of God's creation, as the Bible affirms (*Colossians* 1:15), and existed before the creation of the world. Hence he is not regarded as a mere man: he is pre-existent, but not co-existent with God, and his begotten nature entails that there must have been a time when he did not exist. In his spiritual form, Christ's name is Michael. Although this identification is not explicitly asserted in scripture, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that it is supported by the references in the book of Daniel to Michael as the chief protector of God's people (*Daniel* 12:1), and the Book of Revelation's depiction of Michael as the one who will stand up against Satan in the battle of Armageddon (*Revelation* 12:6–8). It is believed that Jesus is the Messiah, but not in his pre-existent form: this office was conferred upon him at his baptism, when the holy spirit descends upon him and the voice from heaven asserts, "This is my beloved son, my anointed" (*Matthew* 3:16; Watch Tower 2005:40). The Watch Tower Society's Christology is thus both Arian and adoptionist.

Of supreme importance to Jehovah's Witnesses is Jesus' death. Witnesses insist that he did not die on a cross, but on a 'torture stake', which they assert is the true meaning of the Greek word *stauros*. Although this may seem a minor point, Witnesses avoid the words 'cross' and 'crucifixion', partly in the interests of biblical accuracy, but also because they believe the cross to be a pagan rather than an authentically Christian symbol. Christ's death is supremely important, being the ransom sacrifice for sin and thus the means of salvation. Jehovah's Witnesses affirm the importance of the resurrection, but do not believe that Jesus was raised in a physical form, but rather as a spirit being—the form in which he existed before his birth. Jesus' ascension into heaven was an offering up of this sacrifice to his father, and Jesus declared that this departure was needed if his disciples were to receive the holy spirit (*John* 16:7–14).

Unlike Jehovah and Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is not regarded as a person. Watch Tower literature points out that the Greek word *pneuma* means 'wind', and that the word refers to God's active force, rather than any personal form, and to emphasise this the term 'holy spirit' is invariably written in lower case throughout. Biblical allusions to the spirit as witnessing, speaking, helping, teaching, and guiding, are regarded as personifying figures of speech, rather than indications that the holy spirit is a person.

War and Blood

Jehovah is to be obeyed: he is not merely the subject of correct theological reflection, and Jehovah's Witnesses have not feared unpopularity and persecution in their endeavours to obey God's law. One particular area for which Jehovah's Witnesses are renowned is their refusal to take part in military conflict, and this stance derives from their interpretation of scripture. Isaiah gives the following description of paradise on earth:

> They will beat their swords into plowshares
> And their spears into pruning shears.
> Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
> Nor will they learn war anymore,
>
> *ISAIAH* 2:4, NWT

and Jesus says to Pilate, "My Kingdom is no part of this world. If my Kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought…" (*John* 18:36, NWT).

The reference to earthly and heavenly kingdoms is important in this regard. The Bible is replete with accounts of military conflicts between the Israelites and surrounding nations. Witnesses are therefore not pacifists, strictly speaking, maintaining that if it Jehovah were to command his people to fight, then they would be obliged to do so; they also point out that the military conflicts recounted in the Old Testament were for Jehovah's purposes, aimed at achieving and securing his theocratic kingdom. This is not what present-day wars seek to accomplish. Although Jehovah's Witnesses regard obedience to the law of the land as important (*Romans* 13:1), where civil law conflicts with divine law, obedience to Jehovah must take precedence. In both World Wars Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses have been prepared to endure hardship, persecution and imprisonment for their stance (Chryssides 2008: 135–136).

Blood

Towards the end of the Second World War blood transfusion became more widely used as a medical procedure, and this caused the organisation to consider its stance on the matter. The prohibition on blood was originally a food law given to Noah (*Genesis* 9:4), and was reinforced at the First Council of Jerusalem when matters of Jewish legal observance were debated (*Acts* 15:20). Jehovah's Witnesses will not eat meat that substantially contains blood, for

example blood sausage, although their stance is not as strict as that of the Jewish community, since they do not accept the traditional Jewish dietary laws.

Receiving a blood transfusion is ingestion of blood, which is regarded as ethically no different from violating the food law that was agreed by the early apostles and thus is a violation of Jehovah's law. The Witnesses' firm stance on blood does not apply to forms of treatment that involve the use of haemoglobin or blood fractions, since the quantity of blood involved is less. Dialysis equipment is permissible, since one's own blood is being extracted by medical machinery, purified, and returned immediately to the body. When organ transplantation became more widely available, the matter was debated by Watch Tower leaders; initially transplantation was forbidden, but at the time of writing it is regarded as acceptable, so long as transfusion is not involved.[3]

Although some Jehovah's Witnesses have died as a result of refusing blood, the Watch Tower organisation has advocated the use of alternative procedures, in particular blood volume expanders that will increase the quantity of cells in the patient's blood. Many Witnesses contend that such alternatives are almost as effective, and do not carry the same risks as transfusions. Witnesses have also been instrumental in the formation of Hospital Liaison Committees, in which elders from congregations discuss acceptable forms of treatment with medical staff. Practising Witnesses carry a 'no blood' card on their person, explaining their stance, in case they are unable to explain their beliefs in a medical emergency (Chryssides 2008: 74–75).

Rites and Ceremonies

Obedience to Jehovah also involves right and uncompromising worship. Jehovah's Witnesses dissociate themselves from mainstream Christianity, which has appropriated pagan practices, and attending mainstream Christian services can lead to 'disfellowshipping' (the Watch Tower term for expulsion). Jehovah's Witnesses are well known for the refusal to celebrate Christmas,

3 In June 2000 there were media reports that Jehovah's Witnesses had made a U-turn on the issue of blood, and that it was no longer a disfellowshipping offence. This was incorrect. From that date, any Witnesses who wilfully accepted blood were by their own action considered to have disassociated themselves from the Watch Tower Society. The change was in the procedure: congregations no longer had to instigate disfellowshipping proceedings. For a detailed discussion, see Barker (2000).

Easter and birthdays. Christmas is avoided for a variety of reasons, the principal one being that it is a pagan festival, being derived from the Roman Saturnalia. The dating of Christmas was set by an apostate church, and there is no scriptural justification for observing the festival. As Christmas has become increasingly commercialised, the Watch Tower Society deplores the greed and materialism that surround it.

Just as there is no scriptural injunction to celebrate the birth of Jesus, there is no biblical warrant for the celebration of birthdays. Jehovah's Witnesses were slower to dispense with birthday celebrations, which were not phased out completely until 1951. The Society came to the view that the practice of celebrating birthdays was, like Christmas, essentially pagan, and no Jew or early Christian is ever recorded as having celebrated a birthday. The Bible only mentions two birthday celebrations: one of an Egyptian pharaoh (*Genesis* 40:20–22), and the other of the Roman governor Herod Antipas (*Matthew* 14:6–11). Both were foreign rulers,[4] and both incidents ended in calamity: Pharaoh's butler was executed, and Herod ordered the beheading of John the Baptist. Additionally, birthday celebrations are reckoned to give undue recognition to the individual whose birthday it is, and, like Christmas, they tend to be materialistic. Halloween is another festival from which Witnesses disassociate themselves, partly because they believe it to be Celtic, and thus pagan, in origin, but mainly because it involves the occult (*Deuteronomy* 18:10; *Galatians* 5:19–21; Watch Tower 2013: 6–9).

Jehovah's Witnesses will often give similar justification for the non-celebration of Easter, as they do for Christmas. It is regarded as a pagan festival, 'Easter' being an Anglo-Saxon word associated with the Saxon goddess Eostre, and the festival being associated with spring and fertility, underlined by the practices of having Easter eggs and rabbits, the latter being regarded as a pagan fertility symbol. However, the avoidance of popular and mainstream Christian Easter celebrations runs deeper than this. Unlike Christmas and birthday celebrations, which were originally observed and subsequently forbidden, Easter does not appear ever to have been celebrated by members of the Watch Tower Society. The reason for this appears to go back to the Adventist belief in celebrating Jewish festivals. At the Last Supper or, as Jehovah's Witnesses prefer to call it, the Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus enjoins his disciples to "keep doing this in remembrance of me" (*1 Corinthians* 11:23, NWT).

4 Watch Tower literature states that Herod was only nominally Jewish, and his family were actually Ideumeans, having been forced to become circumcised by John Hyrcanus, the Maccabean ruler, in 125 BCE.

Witnesses hold that the original Lord's Evening Meal was a Passover celebration, and hence should be observed annually, like the Passover. However, Witnesses mark the strict calendar date of the event—the fourteenth of the Jewish month Nisan. The decision to observe the annual Memorial in this way therefore uncouples the Watch Tower Society's festival from both the Jewish Passover and the mainstream Christian Maundy Thursday. The Memorial service consists of an opening song, an extempore prayer, and a Bible talk, followed by the distribution of the 'emblems' (the Society's preferred term for the bread and wine). Since the ceremony is a re-enactment of a Passover meal, the bread is unleavened. Originally, the service was open to 'anointed' members only, but in 1938 members of the Great Crowd were invited to attend for the first time. Only the anointed class may partake of the emblems; the rest of the congregation simply handle the bread and the wine, and then pass them along the row in which they are sitting. Since relatively few of the 144,000 remain on earth, it is now commonplace for no one to consume the emblems at all. The service ends with a song, following the practice of Jesus and his disciples, as recounted in the gospel narrative (*Mark* 14:26).

The other practice that is enjoined by scripture is baptism. Anyone wishing to join the Watch Tower organisation would be required to undergo baptism within the context of the Society. Previous baptism within a mainstream denomination does not count. Baptism is by immersion, in line with presumed New Testament practice, and is administered only to those who are of sufficient age to understand the commitment that is involved. Anyone who wishes to present themselves for baptism is counselled by the elders, and must answer over one hundred questions: some of these are on the Society's teachings, while others are designed to verify that the candidate's lifestyle is appropriate. (Watch Tower 1986: 100–135).

The regular worship of a congregation takes place in a Kingdom Hall. This is an unadorned, entirely functional building, devoid of any religious imagery, and set out with seats in rows, with a slightly raised platform at the front. The only visible indication that the Kingdom Hall is a place of worship is the year text that is displayed on a wall: this is a biblical text that the Society selects annually, and is used as a focus for inspiration during that year. Until recently, Witnesses were expected to attend five meetings each week, but number has now been reduced to two, with two pairs of meetings combined into one. The Sunday service opens with a song, and continues with prayer—always extempore—and a Bible talk. These are always led by elders, all of whom are men, since women are not allowed to address a congregation. In contrast with the practice of mainstream churches, no Bible passages are read as formal lessons, but the talk invariably refers the audience to verses in the Bible, which they are

expected to look up. The second part of the meeting is a Bible study, based on a designated *Watchtower* article, which members are encouraged to read in advance. The content is read by an elder, and the officiant then puts questions to which members of the congregation are invited to respond. This is not a discussion, but rather a check on comprehension, and an opportunity for members to illustrate the content of the article by providing examples from their own personal experience.

Congregations are arranged into circuits of between 20 and 24 congregations, and are known as circuits. Circuits are likewise grouped together in districts, which fall under a branch office that roughly corresponds to a country. Larger gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses occur in districts and circuits, and are called Assemblies and Conventions respectively. Meeting together as an Assembly or a Convention is in accordance with the practice of both the ancient Hebrews and the early Christians. Circuits will normally have their own Assembly Hall, which is larger and has more facilities than a Kingdom Hall. Baptisms take place either in Assemblies or Conventions, partly to signify that the candidates for baptism belonged to a wider community of God's people, and partly because Kingdom Halls are too small to have a baptismal pool in which to immerse the candidates.

Prophecy

Jehovah's Witnesses continue to attach importance to biblical prophecy, and are famed for their belief that Armageddon is soon to be expected, when the present system of things will draw to its close, with Satan and his angels being defeated by Christ and his heavenly armies. Witnesses have often been accused of changing the dates for the end. However, while there have undoubtedly been changes in their dating and in their expectations, the phenomenon of changed dates has been greatly exaggerated by critics, who characteristically forget that there is not one single end-time event, but a chain of events leading to Armageddon and beyond. For example, the currently held 1914 date relates to the casting out of Satan from heaven, while the 1918/1919 date relates to the time when the preparation of the sanctuary was complete, and members of the 144,000 began to take their places in heaven. It was a former expectation that, prior to Armageddon, the 'faithful men of old' referred to in Hebrews 11, would rise from the dead and live among us. Joseph Rutherford specified 1925 as the date on which this would occur (Rutherford 1920: 88). Although this was a failed date, as Rutherford himself had to acknowledge, the date did not replace either 1914 or 1918, but related to a quite separate end-time event.

Although, following the failed 1925 prophecy, Rutherford had stated that there would be no further setting of specific dates, the years 1975 and—to a lesser extent—1984 are often mentioned as dates when the Jehovah's Witnesses had apocalyptic expectations that failed to materialise. As far as the Society's written publications are concerned, there were only a few rather guarded hints that 1975 might be a key date. Its significance lay in the fact that it was exactly 6000 years after the presumed date of the creation of Adam, and thus would mark the end of Jehovah's seventh creative day. One publication quoted President Frederick W. Franz as saying:

> What about the year 1975?... Does it mean that Armageddon is going to be finished, with Satan bound, by 1975?... It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God.
>
> WATCH TOWER 1966: 631

Apparently other speeches of Watch Tower leaders went further in encouraging popular speculation that Christ's millennial rule would commence in that year, and some Witnesses went as far as selling their property in order to finance their increased evangelistic work (Cole 1985: 322). Many, of course, were disillusioned, and some left the Society. It was subsequently explained that Adam's creation did not necessarily mark the end of the sixth creative day: Jehovah created Eve at an unspecified time after Adam's creation, and it cannot be precisely determined when that creative day ended.

The year 1984 is perhaps less remarked upon, although it is the theme of one book by two ex-Witnesses (Botting and Botting 1984). Being seventy years on from the pivotal 1914 date, some Convention speakers apparently encouraged their audiences to believe that there might be some significance in this fact. A subsequent speculation was that the year 2014 might be significant, being the centenary of 1914. Whatever the precise date, Jehovah's Witnesses continue to expect the imminent occurrence of Armageddon. This will be a spiritual battle in which Christ's heavenly hosts will conquer Satan and his demons, after which Christ's millennial rule will commence. This will be a thousand-year period in which the earth will gradually be restored to its former paradisial state, and during which time the dead will progressively be raised and judged. Those who have not wilfully rejected Jehovah during their lives will be offered a further opportunity to accept 'the Truth' (the Jehovah's Witnesses' term for the Society's teachings), and those who do so will be able to gain everlasting life on Paradise Earth. Those who do not will simply return to oblivion. After the millennium, as predicted in scripture, Satan will be released for a short period and have the opportunity to wreak havoc and to

win humans back to himself. His release will be short-lived, however, and he will be finally destroyed, as the Book of Revelation predicts (*Revelation 20*: 1–3; Chryssides 2008: 92–93).

Organisation

In the coming new world, the system of government will be theocratic. Jehovah and Jesus Christ, together with the 144,000 anointed ones, will rule over the restored earth. This is the ideal societal structure, to which the Watch Tower Society, as Jehovah's organisation on earth, seeks to aspire. The structure of the Watch Tower organisation is simultaneously an attempt to restore the structure of the early Church which was founded by Jesus Christ, and an anticipation of the final restoration of the structure in the New World, which will take place after Armageddon. Meanwhile, as things stand on earth, the Society needs to be run in accordance with the laws of human governments, which entail that incorporated companies must have directors, boards, and systems of election. In terms of human organisation, there are two legally incorporated organisations: the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, and the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York. Running parallel with these is a spiritual organisation, led by a Governing Body. The Governing Body oversees the spiritual affairs of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and is ultimately responsible for defining the Society's teachings and for overseeing its publications and its evangelistic work.

Over time, various changes in their Society's organisation have been implemented in order to bring the earthly organisation more into line with the heavenly one. Under Rutherford's leadership, the office of elected elder was abolished, in favour of a more theocratic system whereby leaders were appointed by the Society's hierarchy. In the two incorporated societies, however, a system of voting by shareholders prevailed. When Knorr assumed office, he opposed the practice, on the grounds that it made voting dependent on one's financial ability to buy shares. In place of this system, he substituted a scheme whereby the number of shareholders would be reduced: there should be no less than 300 shareholders, and no more than 500, and all of these would be appointed by the Board of Directors. At that time, it could be safely assumed that the Board of Directors was drawn exclusively from the anointed class. This created a cluster of problems as time went on: the anointed class was dwindling in numbers, and the great crowd, who were quickly coming to be the majority of the Society's members, were denied a say in the organisation's running.

At a congregational level, the system of having a sole congregational overseer was replaced by a system whereby a number of elders would oversee a congregation, with a chairman who would be rotated annually, by alphabetical order. An additional category of office bearer was appointed: the ministerial servant. These two offices corresponded to the early Church's arrangement of having elders and deacons: the elders are responsible for the teaching and disciplinary matters within a congregation, while the ministerial servants look after the congregation's material affairs, such as accounting, literature distribution, and coordination of house-to-house visitation.

In recent times, the Society has been faced with two related problems. Armageddon has not occurred, and with the passage of time the Governing Body has advanced in age. Any expectation that the end would occur within the lifetime of the 1914 generation was dwindling. Accordingly, in 1995 there was a reinterpretation of the meaning of 'generation'. A *Watchtower* article (Watch Tower 1995) explained that the concept should be construed, not as a group of people born within a specified time period, but rather as a class of people with common characteristics. Jesus spoke of "a wicked and adulterous generation" (*Matthew* 12:38), and such people will continue to exist until the Society's expectations are realised.

With the Governing Body ageing, it was not feasible that they should undertake all the Society's decision-making, and hence various committees were appointed. There are six in all: a Personnel Committee, a Publishing Committee, a Service Committee, a Teaching Committee, a Writing Committee, and a Chairman's Committee. In 2000 the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania was split into three distinct organisations: the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, the Religious Order of Jehovah's Witnesses, and Kingdom Support Services, with the respective responsibilities of supervising education, full-time staff, and construction and maintenance.

In 2000, a further major change occurred. Milton Henschel (1920–2003)—the Society's fifth president, who came to office in 1992—took the unprecedented step of resigning. Former presidents had remained in office until their death, but Henschel's resignation heralded a new policy. His role was taken over by two successors, rather than one: Don A. Adams (1925–), who became President of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, and Max H. Larson (1915–2011), who headed the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York. Larson was succeeded by Leon Weaver, Jr.—the first black president. None of the succeeding appointees belonged to the anointed class and hence were not appointed to the Society's Governing Body. This heralded a new method of organisation: the two Societies as legal corporations would be run with Presidents and Boards of Directors, while the spiritual organisation

would continue to be headed by a Governing Body, whose members all belonged to the 144,000, but none of whom had any legal authority by virtue of their office. A number of younger members were recognised as belonging to the 144,000, thus ensuring that the Governing Body could continue to be replenished.

Opposition to Jehovah's Witnesses

Almost since their inception, the Bible Students have been controversial. This was partly on theological grounds, since the organisation questioned basic Christian doctrines, expressing its own opposition to mainstream Christianity, and encouraging those who belonged to it to leave. Unlike other Christian groups in the US at the time, the Society's concerns were predominantly theological, and its leaders did not seek to offer physical or monetary resources to help the needy in society. The press subsequently alighted on scandals involving Russell, such as the Society's attempt to sell a 'miracle wheat' in aid of its funds, but which proved to have no remarkable features. The refusal by its supporters to take part in war has inevitably been a major factor contributing to its unpopularity, and its repudiation of patriotism culminated in the Bibelforscher (the German name for Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1930s) being sent to concentration camps. In many Eastern European and Communist countries, the Jehovah's Witnesses are banned from distributing literature and organising meetings.

Popular opposition in the West, often—although not exclusively—by Protestant evangelical Christians, is directed at their changes in doctrine, failure of prophetic expectations, and rejection of mainstream understanding of the Bible and Christian doctrine. Much criticism has also been directed to the Society's policy of disfellowshipping errant members, resulting in the severance of any social contact with them. While the Watch Tower Society has explicitly acknowledged 'adjustments in view', attributing such changes to its recognition that "the path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established" (Proverbs 4:18, NWT), the Society has conversely been criticised for its intransigence on matters such as the dating of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion as 607 BCE, and its refusal to abandon the pivotal 1914 end-time date. The Watch Tower Society has steadfastly refused to accept changes in the name of modernity, declining to give women an equal role within the organisation, to democratise its administration, or to adopt a more sympathetic stance towards homosexuality. It continues to avoid ecumenical or inter-faith activities, and continues to reject theories of evolution and biblical criticism.

One might wonder what the future holds for Jehovah's Witnesses if their prophetic expectations remain unfulfilled. The organisation maintains a steady state in terms of membership: 2.1 percent growth in 2012–2013, compared with an increase of roughly 2.5 percent in world population. Members persist in their tireless house-to-house evangelism, proclaiming their firm conviction that humanity is living in the end-times and that Armageddon is to be expected very soon.

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CHAPTER 20

Mormonism in America

Itinerary to Allegiance from Joseph Smith to Mitt Romney

Carter Charles

Introduction

"A Mormon in the White House?" was a recurrent phrase beginning in 2006 when Mitt Romney, Governor of Massachusetts, and unwavering member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (or Mormon Church), announced his presidential ambitions. In many cases, the phrase conveyed a mixture of awe and of fear to think that a Mormon was a serious contender to the White House. It revealed as well what people thought about Romney and his religion: (1) that Mormons were polygamists who blindly obeyed their ecclesiastical leaders; (2) that they were not 'Protestant Christians', which therefore precluded them from vying for the highest office in the land; (3) that they rather belonged to the margin of American society, some place where the clock had stopped ticking since the nineteenth century.

The paradox, we shall see, is that Mitt Romney became a presidential candidate because of Mormonism, a religion that has moved across America and which has a culture of engagement with the rest of the nation. That culture has taken many forms over the years. On the other hand, we will see that Romney's religion has illustrated the encounter of defiance, followed by what Max Weber (1946: 78) calls "legitimate violence" by 'the State', and by 'established' groups, demanding allegiance and conformity. Hence, beyond Mormonism, this chapter's aim is also to illustrate American society's power to marginalise non-conformist religions, to conform, and to eventually integrate them.

Emergence, Independence, and Departures

Mormonism emerged during the second Great Awakening which shook the Eastern part of the United States between 1800 and 1840, a period when churches, many of them merely 'religious cells', mushroomed like modern high-tech start-ups, and competed for souls (Appleby 1998; Finke and Stark 2005). Preachers then, like Charles Grandison Finney, went from place to place, preaching in 'camp-meetings' and trying desperately to bring 'sinners'

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to conform to God's will, to be 'born again' through baptism, before the End of Times. Mormonism's future founder, although a teenager around 1820, remembers it was a time of "an unusual excitement on the subject of religion" which "created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, 'Lo, here!' and others, 'Lo, there!'" This shifting religious context seemed to have affected "the whole district of country" as the converts were joining the various Protestant sects (Smith, J. 1948, 1:3). Palmyra, where Smith lived, was wrought up so much by itinerant preachers promising the doom of hellfire that it became known as the 'Burnt-Over District' (Cross 1950; West 1957: 14).

Smith's parents were not regular church-goers but he was nevertheless drawn into the religious upheaval, moving from mere teenage spectator to become an actor on the religious market. He declared to have prayed to know what church to affiliate with and that, in response to his supplication, God and Jesus visited and conversed with him in the spring of 1820. Such a claim could have been dismissed as one more among the many visions heard of in the religiously-torn East at that time (Shipps 1965: 10; Bushman 1988: 59). But Smith's had to be addressed because he challenged the legitimacy of existing churches affirming to have learned from God himself that they were all wrong, and that he had been called to restore the true Church of Jesus Christ. This bold statement comes as no surprise to scholars of religion: new groups often enter a competing religious market by discrediting those already in place and by shattering whatever consensus may have existed in order to establish their own legitimacy. Accordingly, Smith went on in April 1830 to organise in Upstate New York what is now known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Aside from his 'First Vision', in Mormon parlance, Smith announced to have witnessed an avalanche of other divine manifestations before he organised the Church. One such vision led him to break further away from accepted norms by publishing the Book of Mormon, a volume of ancient scripture he claimed to have translated from golden plates handed to him by an angel. The title of the book has been used in a derogatory way since the nineteenth century to identify Smith's followers. The book's authenticity is still an object of debate and it has successfully been satirised in an eponymous Broadway musical. But more than could have been imagined, it has rocked Christianity to its core, challenging the belief that the Holy Bible is the only and final word of God.

As with any book claiming to be scripture, the Book of Mormon belongs to and conveys the social and historical concerns of a culture. Jan Shipps (1965: 21) rightly points out that Joseph Smith captures in it a "visionary anthropological account of the American past" with passages which refer to America as "the land of promise" and as "a land which is choice above all other lands",

reflecting "the exceedingly nationalistic sentiment of the age in overt fashion". Shipps notes further that the book is "a provocative statement of the prevalent American desire to declare cultural independence from Europe" in that it "bypassed the European culture filter altogether" by connecting the United States directly to the sources of the Judeo-Christian tradition, in "maintain[ing] that the American Indians [are] remnants of the twelve tribes of Israel, and that [the resurrected] Christ appeared on [the American] continent in 34 A.D.".

Clearly, Smith founded a Church grounded more than any other in the American consciousness; but he soon discovered that his rejection of the religious consensus had lead to a united front of persecution against himself and his followers. As early as June 1830, mobsters and Protestant ministers in Upstate New York used all sorts of stratagems to prevent him from making converts: a dam set up for baptism was destroyed and those who were eventually baptised were the object of mockeries and threats. As for the Mormon prophet, he was arrested "on the charge of being a disorderly person, of setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon, etc." (Smith, J. 1948, 1: 86–97). The court which heard Smith's case acquitted him but the trial turned out to be the first in a series of conflicts where opponents of the Mormon Church, local and federal authorities would use legitimate means of violence, including judiciary powers, to coerce the Mormons into conformity.

Missouri: A Promised Land not so Free

Persecutions in New York did not prevent early Mormon missionaries from making inroads into the Protestant share of the religious market elsewhere. Such was the case in Kirtland, Ohio, where they baptised more than a thousand members of a group called the Campbellites, or Disciples of Christ, led by a certain Sydney Rigdon. This conversion *en masse* more than doubled the Church's membership, making it stronger in Ohio than in New York. It soon became "expedient," according to a revelation dictated by Smith in December 1830, "that the Church gathers in Ohio".[1] Contrary to what other utopian groups had done, this first relocation was not motivated by a desire on the part of the Mormons to withdraw from the world but rather as a way to escape from and to be better prepared to face persecutions. It also coincided with the nineteenth century movement of Americans to the freer Western Frontier in search of a better future and fewer restraints. Such ideals also motivated their gathering

1 Doctrine and Covenants 37:3. This book is a compilation of some revelations received by Smith and his successors.

in Jackson County, Missouri, designated within a month after Ohio as the site of their New Jerusalem. It is there that the Mormons' allegiance to non-religious norms was also tested.

Mormons began streaming into Missouri in the summer of 1831. Within two years, they represented 1200 of Jackson County's 3,500 inhabitants, with more arriving every month. Moving beyond the status of a Church, they quickly developed a sense of peoplehood (O'Dea 1954) and a communitarian way of life which ultimately threatened the socio-political structure of the County and, of the State (Lyon 1972). Coming from the North-eastern, non-slave holding, part the country, the Mormons were generally abolitionists. The Missourians perceived that abolitionist leaning in an article titled "Free People of Color" published in July 1833 in a Mormon newspaper. It triggered a wave of sporadic tensions which escalated in the summer of 1838. On the symbolic day of July 4th, Sidney Rigdon, who had become Smith's second, delivered an inflammatory oration which concluded:

> And that mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for they will have to exterminate us: for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed.
>
> CRAWLEY 1974

Skirmishes ensued on October 24th and 25th, with casualties in the ranks of the Missourians. Two days later, the governor of Missouri issued an executive order of retaliation to the State's militia officers: they were to march against the Mormons who had to be "treated as enemies, [...] exterminated or driven from the State [...] for the public good" (Boggs 1838). Mormons soon learned that unlike Sidney Rigdon, whose threat was rhetorical, Governor Boggs had the means of legitimate violence: Missouri militiamen cornered and killed eighteen of them on October 30th at a settlement called Haun's Mill. To avoid extermination, the Mormons capitulated, abandoned their possessions and hurried from Missouri to Illinois.

Illinois: Land of Refuge and of the 'Politicisation' of Mormonism

The Mormon Church experienced several important developments in Illinois. On the religious level, Smith systematised the Church's theology and instated complex, Masonic-like rituals (Bueger 2002; Homer 2014) and definitely

placed Mormonism outside of the pale of mainstream Christianity in revealing to his close associates that God wanted them to engage in polygamous relations like the Old Testament patriarchs. On the profane level, Smith set out on a campaign whose goal was twofold: obtain redress for the forced expulsion of his followers from Missouri, and protect the Church from more persecutions.

To accomplish the first goal, Smith launched a communication campaign and memorialised the federal government. He was granted an interview with President Van Buren in November 1839 and he submitted a petition to Congress for redress. To Smith's great disappointment however, both the president and Congress denied his request. For him, Van Buren's refusal to come to the rescue of his followers was both a blatant aberration—how was it that a higher authority could not command a lower one?—and the cause of political corruption. Van Buren reportedly told him: "I can do nothing for you! If I do anything, I shall come in contact with the whole state of Missouri" (Smith, J. 1948, 4: 40). On another occasion, Smith reported Van Buren's words with a slight variation saying: "Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you [...] If I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri" (Smith, J. 1948, 4: 80). The refusal also led Smith to lament that

> the Constitution is [...] not broad enough to cover the whole ground. Although it provides that all men shall enjoy religious freedom, yet it does not provide the manner by which that freedom can be preserved, nor for the punishment of Government officers who refuse to protect the people in their religious rights, or punish those mobs, states, or communities who interfere with the rights of the people on account of their religion. Its sentiments are good, but it provides no means of enforcing them.
>
> J. SMITH 1948, 6:57

As a Jacksonian Democrat, Van Buren actually advocated individual States' rights as opposed to centralised federal structure. Still, his refusal to assist the Mormons was not only motivated by political greed. Whether it was him, another president, or Congress, it was a fact that at the time, federal institutions were constitutionally powerless when it came to religious matters. Freedom of religion, which Smith was invoking, had been imbedded in the federal Constitution since 1791, but as may be gathered from his words, it was left to the States to interpret and to enforce it. This meant that the States had full authority to command allegiance and regulate religious affairs within their

borders, including the power to use violence if it were required.[2] In other words, if the Mormons wanted redress, they had to go to the State whose governor had issued an order to exterminate or to chase them. This denial will be as consequential on the Mormon prophet and on the Church's itinerary as the events that would unfold in Illinois.

The Mormon 'refugees' were welcomed with open arms in Illinois in the village of Quincy, on the banks of the Mississippi. Those who welcomed them claimed to have been motivated by Christian concern. Such may have existed but it was secondary to local interests. Political leaders in both Quincy and Illinois understood that the influx of Mormons could turn to their advantage: they knew that the Mormons were hard-working believers who could boost their economy and that they were a significant voting bloc to be had. They therefore opted to work *with the Mormons* instead of using the bellicose approach of the Missourians. Conscious of those facts, the Mormon prophet also decided to make the best of the situation by transforming the Church progressively into a political *apparatus*.

This 'politicisation' of the Mormon Church began in the summer of 1839. Shortly after Smith's meeting with Van Buren, the Church acquired swampy lands on both sides of the Mississippi and built a city that Smith named Nauvoo. The politicisation accelerated with the arrival in 1840 of convert John C. Bennett. He would be excommunicated in 1842 but he quickly rose before that to become one of the Mormon prophet's closest associates because he knew how to, and effectively helped, obtain a charter for Nauvoo in 1841. More than a mere right to self-administration, Joseph Smith interpreted the charter as a total and perpetual delegation of power which made the Mormon city equal in authority with the State (Brodie 1945, 351). Other than being a prophet, Smith was by 1842 the mayor of Nauvoo and the lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion, a militia created by the charter. According to D. Michael Quinn (1994, 106), this legion was the largest militia in all of Illinois, enlisting up to three thousand men by 1844.

In fact, Nauvoo was very much like a theocracy; it was ruled largely by Mormon authorities. This meant that the Mormon Church had indeed found a

2 The federal pre-eminence Smith was calling for on this subject became a reality a century later when the Supreme Court decided in *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (310 U.S. 296, 1940) that the First Amendment forbids the States, as much as it does the federal government, from enacting laws "respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". This case was brought before the U.S. Supreme Court after Jehovah's Witness ministers Newton Cantwell and his two sons had been denied their freedom of religion right, among others, by the courts of Connecticut because of their religious activities.

haven where its leaders were the ones making and enforcing the rules of allegiance. Quinn (1994, 107) notes also that the Mormons provided specifically that "Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Episcopals, Universalists, Unitarians, Mohammedans, and all other religious groups, sects and denominations" should enjoy the same rights and privileges in Nauvoo. Those who ridiculed others' beliefs could be fined $300. Aside for the fine, the religious tolerance provision is reminiscent of William Penn's instruction to the Quakers "to injure no person upon a religious account, and to consider as brethren all those who believe in one God" (Voltaire 1734).

It would be misleading, considering the Mormons' communal attitude in Nauvoo, to assume that their city was a way to cut themselves off from society. But their utopian religious experiment has to be viewed as the embryo of a real political project. Smith seemed to have conceived it as *a city upon the Mississippi*, a sort of replica of John Winthrop's "city upon a hill", which had to build itself first but which ultimately intended to change the world prior to Christ's return. They wanted to apply in Illinois and throughout the United States what they were doing in Nauvoo. This explains why the Mormons engaged with the rest of the world and participated in political activities: William Smith, the prophet's younger brother, was elected in 1843 to Illinois Assembly; Joseph Smith corresponded with promising political leaders like Stephen Douglas and John C. Calhoon before eventually throwing his hat in the political arena in 1844 as a the first Mormon presidential candidate.

Not very many Mormons know about their first prophet's presidential candidacy, let alone non-Mormons. It is one of the minute details left behind in history but it was serious business for Smith, and consequently for his followers. The missionary force of the Church was mobilised to both preach the Mormon gospel and to campaign for the prophet-candidate (Robertson 2000). His idealism transpires in his platform, *General Smith's Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States*,[3] but it also tells about how Mormonism situated on major issues towards the second half of the nineteenth century. The Mormon prophet advocated for instance:

- The suppression of prisons (except in certain cases) and of court-martials for desertion;
- The consolidation of individual freedom and ownership rights;
- The reduction of the size of the federal government and that it be given pre-eminence over the States;

3 Smith preferred to use his more patriotic title of 'general', in reference to his position as lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion.

- The creation of a federal bank, with branches throughout the country;
- A return to the Jeffersonian idea of territorial expansion by annexing Oregon and, upon their requests, Texas, Mexico, and Canada;
- The immediate abolition of slavery, or at least by 1850.

Smith's plank on slavery was by far the most detailed. He considered that slavery was a cause of "reproach and ruin, infamy and shame" because Blacks were "like other human beings" who had to be hired and paid for their labours. He proposed in particular to sell federal lands and use the money saved in the sizing down of the federal government to compensate slave-owners. He would not live long enough to see the presidential election, much less the abolition of slavery, without compensation, in 1863.

Many Mormons and non-Mormons in Illinois resented some of the doctrinal innovations introduced in the Church, polygamy in particular, and the fact that Smith was blurring the line between religion and politics. His opponents created the *Nauvoo Expositor* to 'expose' those wrongdoings. The paper was short-lived however. The publication of its first and only volume on June 7th, 1844, was followed by an immediate order by Smith and Nauvoo's municipal council to destroy its press, deemed "a public nuisance". For the opponents of the Mormon prophet, such an attack on the freedom of the press was a manifestation of the religious tyranny that prevailed in Nauvoo. It had to be stopped. Thomas Sharp, a journalist who had grown suspicious of Smith's intention upon observing his large Nauvoo Legion, called for the extermination of the Mormons:

> War and extermination is inevitable! Citizens ARISE, ONE and ALL!!!—Can you stand by, and suffer such INFERNAL DEVILS! to ROB men of their property and RIGHTS, without avenging them. We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE WITH POWDER AND BALLS!!![4]

Smith went into hiding for some time before he eventually surrendered to Illinois authorities to face treason charges. He was incarcerated on June 27th. That evening, a mob of about 250 people took into effect Sharp's call, stormed the jail and lynched Smith and his older brother. The assassination was meant to do away with Mormonism once and for all. Instead, it plunged the Church into a succession crisis from which Brigham Young emerged as a new leader. But his leadership skills would not be exerted in Nauvoo: Illinois authorities

4 Thomas Sharp, 1838. *Warsaw Signal*, June. Quoted as in original.

decided it was in the best interest of everyone to repeal the city's charter and for the Mormons to leave the State.

New Leader, New Zion, and Pressing Demands for Allegiance

The first Mormons crossed the Mississippi in the winter of 1846 and trekked further west on what would be their ultimate exodus. They began arriving in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th, 1847. Officially, the arid place belonged to Mexico. Its sovereignty would eventually be transferred to the United States in February 1848 in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; but the Mormons anticipated the transfer by about eight months. One of their first official acts upon arriving in the territory was to plant the American flag on the highest summit in Salt Lake City, signifying that they had claimed the land in the name of the United States, to which they pledged their allegiance, at least as they understood the term.

The Mormons' pledge was confirmed about a month after the treaty's ratification when they petitioned Congress for the admission of their territory into the Union as the "State of Deseret". A Senator from Missouri noted with irony that "Deseret", which actually referred to a honeybee and its hive according to the Book of Mormon, sounded more like "desert". What really alarmed Congress though was the sheer size of Deseret. It was Nauvoo in grand! Its eastern and western borders included half of Colorado and as much of California; it covered part of Wyoming, Idaho and of Oregon, in the north; and it spread southward to the border of present-day Mexico.

Instead of a State, Congress voted the Clay Compromise in September 1850 with a provision creating a smaller Territory named Utah, after a local Indian tribe. The Territory was smaller than the anticipated Deseret but large enough to included Nevada and part of Colorado. Successive acts of Congress until 1868 reduced it to the size of present-day Utah. But size, status, or official name did not change much for the Mormons who continued to identify the place as their 'Zion'. They made the beehive, which reminds of their industriousness and sense of community, the symbol of Utah. Without any particular reason to question their loyalty, Congress also ratified the nomination of Brigham Young as the first governor of the Territory. Thus, it was with the blessing of the federal government that the Mormons began to create once again, and at a much larger scale, the "Kingdom of God" they had experimented in Nauvoo.

Two periods of *laissez-faire* by Washington, from 1850 to 1857, and from 1861 to 1874, provided ample time for the prophet-governor to reign as "the Lion of the Lord" over the Utah Territory. Evidence of federal disinterest for what was

taking place there between 1850 and 1857 was the fact that the Mormons felt at home enough to announce in 1852 that polygamy, which was secret and limited to a handful of leaders in Nauvoo, was a fundamental tenet and practice of their religion. Even worse yet was Washington's failure to replace Brigham Young in 1854 at the conclusion of his term.

The kingdom Young was building was in many ways similar to the one created by the Anabaptists in Munster, Germany, in 1534. In both cases, it was a place for the pure or chosen people of God, one of its characteristics being polygamy, "the true Christian marriage" for the Munsterites. Contrary to Munster though, the kingdom of the "Latter-day Saints" in the New World was autonomist, not separatist. They wanted it to be in the United States, to enjoy the advantages of the Union while living according to their own religious values. Such was the meaning of allegiance for the Mormons. Nevertheless, words made it to the East, through federal officials who had abandoned their posts, that they were practicing polygamy and that federal laws could not be enforced in Utah. The Republican Party, created in 1854, made it a presidential plank in 1856 to eradicate polygamy and slavery, the "twin relics of barbarism".

The Democrats carried the election but the newly elected president, James Buchanan, took it to heart to replace Governor Young and to quell the 'Mormon rebellion'. In May 1857, he ordered some of the finest Frontier officers of the U.S. army, Brigadier-general William S. Harney and Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, to assemble "in haste" a force of 2,500 troops with ammunitions and necessary provisions and to march upon Utah. This show of force in the heat of the slavery debate and growing talks of secession alarmed the southern States. Their officials in Congress acted through the House of Representatives and passed a resolution requesting the communication of the documents and the rationale behind the decision to send a military expedition to Utah. Buchanan explained in his response:

> The people of Utah almost exclusively belong to this [Latter-day Saints] Church, and believing with a fanatical spirit that [Young] is governor of the Territory by divine appointment, *they obey his commands as if these were direct revelations from Heaven. If, therefore, he chooses that his government shall come into collision with the Government of the United States, the members of the Mormon Church will yield implicit obedience to his will*… Without entering upon a minute history of occurrences, it is sufficient to say that all the officers of the United States, judicial and executive, with the single exception of two Indian agents, have found it necessary for their own personal safety to withdraw from the Territory, and *there no longer remains any government in Utah but the despotism*

> *of Brigham Young*. This being the condition of affairs in the Territory, I could not mistake the path of duty. As Chief Executive Magistrate I was bound to *restore the supremacy of the Constitution and laws* within its limits.
>
> This is the first rebellion which has existed in our Territories, and humanity itself requires that we should put it down in such a manner that it shall be the last. To trifle with it would be to encourage it and to render it formidable. We ought to go there with such an imposing force as to convince these deluded people that resistance would be vain, and thus spare the effusion of blood.[5]

Brigham Young's forces kept the U.S. army at bay and exposed to the elements from the fall of 1857 to the summer of 1858, after Buchanan extended a general pardon to him and to his associates. Since there was no direct confrontation, it followed that there was formally no effusion of blood. Unofficially though, this 'Utah War' was far from being 'bloodless'. It was in that context, on September 11th, 1857, that a group of overwrought Mormons, thinking they were avenging their murdered prophet and others, stained the history of their religion in the heartrending bloodbath at Mountain Meadows, in southern Utah: they convinced the Indians in the area to assist them in killing about 140 civilians (adults and children), en route from Arkansas to California.[6]

The 'Utah War' is also called 'Buchanan's Blunder' because Buchanan did not investigate the alleged 'Mormon rebellion' before sending the troops and did not take into account military advice on climatic and geographic conditions. Still, his message to Congress clearly shows that it was allegiance that was at stake. It was not in his intention, he wrote, to interfere "with the religious opinions of the Mormons, as long as they remained mere opinions, however deplorable in themselves and revolting to the moral and religious sentiments of all Christendom"; but how *not to interfere* with beliefs when they define identity and behaviour? Buchanan feared that in case of conflict between the federal government and Utah, the allegiance of its citizens, "almost exclusively" Mormons, would go in the first place to Brigham Young, this not because he represented the federal government but rather because the Mormons *believed* that he was "divinely appointed" to the governorship, and that he received revelations from God. In other words, belief, when it came to the Mormons, was antithetic to loyalty. This criticism will be used from then on and across the centuries to oppose Mormons in politics.

5 Richardson, 1899, v: 454–455, 456. Italics added.

6 Bigler and Bagley, 2011: 156–179.

Washington's demands for the Mormons' allegiance became dormant throughout the Civil War and Reconstruction. The Morrill Act, the first anti-polygamy law was passed in 1862 but remained a dead letter. Efforts began in earnest with the Poland Act in 1874: it outlawed polygamy and gave federal authorities the means to prosecute and imprison Mormon polygamists by the hundreds. From then, the battle for allegiance moved to judicial grounds. The Mormon Church set up the test-case *Reynolds v. United States* with George Reynolds, Brigham Young's personal secretary, and challenged the laws, arguing that they infringed on their right to free exercise of religion. Reynolds was convicted, and the case was appealed to the federal Supreme Court. On January 6th, 1879, the Court handed an unprecedented decision. In the first place, it upheld Reynolds' initial conviction and declared that polygamy belonged neither in the United States nor in the western hemisphere. This was an official seal on the Protestants claim that "something" in Mormonism, polygamy, made it "an essentially foreign theocracy", an un-American Church which operated "out[side] of the sphere of religion" and which necessarily conflicted "with a republican people [that is, 'Protestant America'] and their institutions".[7] We know that the Protestants raised the same charge of un-Americanness against the Catholics.

In the second place, and most importantly, the Court established a distinction between belief, protected by the "free exercise" clause, and the practice of religion, which had to be regulated. To the question "Can a man excuse his practices to the contrary because of his religious belief?", the Court replied emphatically that "To permit this would be *to make the professed doctrines of religious belief superior to the law of the land*, and [...] to permit every citizen to become a law unto himself", making government an empty shell (emphasis added).[8] Plainly put, an American owes allegiance first to his country.

The Court's decision paved the way for several stringent demands for the Mormons' allegiance. The most significant were the Idaho Test Oath in 1884 and the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887. The Idaho Oath devised a pledge which required Mormons to swear to the following: (1) that they were not polygamists; (2) that they did not belong to a Church which taught polygamy; (3) that they would not, either publicly of privately, advocate it, and; (4) that they regarded the United States Constitution and laws as "the supreme laws of the land". As for the Edmunds-Tucker Act, it also carried a provision to disenfranchise

7 Beadle, 1877: 372. Terryl Givens offers in *Viper on the Hearth* (1997) a thorough treatment of how Mormonism was depicted in the nineteenth century American religious landscape.

8 Italics added. For further reading on religion, polygamy and the law in the United States see Firmage and Mangrum, 2001; Gordon, 2002.

Mormon polygamists, together with measures against the Church: it ordered its dissolution and the confiscation of its assets above fifty thousand dollars; and it disbanded the Church's political arms, that is, the territorial militia and Utah's People Party. Both laws were challenged and appealed to the Supreme Court. In the Idaho case, *Davis v. Beason*, the Court upheld in February 1890 the indictment of Samuel D. Davis in virtually the same terms as in *Reynolds*. Three months later, it handed another major decision in *Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* and stated that Congress had acted constitutionally in legislating the Mormon Church out of existence because it was:

> … a contumacious organization, wielding by its resources an immense power in the Territory of Utah, and employing those resources and that power in constantly attempting to oppose, thwart, and subvert the legislation of Congress, and the will of the government of the United States.

This decision, together with the previous ones, led the Mormon Church to officially renounce the practice of polygamy in October 1890. Demands for allegiance continued however in the long trial in the U.S. Senate from 1903 to 1907 against the seating of Reed Smoot, a Mormon apostle. The Protestant Churches of Utah, which had already successfully lobbied Congress to exclude Representative-elect and polygamist Brigham H. Roberts in 1900, spearheaded a national protest movement and brought charges of polygamy and of disloyalty back to the fore in an attempt to have the Senate expel Smoot. In their view, Mormons were not qualified, because of their beliefs and the practice of polygamy, to hold seats in the federal legislative body. They specifically denounced Smoot in their memorial to Congress as belonging to:

> […] a self-perpetuating body of fifteen men who, constituting the ruling authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or 'Mormon' Church, claim, and *by their followers are accorded the right to claim, supreme authority, divinely sanctioned, to shape the belief and control the conduct of those under them in all matters whatsoever, civil and religious, temporal and spiritual, and who thus, uniting in themselves authority, in church and state,* do so exercise the same as to inculcate and encourage a belief in polygamy and polygamous cohabitation…
>
> U.S. SENATE 1906, I: 1

As captured in "The Real Objection to Smoot," a *Puck Magazine* caricature (Keppler 1904), fear was also pervasive that the apostle-senator was on errand

FIGURE 20.1
"The Real Objection to Smoot," Keppler, Puck*, 1904*

for his Church and that he was bound, by a secret religious covenant, to receive his orders from the Mormon prophet and to vote according to revelations received from a supposed Mormon God. Indeed, continued the Protestants, the Mormon apostle could not be but a liar and a traitor to the United States. As a consequence, they prayed the Senate to overlook constitutional requirements such as regularity of election and citizenship and to judge the validity of his election solely on religious grounds: "We submit," they wrote,

> that… however formal and regular may be Apostle Smoot's credentials or his qualifications by way of citizenship, whatever his protestations of patriotism and loyalty, it is clear that the obligations of any official oath which he may subscribe are and of necessity must be as threads of tow compared with the covenants which bind his intellect, his will, and his affections, and which hold him forever in accord with and subject to the will of a defiant and lawbreaking apostolate.
>
> U.S. SENATE 1906, I:25

Among the conditions to help Smoot keep his seat in the Senate, the Mormon Church took actions, beginning in 1903, to really make polygamy a thing of its past, and to progressively align itself with the nation's Protestant "idea of a Church" (Flake 2004). To the charges of disloyalty because of the Mormons' belief that their Church was the "Kingdom of God", Joseph F. Smith, nephew of Mormonism's founder and the Church's prophet from 1901 to 1918, wrote:

> [...] the Kingdom that was announced by the Baptist and the Nazarene [...] was in no sense inimical to any earthly government [...] but tended to make its adherents better citizens and more useful to the state because of their attachment to the Church and Kingdom of God. They were to 'render unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's' while they 'rendered unto God the things that were God's'... And history repeats itself in the old cry of 'treason' and the charges that the 'Mormon' organization is *imperium in imperio*. Yet, it does not attempt to exercise the powers of a secular government [;] its influence and effects are to strengthen and promote fidelity to the law and loyalty to the nation where its followers reside... [The Church] is solely an ecclesiastical organization. It is separate and distinct from the state. It does not interfere with any earthly government (Smith, J.F. 1903).
>
> This definition of a spiritual kingdom which separates religious and secular powers, and whose purpose is to support earthly governments is consistent with the Church's twelfth 'article of faith'. It states that Mormons "believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law". However, this declaration, penned by the founding prophet prior to his murder in 1842, was true only in name. It did not inspire the type of theocratic kingdom that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young had endeavoured to establish in Nauvoo and in early Utah.

James Buchanan would have been pleased to hear the following final statement of loyalty from Reed Smoot before the Senate:

> In closing, let me say, under my obligation as a Senator... that I have never taken any oath or obligation, religious or otherwise, which conflicts in the slightest degree with my duty as a Senator or as a citizen. *I owe no allegiance to any Church or other organization which in any way interferes with my supreme allegiance in civil affairs to my country*—an allegiance which I freely, fully, gladly give.[9]

Smoot and Joseph F. Smith were the perfect illustration of what Mormonism had become. Their statements were proof that the federal government had succeeded in reshaping Mormonism: it had evolved from a radical utopian sect into a more mainstream religion; one that was willing to abandon some of its practices or to tone down its beliefs in order to meet the demands of the State.

9 *Congressional Record*, U.S. Congress, 1907: 3412. Italics added.

Those elements, coupled with unabashed support from friends, including President Theodore Roosevelt, a 'Constantin figure' for Mormonism (Charles 2013: 290–291), satisfied a majority of Senators to confirm the Mormon apostle as one of theirs. Their favourable vote was a tacit statement that from the standpoint of civil authorities, Mormons were conform and fit to participate in national politics, Smoot being the first of them.

In all, Apostle Smoot served for thirty years in the U.S. Senate, rising to the chairmanship of its Finance Committee. Several other Mormons followed in his footsteps in government service at the highest level. Among them were: Marriner S. Eccles, Chairman of the Federal Reserve (1934–1948); Ezra Taft Benson, President Eisenhower's Secretary of agriculture (1953–1961) while he was also an apostle in the Mormon Church; Ivy Baker Priest, United States Treasurer at the same time as Benson; George Romney, Mitt's father, himself a presidential candidate before becoming Nixon's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (1969–1972); and there are currently more than fifteen Mormons in both houses of Congress. Mormonism never really was an obstacle to the political ascendency of those individuals, except for Mitt Romney.

Mitt Romney and 'The Ghost of Mormonism Past'

In July 2007, a *Newsweek* poll showed that 28 percent of Americans would not elect a Mormon president, and they thought that 48 percent of the nation would not either (Ramirez 2007). Other surveys would confirm that America was not ready for a Mormon in the White House. In 2012, Robert Bennett, former Utah Senator, reported what a friend had told him: "If Mitt Romney were Presbyterian, he would [already] be the Republican nominee" (Whitley 2012). Indeed, more than anything, Romney was beset during the primaries of both of his presidential bids by 'the ghost of Mormonism past'. His religion had abandoned its most objectionable aspects and had shown the guarantees of allegiance in civil matters, but for Evangelical Protestants, self-proclaimed keepers of the seal of doctrinal conformity, allegiance *in religious matters* had yet to come. In their eyes, Mormonism remained a non-Christian, even an anti-Christian religion based on misguided doctrines. In the 2008 presidential primaries, for instance, Robert Jeffress, an adamant Southern Baptist minister, warned:

> The value of electing a Christian goes beyond the public policies that he or she may enact… Followers of Mormonism, Hinduism, Islam, they're not worshiping the same God in a different way. We believe they are following after false gods. And as Christians, we can look at the Bible and see very

> clearly that God always judges a nation that has a ruler who introduces false gods into that national life.
>
> SECULAR COALITION 2011

Similar criticism from the Evangelical Protestant wing of the Republican Party pressured Romney into declaring his religious neutrality. Following the example of Reed Smoot and Catholic John Fitzgerald Kennedy, he delivered his famous "Faith in America" speech in which he insisted that he was "… an American running for president" and that his candidacy should not be defined by his religion (Romney 2007). He addressed the Protestants' fears declaring in terms not unlike Smoot almost exactly a century before that in case of election,

> […] no authorities of my Church, or of any other Church for that matter, will ever exert influence on presidential decisions. Their authority is theirs, within the province of Church affairs, and it ends where the affairs of the nation begin… I will put no doctrine of any Church above the plain duties of the office and the sovereign authority of the law…

Romney would not be as fortunate as Smoot or as Kennedy. The very next day after his speech, and just a few weeks into the Iowa caucus, Mike Huckabee, one of his rivals, cleverly exploited his weak Mormon spot in the columns of the widely-circulated *New York Times*: "Don't Mormons believe that Jesus and the devil are brothers?", he asked (Chafets 2007). Huckabee subsequently apologised but as a Southern Baptist minister, he knew that his rhetorical question was a torpedo. It ruined the Mormon candidate's chances of winning the Evangelical vote, without which he could not win the Party's nomination. Huckabee snatched the Iowa-First in the Nation caucus from Romney by 34.4 to 25.2. His successful attack led Romney to suspend his first campaign in early February 2008.

Romney's Mormonism was again a major stumbling block in the primaries during his second presidential bid. The first volleys of religious attack came in May 2011 from Warren Cole Smith, a very influential conservative journalist. He dismissed the proposition that a president Romney would be like Kennedy. For him, Romney was "unfit to serve" because he "promote[d] a false and dangerous religion" based on the doctrine of "continuing revelation":

> Mormons believe in the idea of 'continuing revelation.' They may believe one thing today and something else tomorrow. This is why Mormons have changed their views, for example, on marriage and race. Polygamy was once a key distinctive of the religion. Now, of course, it is

> not. Mormons once forbade blacks from leadership roles. Now they do not. What else will change?
>
> W.C. SMITH 2011

Warren Cole Smith was not nostalgic of the 'Mormon harem' or of a past when Mormonism was a 'Whites only' religion. He actually voiced the Protestants concern with Mormonism's belief that God had manifested himself to Joseph Smith and that he continued to speak to living prophets. "Evangelical Christians should have no part" in the effort of electing someone from the "false religion of Mormonism" Warren Cole Smith insisted. 'Old Evangelical voices' like Pat Robertson cried a different message in 2011, and again in May 2012 but they went almost unheard. A majority of Evangelicals voted for the two Catholic candidates, Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich, who did not obtain the vote of their own co-religionists. The campaign began shifting on real political grounds once Richard Land, one of the 'new and authoritative voices' of American Evangelicalism, asked Santorum to withdraw from the race. Romney's religious conformity ordeal effectively ended then. He did have other weaknesses which proved him a less seasoned candidate than Barack Obama. But the Evangelical wing of his Party greatly advanced Obama's cause and shut the Mormon candidate out of the White House in trying to make his Mormonism another version of Evangelical Protestantism.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the stereotypes about Mitt Romney's religion are rooted in America's dynamic and passionate religious history. Most of those stereotypes, if not all, often prove to be out-dated in light of Mormonism's evolution over the years. Concerns in 2012 that a president Romney would have taken his orders from a defiant and disloyal prophet out in Salt Lake City had not changed one *iota* from the ones voiced in 1858, oblivious to the fact that Harry Reid, a Mormon, was the third most powerful man in America as majority leader in the U.S. Senate. He was in a way a political heir of Reed Smoot and had not proven to be disloyal to the State.

Obviously, history was repeating itself with Romney. No other Mormon candidate before him had come so close to the White House. Hence, it can be said that Evangelical Protestants' opposition to him was a re-enactment, before the authorities of a hegemonic and historical religion this time, of Smoot's trial in the Senate. Only time will tell though if Romney has opened the door of the White House to fellow Mormons like Smoot did the Senate's.

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