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January 2013
Dear Dialogue Partners,

In this issue of the *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue*, we begin to examine two "hot topics" that have crossed many of our family tables and neighborhood cafes: religion and conflict. The faithful and unbelievers alike so frequently bring the two ideas together in conversation and question, and we at the Journal wondered how scholars might consider the ideas in tension.

In "On the *Indigenismo* of American Religion: Toward a Postcolonial Pedagogy," Paul Rodriguez begins with the suppression of the rights of Mexican Americans to explore educational and political policy. Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon examines conflict as religious practice in "Ethnic Cleansing as Religious Practice: Religion, Ethnicity and Political Conflict in Bosnia during the War." Peter Dziedzic begins with conflict and moves to questions of identity and engagement in "Re-approaching Inter-religious Engagement in Israel/Palestine: Moving Beyond Questions of Religious Identity and Experience." In "Democracy: Instrument for or Expression of a Christian Political Order?" by George Harinck and Hans-Martien ten Napel ask if the political and religious realms can work together for society to flourish.

In this issue, we also share a special feature, a paper sponsored by the Memnosyne Foundation, through their collaboration with the *Journal* to create the Memnosyne Interfaith Scholarship. The inaugural award winner of this prize is Bhikshuni Lozange Trinlae, who shares "Leveraging Inter-religious Dialogue into Transformative Action Using Practical Theology's Reflexive Frameworks," an examination of how the field of Practical Theology can inform inter-religious work.

Finally, Adam Edward Hollowell reviews several recent books to query and reflect upon religion and conflict in "Tablet and Sword: Religion and Violence in Recent Popular Scholarship on the Muslim World," and Michael Kuchinsky shares a report from the field in "Pilgrimage in Abrahamic and Other Faiths: Recovering America's Narrative of Religious Pluralism."

We look forward to continuing the conversation online, on *State of Formation*, and at bus stops, coffee hours, and places of worship.

In peace and dialogue,
Stephanie Varnon-Hughes and Joshua Stanton
Founding Editors in Chief

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On the Indigenismo of American Religion: Toward a Postcolonial Pedagogy, by Paul Rodriguez

This paper attempts to show that a study of the history of Mexican religion can help to explain the present state of the study of Mexican-American religion within the U.S. educational system. I contend that there is an historical link between the destruction of the Aztec sacred books of knowledge by the Spanish Conquistadors and the current ban on Mexican-American studies under Arizona House Bill 2281, as well as the limited status of the study of Latino religion within southern California community colleges (and elsewhere). The suppression of Mexican-American history within the broader framework of the American educational system leads to a weakened ability for Mexican-Americans to thrive as historico-political communities.

Introduction: The Mexican and American History

The beginnings of American history are reduced all too often to the arrival of the British settlers on the Eastern coast of the North American continent during the first few decades of the seventeenth century, as well as the subsequent expansion of these colonies westward. This reductionist myth is deeply entrenched within our American educational system. The effects of this short-sightedness manifest in various ways. Let me briefly share two personal examples. A few years ago, I was involved in a friendly discussion with some graduate students of religion who casually mentioned that America is a Protestant country – or at least that its foundations were Protestant. They took this for granted to such a degree, that I found my brief attempt at some disagreement to be quite useless. Again, the former child actor turned conservative evangelical, Kirk Cameron—speaking in a live television interview from the Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC)—commented that America began with the pilgrims who created this nation "out of a wilderness, from scratch."[1] This was not the main point of the argument Mr. Cameron was then making, but it does underscore the main point of the present essay: inaccurate historical claims within the American educational system impede our understanding of cultural and religious heritages, and in this way weaken our ability to discern as political communities.

The study of Mexican-American religion exists somewhere in the borderland between (what is normally called) the study of U.S./American religion and the study of Latino religion. While I do not mean to confuse the singular study of Mexican-American religion with the broader study of either U.S./American or Latino religion, I do argue that the study of Mexican-American religion is an essential component of the greater complex that is American religion; by which I mean the diverse religiosity of all the Americas (North, Central, and South) and the Caribbean. Taken in this broader sense, it can be said that American religion itself exists in a borderland between the three continents that comprise the Old World: Africa, Asia, and Europe. In the field of religious studies, especially with regard to classes on American/U.S. religion, comparative religion, or (so-called) world religions, the model that centers its attention on the

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Old World remains dominant (except that less attention is generally given to African religions). What this means is that, unfortunately, many undergraduate and graduate level religious studies programs do not tend to offer courses on Latino religion. Moreover, no understanding of American religion can be complete without paying a good deal of attention to the religiosity that is situated near the middle of an expansive geographical area: from Alaska to Argentina, Brazil to Maine, and the Caribbean to San Diego. Approximately in the middle of this broad American landscape are the people whose historical homeland stretches from Mesoamerica to the southwestern portion of the U.S.: the Mexican and Mexican-American people.

The U.S. Census & Mexican-American *Indigenismo* (Indigenousness)

As is the case with the majority of Latinos, the timbre of Mexican-American religion is highly indigenous. One might not guess this, however, by looking at the complicated history that the U.S. Census has with regard to how it categorizes Latinos. Unfortunately, this convoluted history of the U.S. Census reinforces an oversimplification of American history that excludes the complex and ancient Mexican historical experience. The problem, as I see it, is that the U.S. Census does not count Latinos and Mexican-Americans as native or indigenous, but instead categorizes them as Caucasian or white. As Roberto Rodriguez points out, this can be traced back to the Mexican-American War and the subsequent cession of the two Mexican states of Alto California and Nuevo Mexico in 1848. At that time, "the Mexican government attempted to protect its former citizens by insisting that the U.S. government treat them legally as white," so that these former Mexicans (now Mexican-Americans) might not be "enslaved or subjected to legal segregation."[2] This attempt to protect its former citizens was not entirely successful, as many Mexican-Americans not only had their land and property taken away from them (only sometimes by legal means), but also suffered a great deal of violence at the hands of the incoming Anglo colonizers of the West.[3] Since 1970, the Census has included a question—one that is separate from the question on race—that asks whether the respondent is either of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin. According to Rodriguez, since Census 1980, about half of Latinos have checked the 'some other race' option, and "are virtually the only group that chooses this category."[4]

The Indigenous Cultures Institute in Texas, a Census 2010 partner, has argued for the inclusion of Mexican-Americans and Latinos in the category "American Indian." After answering the question on whether one is Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, the institute suggested that "If you are a descendant of native people, you can identify yourself as an American Indian in the 2010 Census," and that if "you don't know your tribe, enter 'unknown' or 'detribalized native'."[5] If this more expansive view were embraced, it would result in an increase from about 5 million American Indians to perhaps 30 or 40 million.[6] This is a conservative estimate, because not all U.S. Latinos could legitimately or would voluntarily claim indigenous ancestry. Nevertheless, these expanded figures reflect the *indigenismo* of Latinos in general and especially people who claim Mexican heritage, i.e. Mexican-Americans. In Mexico, for example, the overall population is 80% *Mestizo*, i.e. a person of mixed race (usually Native American and European).[7] A recent study on the genetic diversity that involved 300 self-identified *Mestizos* from six geographically

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diverse states in Mexico found that their mean ancestries were: 55.2% American Indian, 41.8% European, 1.8% African, and 1.2% East Asian.[8] Moreover, according to the Comision Nacional para el Desarollo de los Pueblos Indigenous (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples), 11% of the total population of Mexico claim only American Indian ancestry.

Additionally, the *indigenismo* of the U.S. population is increasing exponentially. Whereas Census 2000 recorded 35.3 million Latinos in the U.S., Census 2012 recorded 50.5 million, which equals roughly 16% of the total population, or 1 in 6 Americans.[9] This means that from 2000 to 2010 Latinos represented 56% of the growth of the entire nation. As of 2006, about half of all public school students in California, for example, were Latino.[10] About two out of three Latinos in the U.S. are of Mexican-American heritage, and the proportion is even greater in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California.[11] Increasingly, the lack of Mexican-American (and Latino) studies is all the more striking. Yet our national system of higher education on the whole, particularly when it comes to religious studies programs, fails to fully include Mexican-American and Latino studies. Like the U.S. Census, the broader national educational system falls behind in recognizing that *indigenismo* is a permanent fixture within the American citizenry.

Education in Pre-Conquest Mesoamerica

Despite the common view, modern American history—if that is to be defined by European colonization of the Americas—does not begin with the English (and Dutch) settlements on the Eastern coast of North America. Nevertheless, religious studies programs tend to ignore this fact, and, as a result, the history of Latin American religion tends to be neglected. Within the context of studying American religion, it is important to stress that it was over a century before the English colonization of America began that Christopher Columbus landed on an unknown island in the Bahamas. Not long thereafter, in 1519, Hernán Cortés along with a few hundred Spaniards and several hundred natives—especially those who had been oppressed by the Mexica Empire—entered Tenochtitlan and met with the Mexica ruler Moctezuma. At this time the Mexica Empire was at its height, and its capital Tenochtitlan, with approximately 200,000 inhabitants, was one of the largest cities in the world.[12] The Mexica were one of the last migrations of a Nahua people into the Valley of Mexico, and they dominated the political system that held together the Aztec Empire, i.e. the Triple Alliance among the three major cities Tenochtitlan, Tetzcoco, and Tlacopan. In 1521, Tenochtitlan fell, with nearly one thousand Spaniards and tens of thousands of Indians having lost their lives.[13] Under Spanish colonial rule there were many ways for the native Mesoamericans to meet their end: work in the mines, famine, random torture and slaughter by the Conquistadors, and, most devastating, the various plagues that recurred on and off for centuries. But this colonial destruction was not only of the physical kind; indeed, it was matched by the destruction of the Mexica culture and religion.

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The Spaniards destroyed the *Huey Teocalli* (Great Temple) in Tenochtitlan, along with almost all statues and reliefs that depicted the gods and myths of the Mexica. Importantly, the process of conquest and colonization depends upon a destruction of the Mexica educational system. Probably the most essential element of the conquest and imperial colonization of the Mexica was the systematic burning of the sacred books that held the histories, myths, scientific knowledge, and ancient wisdom of the Mesoamerican peoples. Only a handful of these pre-Conquest codices survived the Conquest. Most of what we know about pre-Conquest Mesoamerica can be found in codices that were composed by devoted Spanish priests, with the help of Aztec scribes (Nahuatl: *tlacuilo*), many of whom became students at the first European university in the Americas, the Real Colegio de Santa Cruz (founded 1533). Indeed, the first academic work done by Europeans in the Americas was Mexican studies. For example, Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan chronicler, has been called "the first anthropologist" for his treatises on the Mexica and other Nahua people of Mesoamerica.[14] Importantly, many of these codices include reproductions of portions of pre-Conquest codices, which contained records of famines, wars, prosperity and adversity, as well as detailed observations of astronomy and the biodiversity of animals, especially birds from distant lands. The education of the youth carried something like a sacred mandate for the ancient Mexica, and the sacred books were also used in a practical function within the various local schools of Tenochtitlan. There were over 30 distinct classes of priests, and each neighborhood of Tenochtitlan was required to have a temple-school (Nahuatl: *calmecac*) where both men and women were trained to become priests that would serve in one of the many *teocalli* (deity house).[15]

In Aztec society, a *tlacuilo* (pl. *tlacuiloque*) was by definition "a painter of the red and black." Trained since childhood to speak to their heart, the *tlacuiloque* were expected to take into their heart the divine, thus becoming a *yolteotl* ("a heart rooted in god") who could put divinity into things (e.g., the sacred books). The *tlacuiloque* were not alone in their work, for they worked in tandem with the poet-philosophers known as *tlamatinime*.[16] The *tlamatinime* (sing. *tlamatini*) were masters of the oral transmission of sacred word, narrative, and symbols, especially those in the sacred books. A *tlamatini* is literally "a knower of things."[17] The *tlamatinime* were guardians of the red and black ink—the sacred books of the Mexica—because they searched for the deeper meanings of the codices through a process of systematic inner questioning and interpersonal dialogue.

The exegetical method of the *tlamatinime* might come in the form of prayers, riddles, jokes, soliloquy, or songs and poetry. The *tlamatinime* held up the traditional wisdom of the community like a mirror, and in this way, they helped to forge the *rostro y corazón* (heart and face) of the community. The *tlamatinime* were concerned with developing the face (personality) of the individual within the community, including their moral and aesthetic sensibility. In fact, at the time of the conquest, the *tlamatinime* were just beginning to construct an ethico-political alternative to the spiritual crisis caused by the dominant Aztec cosmovision of greed, conflict, and warfare—especially as fueled by the Wars of the Flowers (1450-1519), whose dual purpose was to acquire sacrificial victims and create political intimidation.[18]

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For example, the following is a portion of a poem composed by a *tlamatinime* that is clearly critical of the Imperial Mexica cosmovision as promoted by the warrior classes and much of the nobility:

> Arrogant stand the warriors, those who snatch whatever is precious, gold, splendorous feathers, turquoises ... Those intoxicated with the liquor of death ... Let us spend our lives in peace and pleasure ... Fury and wrath are not for man, the earth is vast indeed![19]

And again:

> To invoke Him [the Giver of Life] with the strength of the eagle and the jaguar, with the force of the warriors, will lead only to the speaking of false words on earth.[20]

The newly forming vision of the *tlamatinime* came as a result of the great sensitivity that they had for the ephemeral quality of all that exists on earth. For Ana Maria Pineda, an important Latina scholar, present day theologians are like modern *tlamatinime*.[21]

I extend Pineda's analogy by reading it within the context of the present status of most religious studies programs across the nation, which generally fail to incorporate the study of Mexican-American religion fully. When present day American students do not have the sorts of educational opportunities that can lead them to recognize historical connections such as the one Pineda makes, i.e. the one between some present day Latino theologians and the ancient *tlamatinime*, the educational system has failed them. This failure is a reflection of the colonial legacies that are woven into the fabric of modern American and Mexican-American experience. Inaccurate historical narratives, especially ones that fail to incorporate the *indigenismo* of American history, inhibit our society's ability to realize the plurality that is required in the American experiment with democracy. Two examples of the failure I am speaking of are the subject of the concluding two sections of this essay.

Arizona HB 2281

On May 11, 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law HB 2281, which effectively banned the teaching of ethnic studies at Arizona's publicly-funded schools. It is no secret that the major target of this bill was Tucson's Mexican-American studies program, despite the fact that Latino students account for almost half of the students in Arizona's public schools, and the Tucson Mexican-American studies program was reportedly graduating nearly 100% of its students, with over 70% enrolling in a college program.[22] The bill originated with the then-Arizona State Superintendent for Public Instruction Tom Horne. Horne defended his actions by arguing: "Traditionally, the American public school system has brought together students from different backgrounds and taught them to be Americans and to treat each other as individuals, and not on the basis of their ethnic backgrounds."[23] From my perspective, this supposed failure to recognize the ethnic make-up of Arizona's student population, which is marked by a high

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degree of *indigenismo*, amounts to a failure to address the needs of these students. Horne went on to argue that HB 2281 is "consistent with the fundamental American value that we are all individuals, not exemplars of whatever ethnic groups we were born into," and that ethnic studies programs "teach the opposite, and are designed to promote ethnic chauvinism."[24]

Contra Mr. Horne, I argue that ethnic studies programs are a uniquely American endeavor precisely because they promote collective democratic values. The Mexican-American studies programs in Arizona were designed to excite a broader love of learning among Tucson's high school students. It is not as though those engaged in Mexican-American studies study an abstract thing called "Mexican-American" that exists at an infinite distance from U.S. American history. The Mexican-American studies programs in Arizona highlighted the role of Mexican-Americans in the broader U.S. American context; for example, in the Vietnam War, or in twentieth century literature. Specifically, the bill prohibits of programs of instruction that (1) "promote the overthrow of the U.S. government;" (2) "promote resentment toward a race or class of people;" (3) "are designed primarily for students of a particular ethnic group;" and (4) "advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals." With regard to Horne's comments (which are quoted above), it is apparently upon (3) that he rests his arguments. However, what about (4)?

In the American educational context, the notion that the study of one particular ethnic group advocates ethnic solidarity or ethnic chauvinism only makes sense if it is first assumed that only those of that particular ethnic group might enroll in or benefit from such classes. In other words, the reasoning behind HB 2281 rests on the belief that African-American studies, for example, is only for African-American students. In this way, the Arizona law is itself based on a dangerously undemocratic presumption of ethnic chauvinism. Moreover, this sort of legislative intervention into the classroom threatens other fields of study. For example, a similar argument could be used to ban the academic study of religion under the equally erroneous assumption that religious studies classes are primarily designed for religious adherents, or to ban a course on Christianity because it is "only designed for Christians." Likewise, according to the logic of HB 2281, Women's Studies should be banned, because, assumedly, such classes only benefit women, breed resentment among women, and promote civil insurrection in women.

In other words, the study of any subject that inherently deals with collectivities (e.g., Mexican-Americans, women, Christians, etc.) is, in the name of individualism, threatened by bills like HB 2281.[25] Most importantly, however, Mr. Horne fails to understand that ethnic studies programs exist as a result of the failure of the American educational system to incorporate fully the histories and experiences of certain collectivities into the national curriculum. HB 2281 is an expression of the latent consciousness of modern European imperialism, which has always attempted to de-historicize and de-contextualize those that it seeks to subjugate and assimilate. HB 2281 comes as the result of (and now is also the cause of) the reductionist myth mentioned at the outset of this essay, which is a myth of Becoming that is abstractly based on the dialectic of radical individualism (solipsism) and market capitalism (system), with the concrete result being the existential covering over of the Being of indigenous collectivities, if not also the conceptual appreciation of collectivity itself. This imperialistic

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cultural conquest is reinforced by the mythic imagery of the solitary explorer /warrior/ priest/ pilgrim/businessman, who can only truly become himself by conquering this New Wilderness/Eden. This imperial myth leads to a reductionist re-centering of history in which the vast majority of time that humans have populated the Americas is ignored. Mexican-American studies, then, is ἀνακαλύπτω (to unveil/uncover)[26] America as a collective singularity, which can only be done after recognizing the *indigenismo* of America.

Yet is it always the case that ethnic solidarity is inherently antithetical to the construction of critical, thinking individuals? I argue that ethnic solidarity can be conducive to the social cohesion of our country. I can have ethnic solidarity with those of other ethnic backgrounds than myself, and vice versa. Ethnic solidarity can be a multi-cultural affair, and this is precisely the logic behind any ethnic studies class. Ethnic studies courses aim at dispelling what is already an unspoken ethnic chauvinism at all levels of education in this country that favors one particular historical myth above all others. Think of our friend Kirk Cameron, who was mentioned at the outset of this essay. Think how our educational system has let him, and perhaps even Mr. Horne, down. Nevertheless, Horne is inestimably useful, albeit unwittingly, in making explicit the logic that links HB 2281 to the destruction of the ancient Aztec sacred books. Specifically, I am referring to the first point in the bill that blames ethnic studies for promoting the overthrow of the U.S. government. It is this aspect of HB 2281 that most clearly points toward the imperial history that informs the reasoning behind the legislative ban of Mexican-American studies in Arizona.

Southern California Community Colleges

I end this paper by sharing what I found out about sixty-six community colleges in southern California—an area I defined as the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Kern, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial—that taken together account for nearly 60% of all California community colleges. The aim of my research was to compare the number of classes offered on Latino religion with the number of classes offered on non-religion Latino related matters by departments other than Religious Studies or Philosophy (since Religious Studies classes are often offered through Philosophy departments). My research was limited to classes offered during the 2012 spring semester. What I found was that courses on Latino or Mexican-American studies were offered at 80% of community colleges in southern California. Typically, these colleges offered two or three Latino or Mexican-American Studies classes, for example, History of Mexico, Latin-American Literature, Sociology of Latinos, Mexican Art History, Latino Politics, etc. A handful of these colleges, mostly in Los Angeles County, have entire departments devoted to Latino or Mexican-American/Chicano Studies, not to mention the many community colleges that have Ethnic Studies departments. The Chicano Studies department at East Los Angeles College, for example, topped the list by offering 19 classes. However, while these Latino and Mexican-American/Chicano Studies courses were offered through Anthropology, Art, English, History, Political Science, Sociology,

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and Spanish departments, there were none offered through Religious Studies or Philosophy departments.

Obviously, this does not equate to conclusive proof that the study of Latino religion is systematically excluded from 100% of southern California community colleges, but it is not a good sign. Given the success of Latino studies classes outside of religious studies, it is safe to assume that the absence of classes on Latino religion or Mexican-American religion is not due to a lack of student interest. I suggest the reason for this is that far too many graduate level religious studies programs (whether public or private, secular or religious) across our country continue in their failure to produce scholars who are capable of or willing to teach classes on Mexican-American religion. In my own experience, while enrolled at three different institutions of higher learning with religious studies programs—one public university, one private theological school, and one private/secular graduate school—there was only one professor who offered one course on Latino religion. While this lagging behind within the academic study of religion is tragic, it is certainly one that can be solved, but only if we include the fullness of the American dream, for example, by bringing attention to the courage of vision that Arizona high school students have shown in their struggle to repeal Arizona House Bill 2281, and if we remember the sacred role that education played in the newly forming vision that was just beginning to be birthed by the ancient Mexican artists, philosophers, and theologians, the *tlamatinime* and the *tlacuiloque*, and their empire-critical cosmovision of peace.

Paul Rodriguez is chair of the Latino and Latin American section of the American Academy of Religion, Western Region. He is also currently in the philosophy of religion program at Claremont Graduate University, and his dissertation is on modern philosophical readings of the Apostle Paul. Rodriguez teaches comparative religion and medieval philosophy at California State University Dominguez Hills.

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[1] Kirk Cameron, interview by Martin Bashir, *Martin Bashir Show*, MSNBC, February 9, 2012, http://video.app.msn.com/watch/video/kirk-cameron-from-growing-pains-to-cpac-star/6rccquh. It should be noted that Mr. Cameron was recently involved with the making of a film that promoted this idea. See *Monumental*, film, directed by Duane Barnhart (2012; Pyro Pictures).

[2] Roberto Rodriguez, "Census: Masking Identities or Counting the Indigenous among us?," *New American Media*, last modified March 4, 2010, http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=1207ef2c27b88e64e432f9fbb18bc6d1.

[3] See Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* (New York, NY: Viking, 2000), 96-107.

[4] Roberto Rodriguez, "Census: Masking Identities or Counting the Indigenous among us?"

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Irma Silva-Zolezzi, Alfredo Hidalgo-Miranda, Jesus Estrada-Gil, Juan Carlos Fernandez-Lopez, Laura Uribe-Figueroa, Alejandra Contreras, Eros Balam-Ortiz, et al., "Analysis of Genomic Diversity in Mexican Mestizo Populations to Develop Genomic Medicine in Mexico," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 106, no. 21 (May 11, 2009): 8611-8616, doi: 10.1073/pnas.0903045106, last modified March 4, 2010,

http://www.pnas.org/content/106/21/8611.full.pdf+html?sid=98c24466-b9bc-4c97-870c-3a6c99664527.

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10 Richard Fry and Felisa Gonzales, "A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students," *Pew Hispanic Center*, last modified August 26, 2008, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2008/08/26/one-in-five-and-growing-fast-a-profile-of-hispanic-public-school-students/.

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12 David Carrasco, *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 66.

13 Ibid., 175.

14 See Miguel Léon-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún: First Anthropologist* , trans. Mauricio J. Mixco (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

15 Carrasco, 264.

16 For information on the *tlamatinime* and the *tlacuilo* see Carrasco, 162-169.

17 Ibid., 270.

18 Miguel Léon-Portilla, ed., *Native Mesoamerican Spirituality: Ancient Myths, Discourses, Stories, Doctrines, Hymns, Poems from the Aztec, Yucatec, Quiche-Maya and Other Sacred Traditions*, trans. Miguel Léon-Portilla, J. O. Arthur Anderson, Charles E. Dibble, and Mundro S. Edmonson (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), pp. 6-7.

19 Ibid., 7

20 Ibid.

21 Ana María Pineda, The Oral Tradition of a People: *Forjadora De Rostro y Corazón*," in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, (eds.) Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996): 104-116, here 115.

22 Roberto Rodriguez, "Democracy Failure in Arizona," *CounterPunch*, last modified October 31, 2011, http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/10/31/democracy-failure-in-arizona/.

23 Jessica Calefati, "Arizona Bans Ethnic Studies," *Mother Jones*, last modified May 12, 2010, http://motherjones.com/mojo/2010/05/ethnic-studies-banned-arizona.

24 Ibid.

25 In this paragraph I borrow terms from the revolutionary modern day philosopher of being Antonio Negri, especially as can be found in *Subversive Spinoza: (Un)contemporary Variations*, ed. Timothy S. Murphy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

26 For this covering/uncovering motif in the New Testament, see 2 Corinthians 4:3 and 23:30; Matthew 10:26; Luke 8:16; 1 Peter 4:8.

Ethnic Cleansing as Religious Practice: Religion, Ethnicity, and Political Conflict in Bosnia During the War, *by* Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon

Abstract

My essay will provide an example, using the now classic case of the Bosnian War, of how religious practice, particularly Christian practice, can adversely affect a political crisis, as well as open up opportunities for how religion can work to ease political conflict. Specifically, I examine four ways that ethnic cleansing was a religious practice during the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Through this examination, I show there was a moral logic and divine command ethic at work, where understandings of conversion—that is, the Christian practice of evangelism—were related conceptually and practically to ethnic cleansing, so that cleansing was at times a corollary practice of evangelism in that specific context. This can help us better understand the central, motivating role that religious imaginaries and practices had in the war. Even though scholars have conducted important and extensive analyses of the role of religion and genocide in Bosnia, we have yet to explicitly frame the conflict in this way.

One of the most devastating ways that religious practice and political contestation have intersected in the last quarter century has been through religio-ethnic conflict, particularly ethnic cleansing and genocide. The now tragically classic case for this is the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina from 1992-1995, where more than 200,000 people were killed and more than a million dispersed by the political collapse and reconfiguration of the former Yugoslavia. Several scholars have already analyzed the role of religion, particularly Christianity, during that political conflict.[1] Yet even now, 20 years after the start of that war, we are still trying to understand the complex ways in which religious practice and discourse can negatively affect or be affected by political crises. The need for such understanding, of course, has only endured, as we continue to try and come to terms with the impact that the domains we call "religion" and "the political" have on each other. Given the present need, it remains important to reflect back and see what we can continue to learn from cases where religion had, overall, an adverse and deadly effect on political crisis, and where political crisis helped stoke religious practice and imagination toward violence.

To do this, I will examine four ways that ethnic cleansing was a religious practice during the Bosnian War. In particular, I will show how understandings of conversion—that is, the Christian practice of evangelism—intersected with cleansing practices. Although much has been written on this topic, the link between conversion narratives and ethnic cleansing has yet to be highlighted. Looking at ethnic cleansing as Christian practice is an admittedly analogical method, and so partakes of the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach. Nevertheless, this investigation will be helpful in a number of ways.

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First, it will help us better understand how a key Christian practice and narrative—evangelism—could be coupled with another practice, ethnic cleansing, in the minds of some perpetrators. Second, this will better help us understand the ways that religiously motivated action affected a key political crisis at the turn of the millennium. It can also help deepen our analyses of religion, politics, and conflict by stressing not just theological doctrine and ethical principles but also ritual, practice, and ethics in action, and so demonstrate how theological imaginaries are enacted in public and how political action affects theology. Third, it will help broaden our understanding of "religious practice" itself to include practices that engage or help inform violent imaginaries in a tradition. This is important, as religious practice is a key frame for the study of religion, as it helps balance cultural biases that can stress the importance of belief and inner experience at the expense of outward and material religious forms.[2] Finally, it will also help us further appreciate the active moral logics that made certain religious practices fluid enough to be used in the service of atrocity and to help promote violent answers to complex political problems.

Terminology

Before continuing, we need to understand the terms that make up our analogy: ethnic cleansing as religious practice. This will help clarify our current project, and as any analogy is inherently comparative, it will help us better understand what exactly it is we are comparing.

Religious. When we speak of "religion's" involvement in ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, we are really referring to two specific traditions: Roman Catholicism and Serb Orthodoxy, specifically, their hierarchies and practices as found in Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, and Serbia during the later half of the twentieth century, specifically during the 1990s. We must be careful, then, not to generalize any claims made here to a generic category of "religion," as this can unwittingly support ideologies that pit a rational and Enlightened "secular" against a violent and regressive "religious."[3] Any mention of "religion" and "religious," then, will refer to Catholicism and Orthodoxy as it was in Bosnia during the war. Furthermore, we will look at Serb Orthodox and Catholic imaginaries and practices of conversion toward Bosnian Muslims or Bosnians who were not avowedly Christian. Looking at possible conversion theologies and practices directed at other Christians is important, but we do not have the space here for such an additional complex inquiry.

Practice. Practice is action involving both symbolic and material resources, including but not limited to prayer, liturgy, devotion, pilgrimage, proselytization, contemplation, etc. Practice is differentiated from, yet intertwined with, discourse—that is, religious speech, theology (as dogmatics and not as the practice of creating theology), revelatory and scriptural content, and viewing theology or religion as a text to be interpreted. The use of practice focuses particularly on "embodied material action," focusing our attention on how bodies are moved and are placed, as well as the central place of movement, location, and material objects to a specific religion.[4]

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Ethnic Cleansing.[5]

Scholars have proposed different definitions for ethnic cleansing and genocide. Some argue that it can be helpful in creating a better typology for ethnic mass violence, and so be a conceptual aid to terms such as genocide. Those interested in justice and human rights issues, however, particularly when it comes to prosecution, often argue that by using ethnic cleansing, a legally imprecise term, we lessen the moral and legal power behind the term "genocide," which is enshrined in international law.[6]

Understanding the importance of the term genocide, I opt to use the term "ethnic cleansing" for what it may tell us about the motives and worldview of the perpetrators.[7] Whereas genocide is a term of the advocates, created by Raphael Lemkin to give a name for a crime he wanted punishable under international law, ethnic cleansing is a perpetrator's term.[8] This self-purported "cleansing" harkens to notions of purification and ritual cleansing, sumptuary laws, and religious bodily prohibitions in a way that genocide does not. It seems to embody, then, a theological ethic and worldview held by certain perpetrators and nationalists and which helped condition the war's atrocities. As morally problematic as it is to use a perpetrator's term, using ethnic cleansing may still be appropriate in that it may help foreground and reveal the operative theo-ethical assumptions and logics of at least some of those involved in the cleansing.

Religious Practice and the War in Bosnia

Before discussing the connection between evangelism and ethnic cleansing, we will look at three other sets of Catholic and Orthodox religious practices that helped create the material and symbolic conditions that enabled ethnic cleansing to take place. First, religion sacralized and ritually demarcated the geographies that were to be cleansed. As religious scholar Michael Sells notes, the relics—literally, the body—of Prince Lazar, who was a singularly important religious figure in the creation of Serb nationalism, were translated throughout Kosovo on the 600th anniversary of Lazar's defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. This ritual circumambulation of important Serb Orthodox relics through Kosovo, a highly contested territory, demonstrated it to be a land where the holiest Serb martyrs lived and died, a land integral to the modern identity of the Serbs as a people.[9]

Such practices, then, infused Kosovo's landscape and its borders with great religious and national meaning. They also raised the stakes in the contest over Kosovo considerably, creating space wherein the perceived violation of the sacredness of that space and its borders would be interpreted in religious, perhaps even cosmic, terms. In this way, Kosovo invoked tropes of purity, violation, sacrifice, and divine retribution. This geography was so charged that the question over its future and whether it would remain a part of Serbia became a flashpoint that helped trigger the wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s, including the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Throughout the crisis, Kosovo remained a potent symbolic issue for many Serb fighters and leaders, right up until the final battles of the Yugoslav conflict, which were fought,

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not surprisingly, over the control of Kosovo in a post-Yugoslav era. This makes Kosovo and its sacralized boundaries the tragic bookends of the Yugoslav conflict.

Second, Christian practices sacralized one group at the expense of other, outside groups, which were demonized. Such practices accomplished this not only by demarcating the geographies to be cleansed; it marked and separated those bodies that were to be cleansed and those that were not. One example is the special sanctification of the Croats as a Catholic people through a Marian pilgrimage site in Hercegovina. In Medjugorje, where the Virgin Mary has purportedly been appearing for over thirty years to six local villagers, Mary's coming at the end of Marshall Broz Tito's rule over Yugoslavia signaled to some Croat nationalists that divine favor had been bestowed on the Croat nation. To some, her coming was a sign that past national sins —such as Croat acts of genocide during World War II—had been forgiven.[10] In this context, the Virgin was, in fact, the Queen of Croatia and that nation's protector and advocate.[11] Eventually, Medjugorje was included in the breakaway statelet of Herceg-Bosna, which not only adopted Medjugorje as its unofficial, spiritual capital; the borders of Herceg-Bosna itself coincided with the boundaries of the century's old Franciscan province in Hercegovina.[12] This marked off Croats—defined specifically as Catholic during the war—as a sacred people, and so, more valued than non-Croats, who could now be targets of cleansing.[13]

As Medjugorje will be a new name to many readers, and since it is an example I will return to throughout this essay, it is important to pause and give some brief background information before proceeding. Medjugorje is a town in Hercegovina, the southern tail of Bosnia, not far from the border of Dalmatian Croatia. It is a hot, dry, rocky region, good for growing wine. Hercegovina had, for centuries, been a beachhead in the Vatican's struggle to spread Catholicism in Ottoman lands. This history resulted in a strong, Catholic presence in the region, one substantially tied to the Franciscan religious order, which for centuries was a key part of the Catholic evangelism of Hercegovina and Bosnia more generally. For most of the past century, Medjugorje had been a small village with a sizable Franciscan church, St. James, at the center of town. This changed, however, with the collapse of Yugoslavia and the end of the Cold War. Shortly after Marshall Tito died in 1980, the Virgin Mary, coming as the Queen of Peace, purportedly appeared to six young villagers on a hillside overlooking the town and the church. Very quickly, news of the visions spread, and Medjugorje became a local, then very soon, a global pilgrimage site, the millions of pilgrims and visitors it received transforming its local economy.

Thirty years later, with the child-seers grown and the visions still occurring, Medjugorje now represents the longest appearance of the Virgin in history. The pilgrimage center has grown so large that the number of annual pilgrims exceeds that of Fatima and rivals Lourdes. Thousands testify to spontaneous healings and visions. The center's influence is global, and Medjugorje groups have popped up in the United States and across the world. It has grown into an influential center of theology and practice for millions of Christians, and up until the war, both Orthodox and Muslim Yugoslavs came to Medjugorje to pray.[14] Medjugorje also was a point of pride for Croat Catholics, as the Virgin Mary chose a town with a majority of Croats in which

to appear, out of all the world. Medjugorje's influence on theology, Roman Catholic practice and imagination, as well as regional politics, then, has been substantial

The timeline of Medjugorje's growth, however, intersects with that of the Bosnia War, as well as the other wars that led to Yugoslavia's dissolution. As we will see in this paper, this means Medjugorje had an ambivalent, though important role during the war. The Medjugorje movement[15] and the visions of the Virgin Mary helped contribute to the formation of wealth that was used during the war, was a lightning rod for inter-Christian tensions, and became a symbol for religious-nationalism in the region. Yet, it also remained a place where people from around the world came for healing, hope and inspiration, creating a religious center whose meaning and legacy is much contested. In this way, such ambivalence makes Medjugorje a rich, although contested, focus for our discussion of religious practice, dialogue and politics.[16]

Returning to our list of religious practices that created to conditions for ethnic cleansing, the third is that religious practice and theology empowered those who did the cleansing with both spiritual and material resources. These included, first of all, the mobilization of the spiritual community and its religious resources. Soldiers were blessed and prayed for, before and during deployment, and liturgies and prayers were said. In addition to spiritual support, religious organizations provided material resources to military and paramilitary groups involved in cleansing. For example, Medjugorje Appeal, based out of Britain, raised approximately 20 million British pounds on behalf of a local orphanage in Medjugorje. This funding, however, went instead to the HVO, the main Croat paramilitary force in Bosnia, which carried out cleansing engagements in Bosnia and Herceg-Bosna. Medjugorje Appeal had direct connections to the pilgrimage site, beyond the orphanage, including two Franciscans who had been central to promoting the importance of the shrine globally, as well as Ivan Dragicevic, the eldest male among the seers at the heart of the Medjugorje movement.[17]

This overview of three key ways that Christian practice, both Catholic and Orthodox, aided ethnic cleansing— sacralizing the geography to be cleansed, sacralizing and demonizing groups, and providing spiritual and material resources to those involved in cleansing–is admittedly brief. I resist a more detailed account, because such work has already been done. Those works can be found in the bibliography at the end of this article. Instead, I will take the remaining space offered here to frame the activities included under ethnic cleansing - which included rape, murder, torture, forced migration, psychological manipulation, theft, and other forms of coercion by one's neighbors as well as paramilitary forces - as a religious practice, which, for all of the research done into the role of religion and genocide in Bosnia, has not yet been explicitly framed in this way.

Ethnic Cleansing as Religious Practice

To help show that ethnic cleansing was a religious practice to at least some perpetrators during the war, we will consider two relevant quotes. One is from a soldier and one from a political leader—one Croat and Catholic, one Bosnian-Serb and Orthodox, respectively. They

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come from enemy political communities and from opposite ends of the political hierarchy of war, yet they still share a common, theologically and racially informed worldview. They hold in common an understanding of ethnic cleansing as a religious practice and as a means to key theological and political ends. I analyze only two quotes, and so, my explication here should not be taken as statistically relevant of broader trends. I present them, instead, as illustrative of certain religious, ethical logics operative during the war, even if everyone did not hold them at all times.

The first quote is from the Croat soldier (possibly a paramilitary HVO member) visiting the Medjugorje shrine: [18]

'We have not done what the Virgin Mary asked...She asked for conversion (to Catholicism) so that peace would come. We haven't converted the non-believers and so we have war.'[19]

This is a standard, conditional "if not, then" statement. That is, a request was made, and since that request could not be met, a further action was necessitated as a consequence. It sets up a rationale for the violence, and what makes the quote interesting are the stakes and persons involved in this rationale. The request, the "ask," came from the Virgin Mary herself, but not to a universalized Mary. The ask came from the Croatian Mary, who appeared on Croat soil as a national patron and protector.[20] This particularity makes this specific request to a Croat soldier of greater weight, as if a divine request were not weighty enough.

Further, the content of the ask, the "what," is conversion to Roman Catholicism. Conversion was a common motif of the seer's reports at Medjugorje. Conversion can be directed inwardly toward the community of faith and understood as a call to return to the correct behavior and belief one promised through specific sacraments, including baptism, confirmation, and communion–sacraments that also mark one as belonging to the Catholic faith community.[21] Here, however, conversion is a command directed outwardly at the non-faithful to reorient their lives, dispositions, and activities toward the Catholic tradition. This is conversion not understood as renewal of the already sacramentally confirmed but of conversion understood as evangelism, of those outside of the faith and its sacramental markers.

The Virgin's message, as understood by the solider, also provides an authoritative explanation for why Croat Catholics do not have peace. It is authoritative because the messages are nearly synonymous with divine revelation, and because the Virgin is referred to in Medjugorje as the "Queen of Peace." Conversion was required "so that peace would come," and yet the requisite change of heart by non-Catholics did not occur. The cause of the war, according to the soldier's understanding, is rooted, then, in a failure to convert and a failure to accept conversion. And those non-Catholics who refused to convert not only frustrated certain Croat individuals; they also frustrated the Virgin, a beloved symbol and intercessor. This raised the stakes of conversion as well as the perceived offense at refusing conversion considerably.

At this point it is important to note that in Bosnia-Hercegovina during the war, conversion would entail more than a change in religious belief. During the war, ethnicity and

religion were largely fused so that to become Catholic would be, quite practically, to become Croat, as well.[22] The requested conversions, then, were not only religious but ethnic; they were political, representing a shift in identity and socio-political location and affiliation for the convert. In other words, the non-Catholics in question were also non-Croats and were being asked to change both faith and ethnic affiliation to create a religiously and ethnically homogeneous political community. One can argue that religion is always or largely political, but in this case, we can see a direct tie between ethnic and religious identity where religious conversion would have a direct effect on the political landscape of the former Yugoslavia. This raises the stakes yet again concerning the impact of the Virgin's message, or at least how it was perceived, making not just religious but ethnic diversity problematic theologically.

The consequences for such diversity become evident in the final line of the soldier's quote, which concludes the logic undergirding his statement. In the last line, there is an undercurrent of failure, yet the burden of failure, as is the direction of the ask, is directed outward against those same non-believers. The non-faithful have thwarted the Virgin's request. They are the target of the command, and they carry the burden of whether the command was successful or not. They also have to bear the consequences. And here we come to the end of the formula. Since conversion did not occur, there must be war, and in the context of the Bosnian War, this included rape, torture, genocide, and forced deportation.[23]

This, of course, is not the only possible ethical formula in the Catholic imaginary. One could imagine an alternate scenario in which the solider said, "The Virgin has asked for conversion, and since we have failed, we return to her and ask forgiveness." The consequences could have been turned inward instead of outward, focusing on the change that needed to occur among Catholics. Those faithful had available a rich tradition that includes practices of contrition, and by performing them, could have placed responsibility on themselves. But the logic of the soldier's statement is informed, instead, by an outward trajectory, projecting guilt and meaning on others, a hermeneutic that forbids our imagined alternative from the start.

This quote, then, embodies an ethic understood as a straightforward divine command. The divine has issued a command, and if it is not met, there are consequences. In the case of Croat ethno-nationalism, however, the command is more intimate than usual. It is not exegeted from a text but is understood to be given directly from a divine presence – the Virgin, who appears within the national, cultural space of Croatia. Or, at the very least, this is how the soldier viewed the message. It is a message understood to come from a divine authority existing among the Croat people during a major political crisis, and in this case, taken in and interpreted by a common soldier responding to that crisis on the ground. This gives the command not only a greater sense of urgency but also an immanence and intimacy that adds to the commands compelling, as well as national, character.[24]

The second quote is from Radovan Karadzic, the first president of the Bosnian-Serb state of Republika Srpska. Karadzic was tried in the Hague, and in 2012, he was convicted of 10 war crimes counts, including one count of genocide that covered the massacred of nearly 10,000

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men and boys in Srebrenica. In an interview given with a Serb Orthodox journal, Karadzic said:[25]

> 'It is clear that the path to salvation of Serbs of the Muslim faith is the return to Orthodoxy. I am saying this completely responsibly; I know that not everyone can do this and that it is not easy, but I know that it is the only way to overcome the dualism in their soul…Therefore I think that the Serb people will recuperate entirely and wholly only when the majority or all of them…including Serbs who are of the Islamic religion, experience healing of their soul and enter into the wholeness of their being…'[26]

The quote includes a problem statement, as did the soldier's. There is something wrong with the "Serb people" that requires them to "recuperate." Karadzic was trained as a doctor, so it should not surprise us to hear him diagnose the problem in terms of pathology.[27] The solution or cure is directed, once again, outwardly to non-believers, the "Serbs who are of the Islamic religion." This refers to the racial, nationalist theory that Bosnian Muslims are not a separate ethnic group but Serbs who are descendants of those who converted to Islam during the Ottoman Empire. To Karadzic, Bosnian Muslims could never be true Muslims, because there is an integral connection between Serbianness, if you will, and Orthodoxy that will always run against attempts to be Muslim.[28] This is the "dualism of their soul" that he mentions. Karadzic describes what the Bosnian Muslims must do cryptically, using therapeutic terms ("healing") yet augmented by religious language ("soul," "wholeness of their being"). This is in line, however, with other quotes of Karadzic and other Serb intellectuals who saw Bosnian Muslims as wounded or inferior Serbs who must be restored or removed.[29]

This quote also differs somewhat from that of the soldier's. It is not directed toward a divine figure, such as the Virgin Mary. This, however, is not surprising, for as Michael Sells shows, the Virgin Mary was central figure to Croat religious, nationalist imaginary during the war but not to the Serbian imaginary. The Serb ethnonationalist narrative was oriented around a wrongful defeat of the original Serbian empire at the hands of the Ottomans. Instead of the centrality of the Virgin, Karadzic focuses on renewal and restoration, which is central for the Serb ethnonationalist imaginary, based as it is on a catastrophic loss of empire and sovereignty.[30]

Even with this difference, however, Karadzic's quote still reflects the moral logic embodied in the soldier's quote previously, which sees religio-ethnic conversion as central to curing a social ill, which is also perceived as a spiritual ill. There remains an explicit call to change and conversion, which Karadzic also praises in other writings.[31] Bosnian Muslims are singled out as those who need conversion, with the inference that to be Muslim is not to be whole. It is a call wrapped in conversion language, where the soul is healed, where an entire group is made whole, and where the person and world is rightly re-ordered, through a spiritually charged existential reorientation.

We could unpack more from both of these quotes, but our conversation thus far should suffice for us to understand the dynamic and ethic expressed by both Karadzic and the Croat

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soldier. Both operate from an exclusivist, divine command theory of ethics oriented around a restrictive, transcendental nationalism. Even though Karadzic does not mention God or any religious figure, there is an expressly metaphysical, cosmological imperative for the Serb people—who, as we saw before, were sacralized by religious discourse and practice—to reorient themselves spiritually. And this command seems to necessitate two actions. The first action has a name: conversion, or more precisely, evangelism, which I define as the practice or set of practices of witnessing one's faith before others and to nurture and encourage conversions in those others. This is a known and accepted practice in both Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The second action or practice, which is needed when evangelism fails, does not have a name in Christianity. The question then becomes, what is this practice that is necessitated when conversion fails and the divine command is thwarted?

Evangelism and Ethnic Cleansing

Conversion is not the end but the means—a means to a holy and homogeneous cultural and religious space. This possibility of failure requires a corollary to evangelism, a second, related practice that is explicit in the Croat's quote and made explicit in Karadzic's cleansing policies. Again, this second practice—the corollary—does not have a name in traditional theological categories. It only has a name that the perpetrators gave it: ethnic cleansing. If the non-acquiescence of non-believers thwarts the will of the Holy Virgin or thwarts the destiny of the sanctified Serb people, a second practice becomes necessary to cleanse the unconverted from the sacred geography that religion has already delineated. This second practice is made all the easier as the targeted groups have already been dehumanized and can be attacked with less moral risk to the perpetrators.[32]

We can now articulate a more comprehensive range of religious practices associated with ethnic cleansing—four specifically—at work in the Bosnian War. There are practices used to delineate sacred space, which also becomes a geography to be cleansed. They include translation of relics, as well as other rituals and pilgrimages. Such translations and pilgrimages emphasize, and interpret, certain traumatic wrongs that have been done to the group, while de-emphasizing the historical wrongs that same group has committed against others. Such "chosen traumas" help justify the aggravating group's status as special in the eyes of the divine.[33] Second, there are practices used to make a group sacred at the expense of other, dehumanized and demonized groups. They are not only demonized, but if we are to agree with Mark Juergensmeyer, they are, with the use of religious imagery, satanized, as well, and so, become an enemy on a cosmic level.[34] Such practices include pilgrimages, sermons and the collapse of religious symbols and imagery into state narratives and processes. Third, there are practices employed to support materially and spiritually those engaged in ethnic cleansing. These include economic and fundraising activities on behalf of religious causes (Medjugorje Appeal), as well as rituals, songs, devotions, prayers, wearing and carrying religious paraphernalia, and sacraments, all employed in support of combatants. Finally, there are conversion-cleansing practices, of evangelism and its potential corollary, cleansing. War, killing, deportation, torture, and rape are themselves,

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then, religious practices with religiously defined and justified ends. They are committed to bring about divinely mandated changes in society and to secure holy spaces, bodies, culture, and history. Cleansing, we can now say, is a practice associated with religious expectations and justifications, religious material and resources, with theological goals.

Even so, it is important to stress that cleansing is not a corollary of evangelism in all places and times, nor even in most places and times. It is also important to note that ethnic cleansing also had other factors and causes associated with it, including revenge, economic factors, war profiteering, etc. This understanding of ethnic cleansing is also not a universal frame applicable to all other ethnic conflicts and genocides, such as that in Rwanda, which happened at the same time as that in Bosnia. And this analysis should not be taken to disparage the Christian practice of evangelism, which is varied and conditioned upon differed and changing social, political, historical, and economic factors. We can see, however, in the Bosnian case, the moral logic and structure that unites these two practices in a violent and morally and theologically problematic way.

Conclusion

By using the analogy of ethnic cleansing as religious practice, we can see a way that Christian theology, symbols, and practices were used to respond to a political crisis. This does not mean that every soldier or politician saw his or her work in terms of conversion, nor in terms of theology. Motivations during the war were diverse, multilayered, and dynamic. It also does not mean that every Christian in Bosnia participated in genocide, as there are many accounts of help being extended across confessional divisions. Ethnic cleansing as a religious duty—as a deontological, commanded practice—however, was operative during a political crisis experienced on local, national, and regional levels. And that crisis, of course, was the institutional collapse of the former Yugoslavia and the contestation over the future of its peoples, lands, resources, and institutions.

By calling it a practice, I intentionally imply that there is a possible continuity backward into prior cleansings, as well as into the future, where cleansing could repeat once more. Natalie Davis has already written on the rituals of violence during 16th-century France, cases that hint at violence as a social and religious practice across time, which later groups can draw from and participate in.[35] And Toal and Dahlman argue that ethnic cleansing is a term that originated as early as World War II during the Croat Ustasha genocide, a term that was reconfigured and redeployed in Bosnia during the 1990s, further demonstrating a continuity across time.[36]

Nationalists and perpetrators also drew from other precedents and symbolic reservoirs in the Christian tradition. For example, Kosovo was viewed by many Serb ethnonationalists, as well as Serb Orthodox faithful, as the "Serb Jerusalem." This metaphor goes farther than simply denoting that Kosovo was important spiritually. There was the belief that the Serbs were, like the Jews, God's chosen people and were given a difficult history of persecution as a mark of their chosenness. Connecting Kosovo to Jerusalem links Kosovo to a history of persecution and

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cleansing, but also to resources such as the Crusade model and the apocalyptic promise of return and the destruction of one's enemies. This is only one, but an important, example of ethnic cleansing as a practice that has continuity with previous violent religious practices and possibly as a resource and model for future, violent practice.[37]

We can also begin to see how intimate and rational violence can be, or at least, how violence can be a part of theologically inspired logics. It can be bound up and expressed through important weekly and daily practices of devotion, purity and communality. This understanding directs us toward the need for religious actors with great agility, with both interpretive and ritual skill, to re-inform traditions in such a way that practices and discourses of purity and conversion, among others, do not lead, as the logic of the Croat soldier did, outward in the form of the destruction of others. Addressing such individuals is important since they can influence political and economic institutions during conflict.[38] This also creates a pedagogical imperative, a call for the fields of practical theology and religious practices to be attentive to acts of violence as theological practice so that they can better prepare such future religious leaders on the ways that one's tradition can abet political and ethnic violence.

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¹ Sells 1998; Perica 2002; Mojzes, et al 1998.

²Asad 1993; Tweed 2006; Vazquez 2011; Bounds 2012.

3 Cavanaugh 2009.

4 Lincoln 2006.

5 There are UN statements on ethnic cleansing, and they provide a good description for the activities implied when I use the term. For example, the UN General Assembly defined ethnic cleansing as "'rendering an area wholly homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups...by means of murder, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, extra-judicial executions, rape and sexual assault, confinement of civilians in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportations of civilians, deliberate military attacks or threats of attacks on civilians and civilian areas, and wanton destruction of property.'" See Power 2002.

6 Mann 2005; Ballinger 2009; Bell-Fialkoff 1996.

7 Exactly how the term came to be is not clear. Some argue that Serbian nationalists created it during the war (Power 2002, 249). Toal and Dahlman argue that it was created by Croat nationalists as a way to describe Serbian war aims. It may also have been a term used during the atrocities carried out by the pro-Nazi Ustasha regime in Croatia during World War II and reappropriated during the war in the 1990s (2011, 3).

8 Power 2002.

9 Sells 1998, 59.

10 Herrero 1999, 139.

11 Perica 2002, 158.

12 Ibid., 336.

13 Although widespread, religious and ethnic identities were not necessarily synonymous before the war. This changed as the fighting continued, creating an effective fusion of religious and ethnic identity that, if not universal, was a very powerful force. For more on the relationship between religious and ethnic identity in Yugoslavia and Bosnia, see Bringa 1995.

14 Sells 1998, 107.

15 Terms around Medjugorje can become confused, as Medjugorje refers to a town, a parish, a pilgriamge site, as well as a symbol both religious and political. We will use Juan Herrero's term "Medjugorje movement" to refer to the tangible aspects of the this phenomenon (Herrero 1999, 139). For the purposes of this essay, then, "Međugorje movement" will refer to such tangible aspects, unless otherwise specified: the pilgrimage center, the pilgrimage industry, and the movement of pilgrims, locals, and religious that associate themselves with the pilgrimage center and the Međugorje cult. This is appropriate, as I appeal to Medjugorje not to study the visions or pilgrimage site in its own right but as an example that helps elucidate the connections between religious practice and ethnic cleansing.

16 For more information on Medjugorje and the Bosnia War, see Mart Bax's important ethnography of Medjugorje, which he conducted both before and during the conflict (1995). Bax is especially helpful for his detailing of the mali rat, the ethnic cleansing and violent conflict that occurred within Medjugorje between the townspeople at the beginning of the larger war. Sells (1998) and Perica (2002) do fine work detailing the ways that Medjugorje contributed to the atrocities of the war, as well as its role in the ethnonationalist imaginaries operative during the war. I have also detailed and summarized findings on Medjugorje (2010), and others also deal with Medjugorje in chapter- or article-length pieces (Herrero 1999; Cohen 1998; Markle and McCrea 1994).

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17 Perica 2002, 338-339; Herrero 1999, 162.

18 Cohen attributes this quote to a journalist reporting from Medjugorje during the war who published with the San Francisco Chronicle.

19 Cohen 1998, 65-6.

20 I take this distinction of universal and parochial understandings of Mary from Victor and Edith Turner in their study of Christian pilgrimage in Europe. Interestingly enough, Turner and Turner anticipated the dangers of a great symbol and personage, such as Mary, narrowed into a parochial setting. They wrote that "the danger is, of course, that Mary, in principle representing global communitas, has in practice become, in each of her numerous images, exclusive patroness of a given community, region, city, or nation." Such a move can create a more exclusivist hermeneutic where the power and protection of Mary, certainly a cosmic force, is limited to specific populations and persons and set up against others (Turner and Turner 1978: 171).

21 The following is an example of one of the Virgin's messages that focused on conversion of the already faithful. It is a message given in July 1995, the same time as the Srebrenica massacre: July 25, 1995 "Dear children! Today I invite you to prayer because only in prayer can you understand my coming here. The Holy Spirit will enlighten you to understand that you must convert. Little children, I wish to make of you a most beautiful bouquet prepared for eternity but you do not accept the way of conversion, the way of salvation that I am offering you through these apparitions. Little children, pray, convert your hearts and come closer to me. May good overcome evil. I love you and bless you. Thank you for having responded to my call." To view the messages of the seers, go to www.medjugorje.org/olmpage.htm. Accessed July 15, 2012.

22 Bringa 1995, 10; Cohen 1998, 46.

23 Rieff 1995; Vulliamy 1994.

24 Of course, the statements of the Virgin are not given directly. They come to the seers and then, at least originally, were communicated to the faithful through the Franciscan priests at the Church of St. James, near where the apparitions began. The statements, then, even though they are from a divine source in real time, are still mediated. The quote is also an interpretation, not just of the Virgin's sayings, the sermons and even the mood and discussions at or about Medjugorje. The soldier's understanding is probably also influenced by discussions with family, friends, and even barracks discussions with fellow soldiers. This is important to remember, so that we maintain some room between the content of the Virgin's messages and the hermeneutical and pastoral apparatuses of the pilgrimage center that grew up around it. In this way, we do not automatically take the interpretation as synonymous with the text. For the purposes of this paper, however, our interest is on the way that the soldier understood the Virgin's presence and words and how this shows a connection between evangelism and ethnic cleansing. The general interpretation, then, is more relevant than an exegesis of the Virgin's actual messages.

25 Mojzes quotes Karadzic only in part and does not provide the interview in full. The interview was entitled, "The Type of Leader We Need," published in a "Montenegrin Serbian Orthodox" periodical, as Mojzes describes it, called Svetigora. It was republished in Svet with the title of, "Radovan Karadzic: What the Holy Ghost Whispers to Me," on September 1, 1995, p. 8 (Cigar 2003, 324n38). In the same interview, Karadzic also said that this conversion, really a return in his mind, cannot be "coerced." The results of his trial at the Hague, however, provide grounds for one to seriously doubt this sentiment.

26 Mojzes 1998, 88.

27 This could also reflect an aspect of Serbian ethnonationalism that insisted on the genetic and physiological inferiority of those who converted to Islam, as well as their descendants. Sells (1998) and the authors in Mojzes's volume (1998) discuss this aspect of ethnonationalist ideology.

28 Cigar 2003, 324.

29 Cigar 2003; Sells 1998.

30 Sells 1998.

31 Karadzic, a published poet, has written a poem on the theme of conversion, a segment of which follows here: "Convert to my new faith crowd/ I offer you what no one has had before/ I offer you inclemency and wine/ The one who won't have bread will be fed by the light of my sun/ People nothing is forbidden in my faith/ There is loving and drinking/ And looking at the Sun for as long as you want/ And this godhead forbids you nothing/ Oh obey my call brethren people crowd." The full poem can be found on: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ karadzic/radovan/poems.html, accessed 4/22/11.

32 Staub 1989.

33 Volkan 1991.

34 Juergensmeyer 2000.

35 Davis 1973.

36 Toal and Dahlman 2011, 3. By "continuity" I do not imply an essentialism to practice, no do I mean practices that are the same across time, but instead, a legacy of violent practices and logics on which future generations can draw, even if they do so without being fully conscious of this appropriation.

37 Perica 2002, 8; Zivkovic 2011, 200.

38 Johnston and Sampson 1994; Gopin 2000.

Re-approaching Inter-religious Engagement in Israel/Palestine: Moving Beyond Questions of Religious Identity and Experience, by Peter Dziedzic

Abstract

While the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a religious conflict, the presence and influence of religious communities cannot be ignored. Inter-religious engagement among various faith communities is necessary in the region, and various organizations have been committed to this work for years. Yet, has it been enough? In this paper, I argue that many inter-religious engagement initiatives have dangerously segmented questions of religious identity and experience from other modes of experience such as the political, the social, and the economic. While this segmenting is perceived as necessary to bring deeply-wounded and alienated communities to dialogue encounters, such encounters are not honoring the full experiences of participants. In order to more effectively engage religious communities in the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation in Israel/Palestine, inter-religious organizations must pursue more holistic conversations and encounters that re-integrate the religious, social, and political experiences of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Contextualizing Inter-religious Engagement in Israel/Palestine

While the consensus today is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essentially a secular conflict, none can doubt the widespread presence of religious communities in the region. Because the land plays a role in the narratives and histories of the three Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—inter-religious dialogue, encounters are often seen as one of the central ways to initiate conversation and engagement amongst Palestinians and Israelis. With apathy towards the peace process rising among both young Palestinians and Israelis, the efficacy of many peacebuilding initiatives is coming into question. What is the effectiveness of inter-religious peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine? There are dozens, if not hundreds of peacebuilding organizations in Israel/Palestine,[1] many of which seek to bring people together to discuss faith and religious identity. Exploring the limitations and possibilities for inter-religious engagement as an aspect of peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine is necessary at such a vital and dire time in the conflict. I hope that this paper, rather than naïvely offering definitive and authoritative solutions to these concerns, will instead invite readers to enter into this critical conversation and offer further insights into re-approaching traditional inter-religious efforts.

Recognizing the Need for Inter-religious Engagement

Despite the widespread divisiveness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the need to engage both Israelis and Palestinians in direct dialogue has been seen as crucial to the success of any reconciliation effort.

> Dialogue…is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises that face humanity…It enables inquiry into, and understanding of…processes that fragment and interfere with real communication between individuals [and] nations…[2]

Dialogue, as a mode of engagement, is used as a way to reach levels of understanding among participants that might not be available in other forms of interaction or communication. When dialogue is used in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, it offers a framework for the open and direct flow of information, necessary for gaining new insights into how groups and individuals perceive and approach the conflict.[3] Among the many parties that are invited to dialogue initiatives and spaces, religious communities and leaders are viewed as central contributors not only in Israel/Palestine, but in many situations of intergroup and transnational conflict.

> Religious communities made significant contributions to conflict transformation in the past century…the recent record but hints at the great potential inherent in a more systematic and coordinated mobilization of the spiritual and sociological resources of religion for conflict transformation and peacebuilding.[4]

Encouraging and fostering dialogue among religious communities and leaders is seen as vital in fostering responsible reconciliation efforts in Israel/Palestine, and this has been explicitly offered in the work of Mohammed Abu-Nimer[5], a leading scholar in peacebuilding studies

> "…[t]here has been a rising interest in how religion can be used in both conflict resolution and the peacebuilding process…The importance of inter-religious peacebuilding is obvious from the widespread, central role religion plays in the individual and collective identity of many."[6]

Inter-religious engagement is a crucial aspect of reconciliation attempts in Israel/Palestine.

> While the participation of these communities is recognized as essential, the need to engage the experience of religious identity and religious narratives among Israelis and Palestinians is also a factor that must be considered.

> …religious identities clearly and crucially impact the perceptions and behaviors even of those Israelis and Palestinians who do not define themselves as religious or observant. …religion in the Middle East…has never been separated from politics.[7]

Religious experience and expression is important, but it must be seen and approached in a context of larger social and political frameworks. This contextualization of experience within

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larger frameworks that transcend any single mode of identity construction has wide implications in shaping the cultural and social narratives of Israeli and Palestinian society, and this must be taken into consideration when pursuing inter-religious dialogue initiatives. This raises the question, what else is informing the experience of religious identity of Israelis and Palestinians, and is this being considered in contemporary inter-religious engagement efforts?

Challenges and Roadblocks – The Barriers to Dialogue

Both Israelis and Palestinians, when engaging in dialogue, bring narratives, experiences, and psychological barriers to the conversation that expands well beyond the confines of religious experience. Peace could potentially emerge out of a successful reconciliation process by overcoming psychological barriers in both parties involved.[8] These barriers are potent and encompass diverse facets of life for both Israelis and Palestinians. Importantly, these barriers are not only present in individuals, but in the political and societal structures in Israel/Palestine.

> …the Israeli political establishment has persistently failed to reconcile its sub-identity towards the Palestinians due to its inability to overcome psychological barriers…these problems are not particular to Israel. The Palestinian political establishment suffers from the same problems and also needs to overcome its own psychological barriers to reach a final agreement with Israel.[9]

There is a systemic issue that revolves around psychological barriers to peace. While dialogue is an oft-pursued method to overcome these barriers, it is important to recognize that these barriers arise from a variety of concrete situations and experiences.

Some central examples of psychological barriers in Israeli society include the historical events and narratives of the Holocaust, the attempted and continual construction of a Jewish-Israeli collective identity, the succession of Arab-Israeli wars in the later half of the twentieth century, the sense of physical isolation and insecurity in the Middle East, and inter-ethnic tensions in Israel.[10] Central psychological barriers in Palestinian society include the historical events and narratives of the Naqba, the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the daily inconveniences and threats that arise from perpetual military occupation, economic limitations and inaccessibility, and sentiments of ethnic discrimination and racism against the Palestinian people.[11] Such broad examples only point to deep and poignant psychological barriers that influence the daily lives and perceptions of Israelis and Palestinians, and reveal that many facets of identity are intersecting in this conflict, including (and beyond the religious) social, political, ethnic, and economic.[12]

While the psychological barriers are recognized, their physical origins must be acknowledged. "Psychological factors…cannot be divorced from the objective conditions that underlie the conflict. There are real conflicts of interest that cannot simply be attributed to the effects of distrust and misperception."[13] These experiences are not only psychological, but point to real on-the-ground situations that limit the ability for sincere reconciliation processes. Such experiences, tendencies, and barriers must be carefully considered and respected in dialogue

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encounters. Such barriers and experiences must inherently be taken up in inter-religious engagements, where the major objective is to change the participants' worldviews, particularly attitudes and behaviors towards the 'other'.[14] How do inter-religious engagement efforts manage to speak to experiences that go beyond aspects of religious identity, and are they even capable of bringing these experiences of intersecting identity into the dialogue experience?

The Pitfalls of Inter-religious Dialogue in a Vacuum

The experience of religious identity formation for many Israelis and Palestinians is a process that touches upon other facets of life beyond the spiritual and is influenced by other experiences, such as the political, economic, and ethnic dimensions of identity. Issues of faith identity, especially in Israel/Palestine, cannot be brought up in a vacuum, but in conversation with other aspects of identity. In many situations, there is a resistance to integrating issues of religious identity with other aspects of identity that are influenced by the conflict. "Israel-Palestine is the supreme present instance of the problem that follows from the imposition of a sacred-secular dichotomy…The idea that politics and religion are different tapestries, hung on different walls, or even in different rooms, is a contemporary illusion."[15] There is a tendency, in Israel/Palestine, to segment religious and political conversations and situations.

> Because political agreements and processes have not included and integrated the religious dimensions, large segments of both Palestinian and Israeli societies have been alienated…segments of the Palestinians and Israeli religious communities clearly feel alienated from the secular peace process.[16]

There is a societal and individual alienation that arises from a false segmenting of religious identity and politico-social engagement in Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation efforts.

Israelis and Palestinians themselves recognize the need to integrate these conversations. According to Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian-Arab Lutheran pastor in the West Bank, "economics and politics present a challenge to my faith in my identity as a Palestinian Christian…Christians in Palestine are forced to ask themselves what God's justice means to a people whose members suffer under systematic political, social, and economic injustice."[17] Dialoguing on religious experience cannot be naturally segmented from other social experiences.[18] While such segmenting is unfortunately part of the societal reality in Israel/Palestine, and while segmenting is often required to bring participants to the dialogue encounter, it risks avoiding or missing the deep psychological barriers and concrete realities that must be addressed in the reconciliation process. It is important to look at the work of several key inter-religious organizations in Israel/Palestine in order to assess if the issue of segmenting conversations on religious identity from other conversations is also a structural problem of contemporary inter-religious encounters.

A Snapshot of Three Inter-religious Organizations

Three central inter-religious organizations in Israel/Palestine—*Jerusalem Peacemakers,* the *Interfaith Encounter Association, and Rabbis for Human Rights*—point to both limitations and possibilities in Israel/Palestine. The first organization, *Jerusalem Peacemakers*, identifies itself as a network of independent peacemakers formed in the Holy Land. Formed by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bukhari and Eliyahu McLean in 2004, the organization proposes to enable the "coming-together of people to support each other in difficult times," and promotes enduring, daily, interfaith cooperation, creating cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the Holy Land and all living beings.[19] Recent initiatives and activities of *Jerusalem Peacemakers* include an interfaith delegation to the Dul Nouran mosque in Qusra, where the delegation met with people from the village, the Jerusalem Earth Walk, in which Israelis and Palestinians participated in an interfaith prayer, dialogue session, and peace circle in the city of Jerusalem, and a presentation at the Boombamela Festival in Eliat, where religious leaders offered a message of religious unity to Israeli youth.[20] While these initiatives seem to bring people together around issues of religious identity and religious unity, discussions about the political, social, ethnic, and economic factors are not promoted as a central aspect of the dialogue encounters. While these conversations might take place among dialogue participants, they are not a part of the systemic focus of *Jerusalem Peacemakers*, seeking to promote a strict message of interfaith harmony and peace. Such interfaith engagement speaks to the segmenting of identity that has taken place in dialogue encounters in Israel/Palestine.

The second organization mentioned, the *Interfaith Encounter Association*, was founded in 2001 and is based in Jerusalem. IEA's goal is to promote peace through "interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural study. We believe that…religion can and should be a source of the solution for conflicts that exist in the region and beyond."[21] In bringing together ordinary people from contending political, religious, and ideological perspectives, the organization's goal is to develop in these "encounter groups" understanding and respect across the differences that divide them, beginning with religious differences.[22] While religious differences are indeed the focus of the conversations and dialogue groups, the conversations do reach a point beyond issues of religious commonality and difference: "Interfaith Encounter Association is not apolitical as such; rather, it is political in a particular manner. It does not avoid conflict or power inequalities. It addresses these in specific ways."[23] According to participants in the encounter groups, conversations of interesting identity and issues beyond religious identity are presented and discussed, and they are personally transformed by their participation. While this is the case, the social impact of IEA's work and individual participation is not clear.[24] This type of interfaith engagement points to possibilities for further integrating conversations of religious identity with conversations of economic, social, political, and ethnic identity, and reveals that such conversations, while powerful for those individual participants, are not yet taking effect at a systemic and societal level.

The third and final organization to be considered, *Rabbis for Human Rights*, is a grassroots organization founded in 1988 in response to "serious abuses of human rights by the Israeli military authorities in the suppression of the Intifada."[25] Identified as one of the most

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politically active peace groups in Israel, they are involved in ecumenical dialogue and educational activities, in addition to dealing with violations of human rights of Israeli Arabs and West Bank Palestinians. Its uniqueness, in comparison to other interfaith or faith-based peace groups, is that its agenda includes solidarity actions with underrepresented groups against injustice, including protesting home demolitions, supporting uprooted Bedouins, and lobbying for the rights of foreign workers.[26] *Rabbis for Human Rights* represents an organization that not only goes beyond discussions of religious identity and integrating this conversation with other areas of experience, but they work in the realm of putting dialogue into political and social action, inherently bringing to the dialogue experience the intersectionality of religious identity with other spheres of life—political, social, economic, or otherwise.

Conclusions

These three organizations, while representing only a small portion of the inter-religious activity in Israel/Palestine, offer a critical insight into the large range of focuses that are present in inter-religious engagement efforts in Israel/Palestine. In light of stagnating reconciliation efforts, what is the way forward for inter-religious engagement in Israel/Palestine? The necessary focus of inter-religious engagement is evident in the need for more integrated conversations on how religious identity intersects with the political and other experiences of Israelis and Palestinians and into more action-based initiatives for reconciliation and justice.

> Focusing on dialogue and inter-religious understanding is necessary for creating a culture of peace in both societies. However, ending the occupation and addressing gross injustices require different mechanisms of inter-religious peacebuilding...The interfaith work in Israel-Palestine is in need of a joint nonviolent religious resistance movement.[27]

There is a way forward for inter-religious cooperation in Israel/Palestine, but it will require not only more honest conversations about religious identity in the context of a conflict that affects the social, political, economic, and ethnic identities of Israelis and Palestinians, but a commitment to concrete efforts of reconciliation and against injustice. While these initiatives and encounters are present in Israel/Palestine, they need to become a norm rather than an exception if religious identity and interfaith engagement are to play a constructive role in changing the stagnating Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation efforts. Inter-religious engagement is, as has been offered, central to changing the narratives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it will require a more nuanced, intersecting, and action-based form of encounter if it is to reinvigorate new pathways to peace.

Peter Dziedzic is graduating from DePaul University with a B.A. in religious studies this year. He has been interested in questions of inter-religious engagement for several years, and has participated in domestic and international programs that work around these issues. Dziedzic has been to the Middle East several times, including an Interfaith Peace-Builders trip to Palestine/Israel in 2011 and as a Classical Arabic student at the Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan. He plans to pursue a PhD in religious studies.

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Notes

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1 Frida Furman, "Religion and Peacebuilding: Grassroots Efforts by Israelis and Palestinians," *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace*: 4:2 (2011), under "Religion and Peacebuilding: Grassroots Efforts by Israelis and Palestinians."

2 David Bohm, Donald Factor, and Peter Garrett, *Dialogue – A Proposal*, accessed via http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html.

3 Julia Chaitin, *Peace-building in Israel and Palestine: Social Psychology and Grassroots Initiatives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57.

4 William Zartman, Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques (Wasington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 273.

5 I have used a large portion of Dr. Abu-Nimer's scholarship in this work due to his heavy contribution to this specific area of inquiry. While other scholars have written on this topic, and while I employ some of their work, I must thank Dr. Abu-Nimer for providing a sound scholarly basis from which I have built my argument in this paper.

6 Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research* 38.6 (2001): 685.

7 Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Religion, Dialogue, and Non-Violent Actions in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17.3 (2004): 492.

8 Yuksel Sezgin, "The Shift from War to Peace – Reconciliation of Sub-Identities and Overcoming Psychological Barriers in Israel," *The Review of International Affairs*, 1.2 (2001): 50.

9 Ibid, 49.

10 Julia Chaitin, *Peace-building in Israel and Palestine: Social Psychology and Grassroots Initiatives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 26, 35-40.

11 Ibid, 28-35.

12 While I would like to further explain and nuance the examples of psychological barriers I offered, and while these examples do not encompass the full experience of Israelis and Palestinians, the confines of this paper do not allow for such extrapolation. While I agree that some of these terms require clarification, I believe the body of literature available on these topics can expand on places where I have only touched the surface.

13 Ibid, 24.

14 Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research* 38.6 (2001): 688.

15 James Carroll, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 296-297.

16 Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Religion, Dialogue, and Non-Violent Actions in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17.3 (2004): 492-494.

17 Mitri Raheb, *I Am a Palestinian Christian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 14.

18 While I offer Raheb's account as a Palestinian Christian to touch upon an example of intersecting identity, similar experiences are echoed by both Jewish and Muslim leaders in Israel/Palestine.

19 Jerusalem Peacemakers, http://jerusalempeacemakers.org/about/about-jerusalem-peacemakers/.

20 Jerusalem Peacemakers, http://jerusalempeacemakers.org/category/action-areas/.

21 Interfaith Encounter Association, http://interfaithencounter.wordpress.com/.

22 Frida Furman, "Religion and Peacebuilding: Grassroots Efforts by Israelis and Palestinians," *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace*: 4:2 (2011), under "The Encounter Group."

23 Ibid, under "The Encounter Group."

24 Ibid, 26-27, under "Conclusion."
25 Rabbis for Human Rights, http://www.rhr.israel.net/profile/indext.shtml.
26 Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "Religion, Dialogue, and Non-Violent Actions in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17.3 (2004): 507.
27 Ibid, 508-509.

Democracy: Instrument for or Expression of a Christian Political Order? by George Harinck and Hans-Martien ten Napel

Abstract

Is separation of the political and religious realms necessary for a democracy to flourish? This article argues that, whereas both the Catholic Church's social teaching and Protestant thinking, especially as developed in the Netherlands, recognize the relationship between religion and democracy, only Catholicism explicitly acknowledges that Christianity is vital for sustaining democracy. Compared with the Catholic Church's social teaching, Herman Dooyeweerd's views on values and democracy, for example, are relatively underdeveloped. Even after his death, Dooyeweerd's thought continues to influence one of the Dutch Protestant political parties, insofar as it still regards democracy as an instrument for a Christian political order, rather than as the expression of one.

Introduction

The starting point of our article is the debate that took place in 2004 between philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas and theologian and churchman Joseph Ratzinger (elected Pope the following year) on the prepolitical moral foundations of the democratic order. We begin by examining the philosophical background of Ratzinger's position in this debate, i.e., the Catholic Church's social teaching. Next, largely on the basis of Jonathan Chaplin's recent study *Herman Dooyeweerd: Christian Philosopher of State and Society*, we argue that Dooyeweerd's views on values and democracy are relatively underdeveloped.

The article then goes on to explore the implications of this for the Christian Union (CU), a Dutch Christian political party that continues to be influenced by Dooyeweerd, even after his death. From 2007 to 2010, the CU was a coalition partner in the Balkenende IV cabinet, together with the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats; in 2010, the CU was vehemently opposed to the formation of the Rutte cabinet, a minority coalition of Liberals and Christian Democrats, which received parliamentary support from Geert Wilders' anti-Islam Freedom Party (PVV).[1] Yet a 2011 letter by the then Christian Democratic Minister of the Interior Piet Hein Donner to the House of Representatives on integration, engagement, and citizenship was more outspoken with respect to values and democracy than any other policy document in recent decades.

In what way then is religion or a prepolitical moral foundation defended as indispensable for the democratic order? It turns out that, although both Catholic and Protestant traditions recognize the relationship between religion and democracy, only the Catholic Church's social teaching views democracy as not just an instrument for a Christian political order but as the true expression of it.

The Habermas–Ratzinger Debate

In January 2004, Habermas and Ratzinger met to debate the moral foundations of the constitutional state. According to Habermas, the democratic constitution of such a state provides legitimacy in and of itself, and its foundations can be considered entirely post-

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metaphysical or secular.[2] Because this is very much the mainstream opinion today, there is no need to elaborate on it here.

Ratzinger, by contrast, questions whether legality equals legitimacy, and believes that the standard of justice should be found in the moral foundations of Western political culture, notably the Christian faith and Western secular rationality. He agrees that, because it ensures the participation of citizens in policy making, among other activities, democracy can be considered "the most appropriate form of political order." Nevertheless, he identifies one crucial problem—that as history shows, majorities can reach utterly unjust decisions. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was published after World War II and articulated basic human dignities that could not (in principle) be compromised by popular vote, is valuable in this respect but does not suffice.[3]

As noted above, the philosophical background from which Ratzinger develops this position is the Catholic Church's social teaching. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, compiled in the 1990s by an editorial committee chaired by Ratzinger, emphasizes that the Bible provides "endless inspiration for Christian reflection on political power, recalling that it comes from God and is an integral part of the order that he created."[4]

With respect to this created order, the *Compendium* affirms that "[t]he political community originates in the nature of persons, whose conscience 'reveals to them and enjoins them to obey' the order which God has imprinted in all his creatures."[5] It is the task of humanity to discover and develop this order. No matter how much human creativity is required for that purpose, however, "[t]his order 'has no existence except in God; cut off from God it must necessarily disintegrate'."[6]

Like Ratzinger, the *Compendium* "values" democracy. It adds, however, that "an authentic democracy is not merely the result of a formal observation of a set of rules but is the fruit of a convinced acceptance of the values that inspire democratic procedures: the dignity of every human person, the respect of human rights, commitment to the common good as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life. If there is no general consensus on these values, the deepest meaning of democracy is lost and its stability is compromised."[7]

Nevertheless, such a consensus is exactly what is missing in modern-day democracies, because of ethical relativism. According to the *Compendium*, this constitutes a serious threat because "if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political action, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism."[8]

Understandably, the *Compendium* then goes on to warn that further marginalization of Christianity in, for example, the West "would not bode well for the future of society or for consensus among peoples; indeed, it would threaten the very spiritual and cultural foundations of civilization."[9]

In summary, then, the democratic order according to Ratzinger and Catholic social teaching is an expression of Judeo-Christian values. Therefore, a democracy that has been alienated from these values will sooner or later adopt totalitarian traits. Democracy is only safe in God—that is, in a society with God-fearing citizens. Or, as political scientist Hugh Heclo put it when discussing the relationship between Christianity and American democracy: "Non-believers

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may not believe the Christians' answers, but a democratic society is surely better off for having to confront the Big Questions rather than pretending they do not exist. Without a strong, publicly engaged Christian presence, America will become a different and not a better place."[10]

Dooyeweerd's Position

Let us now turn to a Protestant position in the debate. Jonathan Chaplin's aim in his recent book on Dooyeweerd is to demonstrate "how his work amounts to a striking and characteristically Protestant philosophy of social pluralism and civil society, comparable in range and depth to contributions emerging from twentieth-century Catholic social thinkers such as Jacques Maritain and Heinrich Rommen."[11]

It is our contention, however, that "the contrast between the impressive legacy of Thomistic thought and the paucity of Calvinist philosophizing" by which Dooyeweerd was struck in 1925[12] still exists with respect to the pressing issues of values and democracy.

As in Catholic social teaching, Dooyeweerd's "creation motive" implies the notion that "[t]he design of the created cosmos is determined throughout by 'divine law,' which structures and sustains its existence."[13] More specifically with regard to the state, Dooyeweerd holds that its dominant features can be summarized as "power in service of justice."[14] According to Chaplin, Dooyeweerd favors "a form of constitutional democracy in which popular will is channeled through and limited by justice-embodying constitutional structures. For him it is more important to limit the state's power and authority than to ensure that its actions reflect popular will."[15]

It can therefore be assumed that Dooyeweerd stands closer to Ratzinger than to Habermas, in the sense that both would probably agree that the democratic order is, as one author recently put it, "not culture-free." Instead, this order possesses distinctive cultural elements that "ought to be carefully investigated, specified, and acknowledged, if liberal democracies are to continue existing as such."[16]

Yet, as Chaplin points out, for Dooyeweerd, "[d]emocracy, it seems, is not given on the law side but is only a positive form, the appropriateness of which depends on historical conditions rather than on conformity to a structural norm."[17] Chaplin rightly observes that this view can be considered "problematic," if only because the "troubling implication" is that not even the question of whether the state should be organized internally in an autocratic or a democratic manner can be decided by referring to the state's structural principles.[18]

Chaplin believes it is possible to argue that the idea of the state as a public–legal community somehow implies political participation of its citizens. It is telling, however, that Dooyeweerd himself did not draw this conclusion and—as Chaplin admits—would possibly have resisted it. In addition, according to Chaplin, "[t]he passages in NC where Dooyeweerd discusses the concept of the nation are among the denser and more obscure in his account of the state."[19] All in all, Dooyeweerd's views on values and democracy seem less sophisticated and, as a result, less conclusive than those of Catholic social teaching, to say the least.

CU and Democracy

Dooyeweerd's weakly developed ideas on parliamentary democracy are still reflected in Dutch politics. The CU stands in the neo-Calvinist or antirevolutionary political tradition as

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developed by the Dutch politician and theologian Abraham Kuyper in the late nineteenth century. The political branch of neo-Calvinism was called antirevolutionary. Its antagony has to be understood as follows: it is opposed to the ideas of the French Revolution, especially the modeling of society according to the uniform rule of reason, and evacuating religion from the public sphere and banishing it to the private one. The antirevolutionaries defended a plural society, for example by promoting equal legal rights and public funding for religious and non-religious based schools.[20] Dooyeweerd belonged to this tradition and was active in the 1920s as President of the Scientific Institute of Kuyper's Anti-Revolutionary Party. His work strengthened the theoretical basis of the antirevolutionary tradition and, after World War II, his philosophical work spurred the tradition's renewal when the key notions of authority and limitation of state power were exchanged for those such as responsibility and social justice.[21] The CU was founded in 2000, as a merger of two Christian political parties that had represented the antirevolutionary tradition in Dutch politics during the last quarter of the twentieth century.[22] The CU may be regarded as the political expression of Dooyeweerd's philosophical school, and CU representatives in the Dutch Parliament, such as former party leader André Rouvoet and (former) senators Egbert Schuurman and Roel Kuiper, have been trained in this philosophical tradition. Schuurman and Kuiper are professors in Christian philosophy, as the Dooyeweerd school is called today.

The starting point for Christian philosophy—and for the CU's reflection on and appreciation of democracy—is that this world, including the state and politics, are subject to God as creator and redeemer. From this perspective, the CU diagnoses secularized Western culture, including democracy, as having abandoned the guiding principles of Christianity. However, despite its negative evaluation of the Western world, the CU is not abandoning this culture. This is still God's world, and Christians must serve culture and society with the Good News, in private and in public. This is in full accordance with the antirevolutionary tradition and its notions of the antithesis between the Christian faith and others and a common (nonsaving) grace for all, as proposed by Kuyper. Thus, the CU stands on two legs: passive acceptance of secular democracy and active striving for democracy with a Christian character.[23]

Given its religious premise and its sensitivity to antireligious trends in modern culture, the CU is receptive to a critique of Western culture not so much from an economic or political point of view, but from a moral point of view of view, whether from existentialist, neo-Marxist, or environmentalist ideologies. At present, Islam in particular is in vogue. The basis of the Islamic critique of Western culture is its alienation from Allah. The CU rejects any radical Islamic criticism of Western culture that includes use of violence, but appreciates reformist Islamic criticism—rejecting trends in modern culture, but not modern culture as such. In 2007, CU senator Egbert Schuurman proposed a "moral pact" between Islam and Christianity as a cultural counterforce against Enlightenment ideas and practices. He referred to Islamic philosophers like Mohammed Iqbad and Mohammad Abdus Salam who want to embed technology in such a way as to guarantee justice, equality, solidarity, harmony, and environmental care.[24]

Schuurman did not discuss the political aspects of a pact with Islam. However, one problem with Islam in Western societies is their relative unfamiliarity with Islam. The

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incapability to cope with a different religion is the main reason why politicians in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom declared in 2011 'multiculturalism' a complete failure.[25] According to these politicians, Muslim immigrants should not be met with multicultural tolerance but with secular strength. The example of the Netherlands—where two anti-islamists, politician Pim Fortuyn and artist Theo van Gogh, were murdered—is often used to illustrate this problem.[26] In the context of this development towards secularism it is our contention that the liberal democratic system requires a reevaluation by religiously based political parties. How does Christianity relate to democracy? Religions may agree on the ontological existence of a prepolitical moral order, but epistemologically the antirevolutionary tradition "expects abiding disagreement about the content" of this order.[27] According to Catholic social teaching, the moral order implies democracy. In this sense, democracy is inextricably linked with Christianity or, even more specifically, with Calvinism (democracy was not accepted by the Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s).[28] As Heclo pointed out, Christianity is not the whole story of American democracy, and Christianity has had a dynamic rather than static relationship with democracy, but "the Christian affirmations of human equality, individuation, and ordinary life have been critically important grounding influences for thinking about democratic man." It was Christianity, and not religion in general, that promoted American democracy.[29]

The relationship between democracy and Islam is a matter of standing debate, at least in Europe. Schuurman's pact therefore has the potential to cause problems when democracy is at stake, and, in line with Chaplin's evaluation of Dooyeweerd's thought, reveals a weakly developed Christian concept of democracy.

Democracy is indeed at stake: Islam challenges Western democracies to speak out on their character. Will Western democracies allow indigenous religions—Christianity and Judaism—only in the public doman, will they include Islam as well, or do they ban all religions from the public domain? What is the CU's position on this issue? Traditionally, the CU focused on freedom of conscience as the litmus test for democracy. Democracy was essentially an instrument, a means to safeguard liberties for Christians and others. The CU takes religion as its criterion against which to evaluate political trends. Hence the CU's negative judgment of the so-called purple coalitions of Liberals and Social Democrats (1994–2002)—these coalitions rejected an ethical approach to political issues, and therefore Dutch society quickly lost its Christian benchmark. Schuurman therefore proposed the pact with Islam: the West is threatened primarily not by antidemocratic ideologies, but by antireligious forces.

Nevertheless, the CU's position is strengthening. In its 2010 and 2012 manifestos, the party placed more emphasis on the acceptance of democracy as essential for participation in Dutch society. It bases this stance on religious grounds, stating that constitutional democracy was developed within a Christian context. This last move is part of a longer development in Christian politics from an exclusive position—society must obey God's commandments—toward an inclusive one: society must treat all opinions equally, especially those of religious minorities. The CU still resists any restriction on religious freedom, but has accepted a more inclusive definition of democracy. However, the party still lacks a positive, intrinsic definition of democracy as the political expression of Christianity.

In 2007, the CU, Christian Democrats, and Social Democrats formed a coalition government that remained in office until 2010. During this period, democracy was challenged by Islamic critics and populist parties such as the PVV. In reaction, this coalition—sometimes called the "Dooyeweerd cabinet" because then prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende and some other Christian Democratic ministers, like their CU colleagues,[30] were pupils of the Dooyeweerd school—stated that democracy should be driven by values. Perhaps this phrase reflected the CU's conviction that government and society must obey God's commandments, but the values by which democracy was to be driven were not explicated. In this political context, Schuurman's pact with Islam sent out somewhat confusing signals. The pact reflected the classic notion of the CU that religion is fundamental to modern society, while simultaneously forming a coalition with a secular party and defending an inclusive position that did not explicitly state a relationship between Christianity and democracy. With whom would the CU ultimately side: with the religion-driven or the democracy-driven factions?

No answer was given, but the CU's vehement opposition to the coalition formed in 2010 was based on the government's apparent allowance of religious discrimination. PVV's qualification of Islam as 'ideology' was not rejected initially by this coalition as an insult but neutralized as a 'point of view.' In reaction, the CU asked for reaffirming the core values of the Dutch constitutional state.[31] The CU was clearly motivated by religion on this occasion. Interestingly, this coalition has been clearer on the values-driven character of democracy than any other coalition in recent decades. Both coalition parties explicitly defended freedom for all religions and labeled Islam a religion, thus distancing themselves from the PVV. While defending religious freedom on the one hand, on the other hand they rejected the notion of a multicultural society without a *Leitkultur* that was popular in the Netherlands in the 1990s. There was something like a typical Dutch culture and the coalition stressed that Dutch society is not exchangeable for any other.

For the first time in decades, a cabinet dared to postulate a direct relationship between democracy and, specifically, Dutch historical or cultural features, such as language, monuments, architectural styles, or unwritten codes of conduct and behavior. The first Rutte cabinet (2010-2012) has admitted to prepolitical foundations of the democratic order or, in its own words, "a fundamental continuity of values, opinions, institutions and habits that define and mark the leading culture of Dutch society."[32]

Although one may appreciate this vision of democracy and values, it is clear that the coalition did exactly what may have been expected from the CU—it rejected an inclusive definition of democracy, instead relating it to specific values. Christianity is not mentioned explicitly among these values, but it is clear that the historical and cultural values, as expressed in, for example, the country's monuments and architectural styles monuments and architectural styles, are mainly those of this religion. This is more than the CU achieved in the preceding coalition or in its own political manifestos.

The antirevolutionary tradition has traditionally been characterized by a rather instrumental view of democracy, one that has never been linked directly to Christianity.[33] The rise of Islam and anti-Islamic sentiments in Dutch society led CU senator Schuurman to invite Islamic representatives into a moral coalition against secularism. Paradoxically, parties with a

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less marked Christian profile than the CU had a different reaction to these sentiments. Thus, the Liberal–Christian Democratic cabinet stressed the moral foundations of Dutch democracy. In the absence of any metaphysical reference, the cabinet's position may be characterized as Habermassian in the sense used above. However, the explicit reference to cultural expressions such as architecture and monuments was, without doubt, a hidden reference to Christianity.

Conclusion

Ratzinger's argument that democracy cannot do without Christianity is rooted in a broad tradition of Catholic social teaching on democracy and the common good, especially since the Second Vatican Council. In contrast, Protestant reflections on democracy are scarce in the Dutch case, and Dooyeweerd—or the tradition of Christian philosophy he founded—hardly addressed this burning issue. This paucity is reflected in the CU's view of democracy. The party admits that values, in the form of religion, are needed to sustain democracy, but it lacks a sophisticated view of democracy. Now that democracy is at stake, the CU is alarmed by voices that want to exclude a religion such as Islam, but it is ignoring the underlying problem, which is the absence of a standard definition of Dutch democracy. It is therefore clear that, although both Catholic and Dutch Protestant traditions recognize the relationship between religion and democracy, only Catholic social teaching views democracy as not just an instrument for a Christian political order but as the true expression of it.

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Notes

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[1] In this article we will use the term 'Islam' in the general sense in which Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im uses it, i.e. 'the monotheistic religion (*Din al-Tawhid*) that the Prophet Muhammed propagated between 610 and 632 CE, when he delivered the Qur'an and expounded its meaning and application through what came to be known as the Sunna of the Prophet'. See his *Islam and the Secular State. Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 8.

[2] Jürgen Habermas, "Pre-Political Foundations of the Democratic Constitutional State?" in: Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, ed. Florian Schuller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006) 19–52, 29.

[3] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "That Which Holds the World Together. The Pre-Political Moral Foundations of a Free State", in: Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 53–80, 59.

[4] *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html, par. 383.

[5] Ibid., par. 384.

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[6] Ibid., par. 396.

[7] Ibid., par. 407.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., par. 572.

[10] Hugh Heclo, *Christianity and American Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 239.

[11] Jonathan Chaplin, *Herman Dooyeweerd: Christian Philosopher of State and Civil Society* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 1–2.

[12] Ibid., 29.

[13] Ibid., 47.

[14] Ibid., 161.

[15] Ibid., 215.

[16] Pablo C. Jiménez Lobeira, "Liberal Democracy: Culture Free? The Habermas–Ratzinger Debate and its Implications for Europe," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies* 2 (2011): 44–57, 57.

[17] Chaplin, *Herman Dooyeweerd*, 213.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 235. "NC" refers to Dooyeweerds magnum opus, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*.

[20] See: Wendy Fish Naylor, *Abraham Kuyper and the Emergence of Neo-Calvinist Pluralism in the Dutch School Struggle* (Ph.D. thesis University of Chicago, 2006).

[21] See: George Harinck, *Waar komt het VU-kabinet vandaan? Over de traditie van het neocalvinisme. Inaugurele rede* (Amstelveen: EON Pers, 2007).

[22] See Joop Hippe and Gerrit Voerman, eds., *Van de marge naar de macht. De ChristenUnie 2000–2010* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2010).

[23] See George Harinck and Hugo Scherff, "Oude wijn in nieuwe zakken. Over de continuïteit in politieke visie en standpunten tussen GPV en RPF en ChristenUnie", in: Hippe and Voerman, *Van de marge naar de macht*, 133–156.

[24] Egbert Schuurman, "Pact van christendom en islam helpt tegen cultuurspanningen," *NRC Handelsblad*, 20 September 2007. See also his: *De uitdaging van de islamitische technologiekritiek* (Wageningen: Wageningen Universiteit, 2007).

[25] *The Daily Mail*, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1355961/Nicolas-Sarkozy-joins-David-Cameron-Angela-Merkel-view-multiculturalism-failed.html#ixzz2EIGyndck.

[26] Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: Liberal Europe, Islam, and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

[27] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Abraham Kuyper's Model of a Democratic Polity for Societies with a Religiously Diverse Citizenry," in: *Kuyper Reconsidered. Aspects of his Life and Work*, ed. Cornelis van der Kooi and Jan de Bruijn (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1999), 198.

[28] Robert P. Kraynak, *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy: God and Politics in the Fallen World* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

[29] Heclo, *Christianity and American Democracy*, 49, 52, 212.

[30] See: Hans-Martien ten Napel, "Het Dooyeweerd-kabinet. De overheidsvisie van het kabinet-Balkenende IV," *Beweging* LXXI (2007): 5–9.

[31] Roel Kuiper and Andre Rouvoet, 'Maak kernwaarden rechtsstaat glashelder', *De Volkskrant*, 1 maart 2011.

[32] Kamerstukken II 2010/11, 32824, nr. 1, 8. See also www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/press-releases/2011/06/17/integration-policy-based-on-dutch-values.html.

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33 See: George Harinck, "Neo-Calvinism and Democracy. An Overview from the Mid-Nineteenth Century till the Second World War," in: *The Kuyper Center Review, IV*, ed. John Bowlin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013) forthcoming.

Leveraging Inter-religious Dialogue into Transformative Action Using Practical Theology's Reflexive Frameworks, by Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae

Sponsored by the Memnosyne Foundation, the Memnosyne Interfaith Scholarship is designed to support a graduate student completing advanced research related to interfaith studies, relations and action. The research will support not merely religious tolerance and dialogue, but real cooperation. The assertion being that in order to live harmoniously in a multi-religious civil society with democratic structures and a secular government, real cooperation is needed. An approach based upon collaborative pragmatism rather than conflicting idealistic principles is needed in order to achieve a peaceful way of life. All religions carry their distinct revelations. Collaborative pragmatism implies not dominating and destroying these diverse revelations, but cooperating in order to compliment and fulfill them in our ever new and changing world.

The scholar was chosen by the Memnosyne Foundation, and through our agreement with the Global Theological Education Program of Perkins School of Theology and the Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue. *In this four week research-centered program over the summer, the scholar was offered the opportunity to use the facilities of Bridwell Library at the Perkins School of Theology, one of the finest collections of theological and multiple faith resources in the United States.*

In addition to the research, Memnosyne will arrange for (two) public lectures or possible panel discussions during the fall for the benefit of the greater SMU community, Dallas-Fort Worth, and the promotion of the Memnosyne Foundation's Center for Interfaith Inquiry. The lectures or panels will be designed to promote religious cooperation, interfaith relations and action, and how this impacts a community. The Memnosyne scholar provides both a researched paper and, as part of the presentation, provide examples of the validity and power of a society that embraces the power of interfaith relations and action, not just in theory, but in practice.

This year, the scholar was Bhikshuni Lozang, a Buddhist Nun and Contributing Scholar to State of Formation. *It is with great pleasure that we feature the work that she composed as a Memnosyne Interfaith Scholar in the article that follows.*

Abstract

In my mission to develop protocols for assessing Vajrayana Buddhist contemplative practices, I have investigated models of academic practical theology as prospective frameworks for systematic reflection incorporating both theological and empirical dimensions. Beyond this Buddhism-specific application, I have explored how practical theology can be used to enhance inter-religious engagement. In this paper, I demonstrate how traditionally Christian academic practical theology hermeneutic formalisms can be generalized to serve as reflexive frameworks

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for conducting collaborative inter-religious activities. Such frameworks have the potential to enable actual communities of lived religions to leverage sustainable collaboration in areas of mutual interest for the long-term benefit of congregations and our wider society.

Introduction and Rationale

Multiple problems, like poverty and violence and their causes, afflict our communities, while our religious communities appear utterly impotent as resourceful antidotes. Perhaps if our religious congregations were able to combine resources and work as coalition partners on problems of mutual interest, this cohesive network would become a significant force for transformative problem-solving.

As an ordained Buddhist clergy, scientist, educator, practitioner, and researcher of traditional formal Vajrayāna Buddhist meditation techniques, I here present a rationale for employing research paradigms from traditional Christian practical theology in the service of inter-religious collaborative activities. Such paradigms are of potential interest to scholars from academic practical theology, contemplative studies, religious and inter-religious studies, Buddhist and other religious clergy and congregations.

Terminology

As a scientist and Buddhist theologian from the Vajrayāna tradition, my use of the phrase "practical theology praxis" is precisely selected: I favor Heitink's general rendering of "praxis" as "action, activity"[1] because of the theological prominence of its Sanskrit rendering, *karma*, in Buddhism and its philosophical significance indicating the locus of practical dynamic processes by which intentions are transformed into executed results. It is taken more specifically in the practical theological sense given by David Tracy[2]: "Praxis is correctly understood as the critical relationship between theory and practice whereby each is dialectically influenced and transformed by the other." For the phrase "practical theology," I refer precisely to the usage jointly offered by Browning, Fowler, Schweitzer, and van der Ven[3]: "Practical theology should be understood as an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practice," contributing to "empirical theory building" and "a theology of transformation."[4]

Review of Practical Theology Scholarship

The work described herein applies categorical analysis to practical theology. The interpretive approach is pragmatic, selecting those points of the respective literature considered most relevant to my quest to develop a community-based service project for inter-religious engagement, beyond my immediate research assessing the prospects for developing a theoretical praxis framework for investigating Vajrayāna Buddhist meditation intended to inform teachers and students of such meditation. This need is determined pragmatically, from

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the point of view of this author who is not only a Vajrayāna Buddhist with extensive expertise in Vajrayāna spiritual formation, but also a scientist and initiate practical theologian.

Prospective Buddhist Practical Theology Praxis

There are authors who believe that practical theology must appropriate for itself an even broader frame of reference. It should restrict itself neither to Christianity nor to the world religions, but should take as its object the desire for transcendent meaning which lives in mankind [sic].[5]

Of the scholarly literature on fundamental practical theology selected here for review, those by Heitink and van der Ven respectively are among the top most-frequently nominated "essential readings" of practical theology by members of the International Academy of Practical Theology and hence have very high scholarly significance.[6] The selections here follow in order of increasing theoretical complexity and specificity.

Richard Osmer writes about "practical theological interpretation by the leaders of [Christian] congregations" in his text *Practical Theology*, detailing a 4-task method of practical theology generalized such that it "may be brought to bear on *any* issue worthy of consideration."[7] These tasks, "descriptive-empirical," "interpretive," "normative," and "pragmatic," respectively function for descriptive information gathering, theoretical understanding and explanation, theological and ethical normative construction (or reconstruction, as the case may be), and the establishment of strategies of action and "reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted."[8] While Osmer restricts his theological formulation of the normative task to the Christian sense of "prophetic discernment,"[9] there is no obvious reason why a Buddhist normative task informed by Buddhist theology and Buddhist ethics cannot function in this task role and thereby yield a functionally Buddhist practical theology. Osmer himself cites Christian theologian Elaine Graham's deployment of this normative task through transformative praxis in feminist theology,[10] thereby evidencing the pragmatism of the normative function. The prospects are therefore favorable for deploying Osmer's practical theology praxis framework, with respective theological modifications, within a uniquely Buddhist or otherwise non-Christian-specific theological context.

Gerben Heitink's presentation of "practical theology as a theory of action" in his text *Practical Theology*[11] rigorously portrays the historical-interpretive development of Christian practical theology from the European Enlightenment era, through modernity, to post-modernity. He details a historical relationship of nuanced engagement of Christian practical theology with developments in philosophy, modern epistemology, the social sciences, political theory, hermeneutics, and pluralism.

Informed by the work of Schelsky, Firet, and others, Heitink's practical theology as a theory of action is built upon the communicative theory of action of Habermas and hermeneutical theories of Paul Ricoeur respectively, with the insights of the latter informing a

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transformative methodology in a hermeneutical cycle of understanding, explanation, and change. A philosophical relational theory between theory and praxis is established which undergirds communicative, interpretative, and methodological capacities in the service of practical theology. This is elaborated in great detail in terms of hermeneutical, strategic, empirical perspectives, and the interchange between [Christian] religious life and its social context. Heitink furthermore considers specific domains of praxis application: a "normative-deductive current;" a "hermeneutical-mediative current;" an "empirical-analytical current;" a "political-critical current;" and a "pastoral-theological current." These categories are not mutually exclusive, and all of these "currents," given theologically-relevant alterations, can be pursued within Buddhism's or any other religion's practical theological praxis relative to particular goals.

Inter-religious Applications of Practical Theology

I propose and personally intend to deploy the concept of practical theology as a framework for collaborative community service in general and inter- and intra-religious activities in particular. This is easiest to consider in contexts of increasing complexity. I will illustrate the concept thereafter using specific examples.

Simplest practical theology context

Here one merely engages in the project or activity within the reflexive hermeneutic framework. This scenario is not unlike project management approaches for non-profit organizations. The differences, however, are that the theological perspective informs all phases of the reflexive cycle--the normative phase in particular--and that the individual phases are mutually interactive with each other.

This reflexive, simple, yet systematic process can employ the Osmer model:

Descriptive-empirical phase: once an activity or project is planned and undertaken, the process is described from observations without analysis

Interpretive: in this phase, the material acquired through the descriptive phase is analyzed and interpreted

Normative: in this phase, theological, ethical, and "good-practice" values inform, guide, and transform plans and designs for subsequent projects or activities[12]

Pragmatic: strategies of action for producing outcomes incorporating the directives from the normative stage are developed and executed.

From this point, the cycle begins anew, and therefore the process is more of a spiral than a circle, over time. That is, since time is always moving forward, our reflections are actualized as normative influences on our future activities. It is precisely the "going-around-in-circles"

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dynamic that we are attempting avoid and replace with this pregnant, transformative approach. Implementation of this framework can serve to train partners in collaborative activities to deliberately consider their activities from within the practical theology process framework.

Moderate empirical practical theology context

In this context, the interpretive framework of the simple context is preserved but extended to include semi-formal empirical work. Questions are formulated and data collected via questionnaires or online surveys such as Survey Monkey®. Data can be compared over time, from pre-project reference, mid-project, and post-project to assess performance and outcomes. Additionally, diverse population groups can be compared according to age, ethnicity, location, etc. The questions of such surveys are designed within and informed by the practical theology hermeneutic reflexive process described above.

For example, perhaps some members of a spiritual community want their congregation to engage in more action to address income inequality locally, nationally, and globally. They could use a survey to ask members if they feel strongly about the ethical outcomes of income inequality, if they would like to see their congregation engage the issue more, and if they would like to participate in a leadership group on the issue. The survey would then be reviewed under two separate hermeneutic phase processes: first to merely describe the survey responses, and secondly to interpret them with respect to their initial vision of enhanced community engagement. From that point, the members would plan their next step as the normative stage, for example, creating a group exploring scriptural resources addressing income inequality and sharing these results with the congregation. Finally, this plan would be implemented, and then the cycle would move to a descriptive phase again. That is, the cycle would begin anew to describe the process of creating this group, interpreting that process, refining and/or expanding it, and then implementing those refinements. Thereby each phase of the process is systematically brought under the scope of reflection, and no stage is overlooked. It is this last feature that has much potential to help inter-religious collaboration and coalition-building, because it is often imagined, rather than intended, sleights, that hurt feelings and obstruct collaborative relationships. By systematically deploying a safety-net of awareness for these and other problems into the fabric of the collaborative process, such problems can be addressed directly. Furthermore, by separating the descriptive and interpretive phases, errors in either description or interpretation of events and issues by parties will not be confounded.

Formal empirical practical theology context

Here, while continuing within the simple interpretive framework mentioned above, project planners and collaborators draw on expertise from academic faculty in psychology and/or others trained in statistical empirical research for guidance and supervision with research design, operationalization, and analytical processes. While in most practical theological contexts, experimental controls cannot typically yield differentially conclusive results, exploratory work

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can lead to more refined interpretive processes. For example, given data from adequately sized populations and carefully designed research, regression analysis can be used to indicate the nature of any causal relationships among various factors relevant to a project.

Examples

Here, I identify two distinct types of problems to approach with the practical theology process, both within contexts of pragmatic inter-religious collaboration. In the first type, the practical theology process framework is used to inform and transform collaborative projects. For example, leaders and members of congregations from multiple faith traditions can work together on areas of common interest, be they items of spiritual formation, such as a program for increasing the practice of patience among populations, or social issues, like reducing public profanity culture, or working on critical problems such as economic injustice and sustainable environmental practices at household, community, and/or regional levels. (Numerous personal and social issues can be conceived; those mentioned above are mere samples.)Like any project, parties would meet and devise vision, mission, strategies, etc. as their planning process, and from the beginning of action, the practical theology reflexive framework would be executed according to the desired and suitable context as described above.

In the second type of problem to approach with the practical theology framework, the collaborative aspect itself would be under examination. This can be conducted passively or explicitly. In the first case, collaborative parties from different faith traditions working jointly on a project would have to describe, interpret, guide, and act on information related to the interrelational components of their joint activities. Ideally this descriptive net would be honest enough to include both strengths and weaknesses or failures in communication and/or cooperation, misunderstandings, etc. In this case, the practical theology framework also serves as a safety net dedicated to managing these components perhaps more often considered to be incidental to project management.

In the second case, activities designed especially for inter-religious relationship building and literacy would themselves be the focus of the collaborative project. For example, a series of workshops and short-retreats can be devised in any community with the specific mission of developing community inter-religious networks and relationships for collaborative network building. Activities could be devised to engender inter-religious literacy with respect to: various theologies; political, cultural, and geographical histories; ethics; and common problem sharing regarding both internal and wider social contexts. By taking time to develop relationships of literacy across various different religious domains, even when we prefer our own ways of doing things to that of our religiously "other" brother and sister, this preference will not interfere in our working together toward common goals (i.e., reducing suffering and its myriad causes), but rather will have a more mundane status akin to different dietary preferences. Our common work can proceed unhindered by our differences, and yield more efficient and effective results. Again, the reflexive practical theology framework would inform and transform such activities by

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enabling participants to refine the processes by using the suitable context of empirical tools and methods.

Conclusion

We know that intellectual power and analytical knowledge alone are insufficient to our contemporary problems. For example, there are many perspective solutions offered by nonpartisan experts advising on environmental and economic issues. Nonetheless, their prescriptions are often not leveraged adequately to yield transformative action resulting in positive conditions for local communities, the nation, and humankind. Their voices do not sufficiently reach into the social space inhabited by various power brokers with influence.

Our communities are full of numerous religious congregations and spiritual communities, yet these potent resources are underutilized for social problem-solving in fragmented form. Conversely, collaborative pragmatism in the form of long-term coalitions among all sectors of society represented by such spiritual communities can work endlessly generation by generation on various problems and therefore can serve as an agency for regular, transformative change. In order for such a resource to bear significant fruit, it must first coordinate itself into a vibrant network and gain mastery in collaborative action.

In order for interfaith collaborations to become and remain effective, an interpretive framework must be in place to inform and transform the collaborative process. Practical theology is suited to this task while also being able to accommodate the diverse theological factors present in any inter-religious context. Furthermore, practical theology can be used empirically for formal project assessment, leading to greater accountability to congregations, organizations, and donors. In our era of diminishing public services, investment in religion is negligible compared to medicine or engineering, where material outcomes and potential commercial benefits are self-evident. At the same time, more numbers of our most vulnerable populations turn to our religious communities for assistance and support. Without a sound accountability process in place, how can willing institutional and private donors have confidence to support the faith traditions' social welfare activities?

The practical theology reflexive framework is therefore a broad-spectrum mechanism for process reflection and normative pragmatism that can enable spiritual traditions to move from the level of inter-religious dialogue to collaborative network building and action coalitions and thereby harness and leverage joint resources for social problem-solving and positive transformation.

Acknowledgements

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Tablet and Sword: Religion and Violence in Recent Popular Scholarship on the Muslim World, by Adam Edward Hollowell

Abstract

A growing body of popular scholarship attempts to reframe Western conceptions of the Muslim world by offering, as Reza Aslan says, "a new, more constructive set of ideas and metaphors." This essay reflects on the complexities and promises of three recent efforts composed outside traditional academic settings: Eliza Griswold's *The Tenth Parallel*, Graham E. Fuller's *A World Without Islam*, and Aslan's edited volume *Tablet and Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East*. Despite their respective challenges, these books diversify and nourish literary images of the Muslim world, and they reshape our perceptions of the relationship between religion and violence in global politics.

Born out of longstanding discontent with Samuel Huntington's now infamous "clash of civilizations" hypothesis, a growing body of popular scholarship attempts to reframe public conceptions of religious conflict across the Muslim world.[1] The most notable of these attempts from 2010 was Eliza Griswold's *The Tenth Parallel*, an extensive journalistic project exploring violence and political tension across countries along the line of latitude seven hundred miles north of the equator.[2] Two radically different approaches are Graham E. Fuller's *A World Without Islam* and Reza Aslan's edited volume *Tablet and Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East*. Fuller's project is an ambitious counterfactual enterprise; he argues that geopolitical and ethnic tensions between the West and the Middle East would be largely similar even "if there had never been an Islam."[3] Aslan's project is more indirect. *Tablet and Pen* offers translations of poetic and literary voices to provide "a new paradigm for viewing the mosaic that is the modern Middle East."[4]

This essay reflects on the complexities and promises of these recent popular attempts to reframe public perceptions of the Muslim world. Many will agree, with Fuller, that, "in many senses there is no 'Muslim world' at all, but rather many Muslim worlds, or many Muslim countries and different kinds of Muslims."[5] Even as we admit this complexity, how can we speak truthfully about religion and politics, especially in places plagued by violent conflict? Do these authors create new spaces for clarity and insight, or do they subtly repeat the inadequacies of their predecessors? Perhaps most importantly, are the new interpretive frameworks they suggest helpful for charting a new course of popular understanding of contemporary Islam?

I begin by examining Fuller's hypothesis that a world without Islam would possess remarkably similar geopolitical tensions. Here William Cavanaugh's concept of the "myth of religious violence" provides a helpful device for assessing Fuller's argument. Turning to Eliza Griswold's work, I argue that she helpfully articulates the complexities of the Muslim World along the tenth parallel, but leaves us more exhausted than hopeful as we look toward future Muslim-Christian relations. Lastly, I will argue that the literary force of *Tablet and Pen* boldly introduces a variety of unique voices to the Western imagination, while largely relinquishing the

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task of explicitly reconfiguring our impressions of religion and violence. I conclude by suggesting that, despite their respective limitations, these works collectively diversify and nourish Western access to the Muslim world and may have the effect of creating new spaces for dialogue and relationship.

Imagining a World without Islam

Though written for a popular audience, *A World Without Islam* is more closely imbedded in the academic world than *The Tenth Parallel* or *Tablet and Pen*. Fuller is former vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council at the CIA, the author of several books, and an adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University. He begins by juxtaposing his argument with Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory, asking, "What if Islam never existed? To some, it's a comforting thought … no holy wars, no terrorists. But what if that weren't the case at all?"[6] Fuller argues that a world without Islam would look much the same as it does today, including challenging tensions between the West and the Middle East. This is because Islam "has primarily served as flag or banner for other, deeper kinds of rivalries and confrontations."[7] These more determinative factors include "economic interests, geopolitical interests, power struggles between regional empires, ethnic struggles, nationalisms, even severe clashes within Christianity itself."[8]

Given the sweeping nature of the argument, Fuller moves quickly through a list of historical conflicts where, he argues, Islam was not the most fundamental issue at stake. Most importantly, he catalogs a broad basis of conflict between the Eastern Byzantine Empire and the Western Roman Empire – "religious, cultural, geopolitical, historical, artistic, and psychological."[9] He argues that "anti-Western feelings" in the Eastern Orthodox Church "strongly resemble certain Muslim attitudes toward the West…suggesting a common geopolitical source of shared views, suspicions, and grievances toward Western influence, intentions, and interventions."[10] In other words, "Islam" has wrongly been identified as the driving factor behind East-West tensions.

Here William Cavanaugh's concept of "the myth of religious violence" helps analyze Fuller's frustration with "facile assumptions that Islam is what the Middle East is all about – the source of the problem and the solution."[11] According to Cavanaugh, the myth of religious violence "is the idea that religion is a transhistorical and transcultural feature of human life, essentially distinct from 'secular' features such as politics and economics, which has a peculiarly dangerous inclination to promote violence."[12] The myth rests on a fundamental belief that "religion must be at least analytically separable from politics, economics, etc.…we must be able at least on paper to identify which motives are religious, which are political, and which are social."[13] Fuller clearly rejects the myth; he argues explicitly against the idea that something called "Islam" is inherently violent. He builds his project, however, on the fundamental idea that religion is analytically separable from other historical, social, geopolitical, and economic factors. That belief is at the heart of Fuller's claim; thus, he says, "take away Islam and the trends still remain."[14]

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In short, while Fuller rightly rejects the isolation of Islam as a sole determining factor in global political conflict, he swings the pendulum too far in the other direction. His aim is noble, and to say that we need to consider complex geopolitical, economic, and ethnic tensions alongside religion is certainly appropriate. But it undermines his criticism of a simplistic narrative about Islam to retort that conflict "has really very little to do with religion and everything to do with political and cultural frictions, interests, rivalries, and clashes."[15] To isolate religion as the most relevant or most irrelevant factor in global conflict is to oversimplify an inherently complex situation for interpretive clarity. Fuller says, "Take Islam out of the equation, and there's a very good chance you'd still find the Middle East at loggerheads with the West."[16] That may be true, but we cannot take Islam out of the equation—as Fuller well knows–and so we cannot isolate it to be overlooked in our analysis of the Middle East, just as we cannot isolate it to overlook other factors.

Encounters with Conflict along the Tenth Parallel

If Fuller is right when he argues that "Islam, in the end, is what Muslims say it is, and how they act upon it," then Eliza Griswold's *The Tenth Parallel* is an attempt to make a record of what Muslims in many parts of the world are saying and doing in the name of Islam.[17] The book presents observations and reflections from nearly a decade of journalistic endeavors along the tenth parallel in Africa and Southeast Asia, including in Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia, the Horn of Africa, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Griswold, like Fuller, is attempting to facilitate a shift in popular Western understanding of Islam away from a "clash of civilizations" thesis. Yet, where Fuller hypothesizes about grand stretches of history, Griswold reflects more intimately on direct experiences of those who live in regions of conflict and violence. She demonstrates an astute ability to observe religion without isolating or overlooking its entanglements with other complicated realities. As she notes in the introduction, "Over the past decade, there has been much theorizing about religion and politics…I wanted to see how Christianity and Islam are actually lived every day by huge numbers of vulnerable, marginal believers."[18]

With acute sensitivity, Griswold confronts the challenges of weak political power and industrial globalization alongside those of ethnic and religious tensions. In Somalia, Ahmed Abdi Salem, a businessman frustrated with conflict between warlords, observes, "This is a secular community, but the more they see themselves as marginalized, the more they turn to religion…Religion comes in because it's education for free and we all have it."[19] In the Philippines, Father Geremia argues that the conflict between ethnic Moro militia groups and the government is "between power and powerlessness, not Christianity and Islam."[20] Griswold's reporting often highlights the prominent social and political role of religion in the absence of other resources.

At other times, however, leaders from fractured communities explicitly point to religious causes of violence. While describing violent chaos in the aftermath of local elections that overwhelmed Yelma, a small town north of Wase, Nigeria, Muslim lawyer and community leader

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Abdullahi Abdullahi observes, "That was the day ethnicity disappeared entirely and the conflict became just about religion."[21] Christian pastor Sunday Wuyep notes, similarly, "This is about religious intolerance."[22] Griswold, hesitant to isolate religion as a solitary interpretive lens, editorializes the event by noting, "Economics lay at the heart of the enmity between the two groups: as merchants and herders, the Muslims were much wealthier than the minority Christians."[23] Later, she pushes on for a deeper explanation, asking several local young people "if they thought this was really about religion."[24]

After ten years of travel, Griswold is so accustomed to a world of violence and brutality that she remains calm, even stoic, amid narrow escapes from bombings and tense moments with ruthless leaders. In fact, what stands out most are those moments when she encounters something that doesn't quite fit her interpretive categories, and she seems genuinely surprised. On one occasion, she approaches two Nigerian religious leaders, Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and Pastor James Movey Wuye, with great skepticism. These men promote "deprogramming efforts" with former militant believers, which includes the reading of scripture together, and Griswold says, "At first, I did not believe that such a simple practice could actually work. As an outsider, I doubted that words on the page, no matter the color, could make a substantive difference as to how people viewed one another."[25] Later, she reflects on her surprise that these efforts have helped the situation, saying, "time and again people's professions of their beliefs, like James and Ashafa's work with former militants, baffled me. They were ultimately mysterious, and could not be explained away by self-interest, or anything else of this world."[26]

Another surprise comes while traveling with Ibnu Ahmad, a former Islamic militant trained in Afghanistan and one of the leaders of the Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia. She writes, "Ibnu Ahmad confessed one thing he hated about Afghanistan: the arrogance of the Arab fighters, who believed, by virtue of their Arab ethnicity, they were better Muslims than locals and Southeast Asian foreigners."[27] As Ahmad spoke, Hunter, a traveling companion, "howled his approval. He, too, hated the attitude of those in Europe and the Middle East, be they Caucasian or Arab: it was the classic arrogance of those in the temperate zone couched in religious superiority."[28] Griswold is caught off guard by Ahmad's hatred for other Muslims and his strange pairing of Europeans and Arabs under the common attitude of superiority. She seems surprised because the hatred is primarily ethnic, or geographical, rather than religious. What she hears as sacrilegious the fighters laugh off as scriptural. The story points to one of the largely unexplored themes of the book–tensions between these ethnic communities along the tenth parallel and the Arab communities of the Middle East. But it also points to the elusiveness of her subject.

If *The Tenth Parallel* suggests anything, it is that life in the midst of conflict is murky, ambiguous, and fraught with tension and confusion about how to go forward. By the end of her travels, Griswold is weary and broken by the intractability of political, economic, and geographic messes. At the peak of her disillusionment, she articulates her growing sense that religion is malleable to the point of being vacuous. She notes that in the Philippines, or anywhere on the tenth parallel, "Islam…could mean whatever one wanted it to; it could hold a link to the past of

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forge a vision for the future. It could reinforce a family's feudal power or promise liberation from colonial oppression. This is today's splintered Islamic rebellion."[29] Griswold's definition of "religion" seems to have changed from the start of her travels, widening, but not necessarily for the better.

Literary Landscapes from the Middle East

Exhibiting many of the same corrective impulses in *A World Without Islam* and *The Tenth Parallel*, Reza Aslan's *Tablet and Pen* aims "to provide a different, more authentic perception" of the modern Middle East.[30] To do this, Aslan gathers together pieces from poems, fiction, memoirs, and essays translated from Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish. What unites the contributions is not a collective Muslim identity, but "a preoccupation with these themes– the overwhelming sense of being cast as 'foreign,' as 'other.'"[31] Thus, he aims to highlight the richness and diversity of the Middle East with an image that is "not fashioned by the descriptions of invaders, but rather one that arises from diverse literatures of its most acclaimed poets and writers."[32]

Aslan is clear that one central purpose of the collection is to unsettle long-standing Western perceptions of the Middle East "as a mysterious and exotic, savage and erotic place."[33] Yet while the voices in this volume are no less critical of simplistic accounts of the "clash of civilizations" mindset, religion and violence are less directly under the analytical microscope. Many of the representations of religion in general, and Islam in particular, are subtle and unremarkable, neither the focus of the scene nor the defining trait of the characters. It lurks behind parental disapproval of young lovers. It takes shape as a headscarf in the sun, incense burning during incantations, or prayers tacked to a wall. It is "a God/Who has hidden Himself/Behind the face of the moon./For the fear of His people."[34]

The two most explicit reflections on Islam and violence richly explore emotions of grief, piety, and tension. In "The Girl Sleeping on Top of Oil," Pegah Ahmadi juxtaposes sharply violent imagery with the exhaustion and submission of heartfelt prayer.

> *Hear me well, prayer rug!*
> *With my dust from Iraq and memories from the wet underbelly of Khorramshahr!*
> *And you, camphor prayer!*
> *As rain from my child reaches the heart of the bow*
> *then it would be time to wash off the moon!*
> *I will explode you*
> *I am no windowpane, but I will bring about your death,*
> *explosion!*
>
> *Hear me well, prayer rug!*
> *I can work magic*
> *with my explosive prayer of submission*

I can pull out a dove
live, breathing heavily
from the passageway in my throat
and with all my heart, all the explosion in my heart
and my blood and body
let it loose over waters.
Croon on, rain, croon on!

And then, bent over my skirt
I sank my head into my downy pillow
And two blue bowls
Exploded into my palms.[35]

Ahmadi confronts the reader with imagery of explosions, but she directs and subverts it into the bursts of tears accompanying prayers of submission. Constructing an alternative to public acts of terror, she privatizes and internalizes the explosive tension by replacing corporal violence with the physical manifestations of grief, loss, and frustration.

Such introspection is also present in "Jamilah and Us," a poem by the Iraqi poet and literary critic Nazik Al-Mala'ika. In it she reflects on the public response to the imprisonment and torture of Algerian nationalist revolutionary Jamilah Bouhired (b. 1935).

Jamilah! Beyond the horizon, far beyond the borders of nations, you weep.
Your hair loose, your tears soak the pillow.
Are you really crying? Does Jamilah cry?
Don't they give you music and song
Didn't they make offerings, of words and more words to you?
So why the tears, Jamilah?

The details of your torture were on every tongue,
And that hurt us, it was hard for our sensitive ears to bear.
You were the one imprisoned and shackled
And when you were dying for a sip of water
We marshaled all our songs
And said, "We'll sing to you, Jamilah, through the long nights."
All of us said: They gave you blood and fire to drink.
All of us said: They put you on the cross.
But what did we do? We sang, we praised your heroism, your glory.

We said: "We'll save her (Yes, we will)!"
We made promises, false promises, drunken promises
And we shouted "Long live Jamilah! Long live Jamilah!"

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We fell in love with Jamilah's smile.
We adored her round cheeks.
The beauty that prison had gnawed revived our love.
We were infatuated with her dimples, with the braids of her hair.
Did we not use her suffering to give meaning to our poetry?
Was that a time for songs? Songs, be ashamed.
Be silent before this noble suffering.

Their intent was evil. They cut her with sharp blades.
We gave her smiles, good intentions.
They hurt her with knives.
We, with the best of intentions, hurt her with ignorant, uncouth words.
The teeth of France tore her flesh.
She was one of us, our kin.
And the wounds we inflicted are more painful to bear,
Shame on us for all the suffering of Jamilah![36]

Al-Mala'ika expresses deeply ambiguous sentiments about the subtle abuses of political celebration and representative martyrdom. She not only names the difficulty of knowing when suffering calls for silence, for songs, or for calls to arms, but she also offers a strong warning against justifying violence by placing it easily into a larger narrative of revolution. She verges on an uncomfortable collapse of the divide between the Western torturers and the Middle Eastern protesters when she cries, "Shame on us for all the suffering of Jamilah!"

These sober and beautiful sensitivities to overly simplistic accounts of violence, redemption, and mourning go a long way toward creating what Aslan calls "a new, more constructive set of ideas and metaphors."[37] The work of both Ahmadi and Al-Mala'ika reflects the common experience of imperialism and colonial domination at the heart of this collection: "the disrupted histories and ravaged lands, the depletion of resources and inequities in wealth and status, the long struggles for sovereignty, and the vacuums of power and identity that so often followed independence from foreign rule."[38] At the same time, each author poetically subverts and reconfigures traditional understandings of the relationship between religion and violence in the Middle East.

The benefits of Aslan's collection are readily apparent; it deftly introduces unique voices from the Middle East to Western popular imagination. Yet, as he presents these new images and metaphors, he largely leaves to the reader the task of reconfiguring Western impressions of the relationship between religion and violence. That is to say, he is content to present these "literary landscapes" without providing even a rudimentary roadmap for the reader to navigate the new terrain. Given that Aslan has elsewhere proven himself to be an insightful commenter on similar themes, we're left wondering what additional benefits might have accrued with a more robust introduction.

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Conclusion

A World Without Islam, *The Tenth Parallel*, and *Tablet and Pen* each attend, in their own way, to issues of religion, violence, and political conflict. Griswold's travels place her most directly in the line of fire, and her surprise in rare moments of reconciliation contrasts more frequent encounters with brutality and suffering. She diversifies and personalizes our images of religious violence but fails to offer many glimmers of hope. Fuller and Aslan confront "ubiquitous images of terrorists and fanatics" more indirectly by shifting our ideological and imaginative paradigms, respectively.[39] Here the literary force of *Tablet and Pen* is particularly effective. The richness and diversity of these native voices offer a multitude of constructive impressions and metaphors to replace standard Western associations of Middle Eastern violence.

More importantly, at the center of each book is an attempt to redefine "religion," particularly "Islam." For Fuller, this lies primarily in rejecting the use of the term as an "instant and uncomplicated analytical touchstone for most affairs in the Middle East."[40] As I've tried to show, however, his project is more concerned with training our eyes to focus on "deeper" issues than it is about getting a clear picture of the various ways Islam takes shape in the region. On this matter Aslan is distinctly helpful to the extent that he allows native voices of the Middle East to speak on their own terms. He shifts the encounter with Islam away from an all-or-nothing mentality toward more subtle, organic moments, while allowing that "the questions posed by the role of Islam in society are ever-present themes."[41]

Griswold grows frustrated with the elusiveness of a definition. She speaks of reaching, finally, "a limit of interpretation," and—as noted earlier—her departing notes reveal an overwhelming sense of exhaustion.[42] Yet her efforts succeed where both Fuller and Aslan fail, because she turns our attention directly to Islam's role in the conflicts of the Global South along the tenth parallel. Here we encounter some unique, even unexpected tensions between Islam in the Middle East and other parts of the world. *The Tenth Parallel* makes it clear that political conflicts "take place not simply between rival religions, but inside them."[43] Thus, while all three authors are well aware that, as Aslan says, "there is no such thing as a monolithic 'Muslim world,'" Griswold alone challenges the Western tendency to conflate the Middle East with the Muslim world.[44] She takes us to the heart of Islam in Nigeria, Sudan, and Indonesia, challenging Western captivity to distinctly Arab images of the religion.

Despite their respective challenges, each of these works diversifies and nourishes Western access to the Muslim world. Examined collectively, they represent a constructive trend in popular scholarship aimed at reshaping Western perceptions of the relationship between religion and violence in global politics. I have tried to point to some of the limitations of each approach. Yet, along with their authors, I share the hope that contributions to the public forum such as these will have the effect of creating new spaces for dialogue and engagement with the Muslim world.

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University, a well as a Masters of Theology and a Ph.D. in Theological Ethics from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. His teaching and research examine political ethics across religious traditions, with particular attention to violence, poverty, and just-war theory. His work has been published in the *International Journal of Public Theology*, the *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, and *Studies in Christian Ethics*, and he is a regular contributor to *State of Formation*, an online forum for emerging religious and ethical leaders sponsored by the *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue*.

Notes

[1] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[2] Eliza Griswold, *The Tenth Parallel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girouz, 2010).

[3] Graham E. Fuller, *A World Without Islam* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010), 4.

[4] Reza Aslan, ed., *Tablet and Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), xxiii.

[5] Fuller, *World*, 8.

[6] Ibid., book jacket.

[7] Ibid., 5.

[8] Ibid., 4.

[9] Ibid., 61.

[10] Ibid., 62. The argument relies on his belief that "there's no doubt what religion would dominate the Middle East today–Eastern Orthodox Christianity" (61).

[11] Ibid., 10-11.

[12] William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

[13] Ibid., 156.

[14] Fuller, *World*, 30. Thus, we must "attend to other deeper and systemic types of problems" because "religion is *not* the central issue at work in present tensions." (11).

[15] Ibid., 16.

[16] Ibid., 44.

[17] Ibid., 139, emphasis removed from original.

[18] Griswold, *Tenth*, 12.

[19] Ibid., 131.

[20] Ibid., 257.

[21] Ibid., 46.

[22] Ibid., 47.

[23] Ibid., 46-47.

[24] Ibid., 49.

[25] Ibid., 71.

[26] Ibid., 71-72.

[27] Ibid., 168.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 267.

[30] Aslan, *Tablet*, xx. Although Aslan compiles literature from 1910-2010, I will largely limit my comments to those selections in Part Three covering 1980-2010.

31 Ibid., xxiii. In fact, Aslan is quick to note that many of the authors do not self-identify as Muslims and "there is no such thing as a monolithic 'Muslim World,' save perhaps in the imaginations of some in the West." (xxii).

32 Ibid., xx.

33 Ibid.

34 Hamid Reza Rahimi, "A Quarter to Destruction," in *Tablet,* 604.

35 Pegah Ahmadi, "The Girl Sleeping on Top of Oil," in *Tablet,* 564-565.

36 Nazik Al-Mala'ika,"Jamilah and Us," in *Tablet,* 584-585. My initial reflections on this poem appeared in a blog post titled "Violence and Celebration in Revolutionary Times" for *State of Formation* (http://www.stateofformation.org/2011/02/violence-and-celebration-in-revolutionary-times/).

37 Aslan, *Tablet*, xxiii.

38 Ibid., xxi.

39 Ibid., xxiii.

40 Fuller, *World*, 3.

41 Aslan, *Tablet*, xxii.

42 Griswold, *Tenth*, 281.

43 Ibid., 13.

44 Aslan, *Tablet*, xxii.

Pilgrimage in Abrahamic and Other Faiths: Recovering America's Narrative of Religious Pluralism[1], by Michael Kuchinsky

"All of us, from the time we begin to think, are on an odyssey." Romare Bearden

In times of increasing polarization, can contemporary religion guide us to a vision of religious pluralism so essential to the American historical experiment, and one that may now be threatened and at risk? Can today's religious organizations advocate for religious pluralism and be taken at their words and deeds? Is such a visionary pilgrimage still fertile ground for American—even global—society in the beginning quarter of the 21st century?

For much of its history, the United States (USA) has journeyed and been a place for journeys into the prospects and meanings of religious freedom and tolerance for many of the world's peoples. Call it a type of national pilgrimage made up of many seekers and pilgrims who wanted the promise of religious pluralism. Formative events and political mile markers dot our historical landscape and created a national narrative that could favor religious pluralism and acceptance. In our country's first centuries, a steady stream "of the hopeful" found the Puritans, Quakers, early Maryland's Roman Catholics, Mennonites and Anabaptists, Huguenots, Moravians, European Jews, the North Carolina Waldensians, the ever-Westward pushing Mormons, Salzburger Lutherans, early African-Methodist-Episcopalians journeying down Philadelphia streets to find dignity in a new location for a church and entries to the nation by way of escape or immigration for many other religious communities.

This pursuit to find openness of belief also included the many religious and secular utopian societies who experimented with alternative visions for a more peaceable or prosperous kingdom—the brothers of Ephrata, Shaker communities of the East and Mid-West, the Amish, the Rugby community of Tennessee, or the various layers of utopian efforts crossing the frontiers who sought home in New Harmony, Indiana. And in the country's last one hundred years, there would be more journeys by non-Europeans hoping for equal accommodation for their religious practices, a thriving inter-Christian ecumenical discourse to lessen boundaries of misunderstanding, and an increasingly active interfaith dialogue about that which may be truly exceptional within the American experiment—religious pluralism.

Beckoning these pilgrimages to come ashore can be found our anchoring statements for making real the exceptional qualities of religious openness and tolerance. Some of these highlights would include the First Amendment of the American Constitution, James Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments, the Virginia Statute for Religious Liberty, Rev. Martin Luther King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial, and the many Supreme Court decisions that affirmed religious liberty or protected religious pluralism. George Washington's response letter (1790) to the Touro Synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island, became an early defense of these statutes and principles declaring the government to allow "no sanction for any bigotry." One could even argue that the recent Pew Report findings on current religious pluralism in the United States, and the increasing presence of "none-ness," could be another

indicator of the country's religious/spiritual shifts partially due to the nation's religious tolerance or in some cases the lack of the same.

Obviously "*the road is long and with many a winding trail*",[2] and the letters "USA" do not equate to some Pollyannaish panacea of absolute and reciprocated religious acceptance! All of us can point out historical setbacks in the history of the national or local communities, and many of us have experienced ridicule or worse over personal religious expressions or principles. *And events in our present-day circumstances suggest that the nation and its citizens need more chances for dialogue about and between religious differences in our shared public space, as well as more mediators and exemplars of such dialogue.*

Consider some traditional thoughts about pilgrimage. Pilgrimages are intentional journeys. As events they can be powerful, clarifying, or formative, underscored with meaning. To be on pilgrimage usually requires a beginning point or purpose and a destination or compelling vision that pulls the pilgrim forward with hope. The pilgrim taking the journey is self-aware of that purpose though never unaware of the new learnings and intersections crossed while journeying. The seeker is interested in the outcomes for these will offer her/him a fuller and completed vision. A traditional pilgrimage may involve a re-creation or an awakened awareness of something that is part of a past or forgotten experience central to the faith; or it may also employ methods to invigorate and sustain new meaning and purpose.

Though pilgrimages are often highly personal, the walk to energize and sustain the exceptional vision of a religiously pluralist society where different religious faiths are valued partners of the American experience is a relational journey, and a collective and national pilgrimage. Even though this may not be a conventional pilgrimage, it complements what most religious faiths embody already as a theological concept or spiritual behavior. Consider just a few examples to express the point.

Most religious traditions, and certainly the Abrahamic faiths, embrace the task of pilgrimage as a means of restoring faith, affirming religious principles, and deepening the sense of purpose for the believer. The "Wailing" or "Western" Wall in Jerusalem, homes and burial places of Jewish scholars and rabbis, and other sites of scriptural importance become pilgrim destination points within Judaism. Torah traditions before the destruction of the temple prescribed important pilgrimage times to return to Jerusalem (feasts of Passover/Pesach, Tents-Booths/Sukkot, and Weeks/Shavuot), and though no longer mandatory still attract believers to Jerusalem during these times. Now, simply the return to Israel can become a pilgrimage of personal and spiritual significance reconnecting with heritage, community, or family.

Christians regularly go to Jerusalem and follow along the *Via Dolorosa* to contemplate and try to relieve the final hours of Jesus. Or they may go elsewhere in Israel and Palestine to encounter the traditional sites of his birth or his ministry. Rome because of its central and manifold importance for different part of the Christian faith and Assisi in Italy on account of one of Christianity's most beloved saints, or the ancient sites of the Apostle Paul's ministry from Syria, to Turkey and Greece become places of historical and spiritual remembrance. Christian martyrs attract followers whether they might be in Canterbury or Compostela. Wittenberg in Germany and other locations associated with the Protestant Reformation regularly attract historical and spiritual seekers for encounters with renewed meanings.

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Islam institutionalizes pilgrimage in faith through the performance of Hajj to the main mosque in Mecca. The pilgrim performs numerous acts of preparation, ritualized actions, and prayers entering and while in the mosque, circling the Kaaba before reenacting Hagar's search for water, Abraham's sacrifice of Allah's provision of a sacrificial sheep, and climb Mount Noor to recall the first transmissions of the Koran to Mohammad. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj institutionalizes the government's commitment to assist pilgrims estimated this year to be over 3.4 million observers. In addition, the Shiite faithful may journey to Karbala in Iraq to observe the martyrdom of Hussein.

Eastern religious traditions also embrace the importance of pilgrimage. The Baha'i and Buddhist faiths venerate places considered historically significant to the Buddha or to Bahaullah. Hinduism has no shortage of pilgrimage sites and opportunities related to sacred cities or natural locations, places linked to acts and lives of the gods, and major temple sites.

Perhaps to be a part of a faith tradition is to be in pilgrimage, on a spiritual journey, much as to be human was to be involved in an odyssey for the American collage artist, Romare Bearden. The American vision for a religiously pluralist, celebratory, and tolerant community is a pilgrimage within the wider history of humanity, or at the very least, in the social narrative of American life. But why is this urgent? Is there something about our time and place which requires a more immediate and contemporary response? Is the vision threatened?

Earlier this year, the tragic shootings in a Wisconsin Sikh temple made visible the vicious reminder that religious, ethnic, and racial hatreds still exist with a vengeance in the second decade of 21st century America. A Cable News Network (CNN) article repeated the fact that the first retaliatory death in the post-September 11, 2001 America was a Sikh gas station owner in Mesa, Arizona and which started years of violent incidents.[3] The same article quoted the Sikh Coalition of New York as saying that more than seven hundred attacks and bias-related actions have been leveled at Sikhs and Sikh institutions since the 9/11 attacks. Speaking after the Wisconsin shootings of her experiences as a Canadian Sikh, Ms. Kamal Arora wrote "These are (small) incidents (ones from her childhood and adulthood), but among the many experienced by Sikhs, Muslims, and other racial and visible minorities in North America on a daily basis. Yet as we have seen recently in Wisconsin and elsewhere, these emotions have escalated to become matters of life and death."[4]

Would that the tragedy and its narrative of violence and discrimination be a singular, awful event! Evidence from different faith traditions about anti-religious violence or harassment in America pushes the would-be interfaith activist further. A poll done by The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) recently assessed that four out of ten Americans admit to an anti-Muslim prejudice, while a 2006 poll indicated that only about two percent of Americans felt that they were very knowledgeable about Islam. CAIR's "Islamaphobia Project" had identified that eighty-eight mosques and Islamic centers had been the targets of hate, violence, or vandalism, with the mosque in Joplin, Missouri destroyed by fired after having sustained multiple attacks. According to CAIR, seventy three anti-Islamic bills had been making their way through state legislatures between 2011 and 2012. The statistics are echoed by the Southern Poverty Law Center who reported that Anti-Muslim groups had tripled in the last two years, and

Federal Bureau of investigation statistics counted one hundred sixty hate crimes against Muslims in 2010.[5]

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) charts incidents of anti-Semitic violence across the United States. In the ten years following 9/11, ADL counts stood at 14,942 incidents of vandalism, threat, assault, or harassment including every US state. The mean of just below 1500 incidents per year reflects a high of 1821 in 2004, and a low of 1211 in 2009.[6] Indeed, of 699 hate crimes counted by New York State's Office of Justice Research and Performance for the year 2010, 39.3% (275) were anti-religious in nature, and second only to the 284 incidents (40.6%) involving race, ethnicity or national origin.[7]

This history of crimes and other incidents, in an environment of religious suspicion, misunderstanding and bigotry moves activists to act to recover the national narrative of religious pluralism. So it was for the leaders, supporters, and volunteers who make up Clergy Beyond Borders...and through the ancient practice of pilgrimage!

As part of its ten year memorial to the changes wrought by 9/11 events, and to all the victims of that day, CBB organized a caravan to promote inter-faith dialogue, religious attributes of conflict resolution, and the need for basic information and education about religious diversity. The caravan offered a chance for literally hundreds of Americans of every religious faith to ask questions, listen to one another, and try better to interpret the importance of religious dialogue in their communities. The caravan became an eleven-state, eighteen-city, three thousand mile-journey across the Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern and Mid-Western portions of the United States. Using workshops, presentations, and advocacy visits to state and local officials, CBB's message, much like the prayerful decal on the side of the van, was that the country/world was a part of one humanity who also reside in one ark. The image of "one ark, one humanity" would be CBB's testimony to the fact that listening to and embracing people of many faiths were necessary values that continue to be relevant to our society. It is good for America and the religions that call America "home!"

CBB leaders met with legislators in several states to speak about the importance of securing the diversity of religious expression and pluralism issues in those states. Various media covered the unfolding story which included a many yards long banner of inter-religious blessings, signatures, and prayers spontaneously expressed and presented as a testimony of hope to national lawmakers. It included unforeseen exchanges with Islamic representatives from the Middle East touring the United States. The story included the many volunteers along the way inspired by the CBB hopeful vision, as well as the thirty two clergypersons of differing faiths who participated at local churches, mosques, and synagogues, colleges and universities, state houses and community centers, as well as the place of dreams and remembrance, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.

It's been more than several years now since my wife and I took our elementary school age children on something that we called "a pilgrimage" to various American heritage sites often associated with our national ideals. We lived (even then) in Washington, DC so certainly we had a head start – the monuments, the White House, Capitol Hill, Mount Vernon, Arlington. That summer's journey went through Fort McHenry, Gettysburg, Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Valley Forge, coal mill villages of Eastern Pennsylvania, the Statue of

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Liberty and Ellis Island, Old North Church and portions of the Freedom Trail in Boston, Lexington and Concord, Plymouth (Rock) and Walden Pond, and Salem. Perhaps this was too much civil religion, but one can list some of our national values when thinking about the locations – freedom, sacrifice and struggle, religious tolerance, unity and diversity, openness, opportunity, fairness, equity, individuality, justice, and citizenship to name a few. Our adult children still remember most of those locations and their inherent ideals.

A few years later, we took another and very different journey. That pilgrimage would have multiple destinations, too – Washington, DC and the Pentagon, Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and Ground Zero in lower Manhattan. That pilgrimage also made lasting impressions. To struggle, advocate, and live out the ideals that are indeed exceptional – such as affirming and celebrating religious liberty, tolerance, and pluralism – is still needed as both a matter of our society's memory and our collective destiny. That pilgrimage not only gives us the chance to grieve together, but also the opportunity to struggle in a common partnership and witness that there is always something better than hate, violence, and murder. There is a place and time called *shalom/salem*.

Groups such as CBB find themselves in the middle of that journey. It is a trip that recalls the precious memories of unique religious faiths, affirms the national purpose found in religious respect and openness, and contends that opportunities for inter-religious understanding are not "least common denominator experiences," but rather signs of a gifted society where deepened and strengthened faith traditions are able to stand alongside each other's most precious offerings in an embrace.

This is the journey that continues. The inter-faith pilgrimage on behalf of an exceptional national vision and narrative called religious pluralism and acceptance goes on. Clergy Beyond Borders is en-route but there is still plenty of space available. Inter-personal as well as public discoveries of infinite value are guaranteed on the partnership journey of "one humanity sharing one ark."

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[1] The composition of this article was generously supported by the El-Hibri Charitable Foundation.
[2] Scott and Russell.
[3] *Temple Shooting Dredges up memories of Long History of Bias Crimes against Sikhs,* August 6, 2012, www.CNN.com
[4] *Wisconsin Shooting: Tragic Extensions of Everyday Hate Experienced by Sikhs in North America,* August 16, 2012, www.southasianpost.com
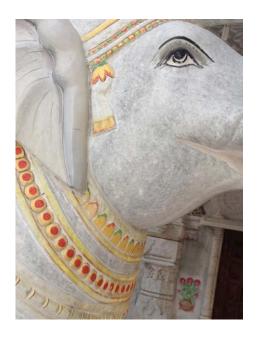[5] www.cair.org
[6] www.adl.org

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[7] http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/crimnet/ojsa/hate-crime-in-nys-2010-annual-report.pdf

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Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue™
Issue 13: Animal Rights & Environmental Ethics
Call for Submissions

Is sentience the minimum threshold for deeming a creature worthy of ethical concern? Are humans the sole objects of ethical reasoning? Whether we regard value as intrinsic or based on other factors—such as the ability to experience pain—bears heavily on our treatment of non-human living entities. From phosphorescent phytoplankton to communicative chimpanzees, the animal kingdom hosts a wondrous array of flora and fauna whose worth should seem self-evident. Despite the grandeur and wonder of the natural world, humans tend to conceptualize themselves as distinct and apart from the rest of the carbon-based life forms inhabiting this planet. Numerous experts warn that ecological devastation on a cataclysmic scale is not only possible but imminent, and they lay blame squarely at the feet of humankind. Our largely anthropocentric understanding of life and the universe has occluded our ability to consider the consequences of our actions. While global actors at all levels rally to protect the earth and its numerous denizens from these dire consequences, they may find it impossible to catalyze change without altering the paradigmatic approach that has led to the level of jeopardy we may be facing at present.

Religious traditions provide an abundance of teachings regarding humankind's relationship to its surrounding environs, from the Abrahamic concept of stewardship to the Buddhist, Jain, and

Hindu tenet of *ahimsa* (avoidance of violence or harm). In this issue of the *Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue,* we welcome contributors to submit academic articles and essays situated in religious traditions considering the vast number of questions in the fields of moral and ethical reasoning related to the fair treatment, fair use, and rights of animals and the environment. Below, we have identified a number of potential avenues to explore:

- What is the minimum threshold for describing an entity as worthy of ethical consideration? Is it pain? Sentience? The ability to communicate? The ability to use tools? The ability to manipulate one's surrounding environment?
- Is the value-centered approach to animal and environmental rights useful?
- Should the concerns of an animal or the environment ever trump human concerns?
- Are humans the ultimate, exclusive units of ethical concern? If so, do humans have the right to determine the fates of animals and the environment?
- What constitutes fair use of animals and the environment? What is proper treatment?
- Do animals have rights? Does the environment?

The Journal is a peer-reviewed publication dedicated to innovative research on and study of the interactions that take place within and between religious communities. Published online, it is designed to increase both the quality and frequency of interchanges between religious groups and their leaders and scholars. By fostering communication and study, the Journal hopes to contribute to a more tolerant, pluralistic society. Recent issues have centered on critical themes in inter-religious studies, including "Religion and Revolution" and "Women, Feminism, and Inter-Religious Dialogue."

Submission Guidelines

All submissions must be the original, previously unpublished work of the author(s). Authors are also advised to read about the Journal and the previous issue prior to submitting an article. Submissions should be around 3,500 words, including references and a 100-word abstract. They should strictly adhere to the Fifteenth Edition of the Chicago Manual of Style, utilizing endnotes for citations and footnotes for discursive elaboration (please do not use in-text citation for anything, including references to sacred texts). Submissions should be in a .doc or .docx format, both of which are available in open-source format as well as in most word processing software. Please be sure to separate sentences by a single space rather than two, and please make use of serial commas (e.g. "yes, no, and maybe" rather than "yes, no and maybe"). Any failure to comply with stylistic standards will be pointed out by staff editors, and authors will be expected to correct the discrepancies themselves during the editing process.

Co-authored articles are welcomed and encouraged. Articles may be submitted online at www.irdialogue.org/submissions or via e-mail to submissions@irdialogue.org.

Deadlines

The deadline for submissions for the thirteenth issue of the Journal is June 15, 2013. Articles submitted after this date will not be considered for publication in the thirteenth issue. You will hear back about the status of your submission by July 31, 2013.

Peer-Review Process

After an initial vetting process by the editorial board, each submission will undergo a rigorous peer-review by members of the Board of Scholars and Practitioners. If accepted for publication, the Journal's staff may edit the submission for mechanics and adherence to writing standards.