Shabkar and Interreligious Encounter on the Tibetan Plateau, 1781-1851

By Rachel Pang

Introduction

In this paper, I will examine a Buddhist response to religious and sectarian diversity on the Tibetan plateau in the nineteenth century. I am interested in: (1) how the inclusion of responses to religious diversity from different cultures and time periods affects the conversation in interfaith and interreligious studies; and (2) whether or not it is accurate, acceptable, or productive to use interfaith and interreligious vocabulary in our discussion of responses to religious diversity in different cultures and historical contexts. Following a discussion of Shabkar's non-sectarian activities and their historical context, I will explore the ways in which such a case study in the history of religion can broaden and enrich discussions in the emerging academic field of interreligious and interfaith studies.

The great Tibetologist Gene Smith once noted, "The roots of eclecticism and tolerance are sunk as deep into the soil of Tibetan tradition as those of sectarianism and bigotry."[1] Indeed, the countless examples of religious harmony and rivalry indelibly shaped the course of Tibet's history. Instances of inter-sectarian harmony resulted in the flourishing of ecumenical learning and exchange.[2] Instances of sectarian rivalry, on the other hand, caused irrevocable damage, sometimes escalating into civil war. These eruptions of violence were usually due to the involvement of powerful political and financial stakeholders in religious affairs—such as the Tibetan nobility and in some cases, foreign military powers like the Mongols.

Into this millennium-long history of co-existent religious tolerance and rivalry was born the celebrated Tibetan Buddhist spiritual master Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol (1781-1851). Shabkar was born in Amdo province at the northeasternmost corner of the Tibetan plateau (modern day Qinghai province, PRC) but traveled extensively throughout his life to teach and to go on pilgrimages. Viewed by both himself and others as the reincarnation of the eleventh-century poet-saint Milarepa, Shabkar is primarily remembered by posterity for his spiritual autobiography, his ability to spontaneously compose and perform songs of spiritual realization (*mgur*), and his fervent promotion of non-sectarianism.[3]

As many scholars have pointed out, the idea of non-sectarianism was not unique to Shabkar or nineteenth-century Tibet. It dates back to the historical Buddha.[4] I suggest that Shabkar felt compelled to promote non-sectarianism so fervently due to three reasons.

Firstly, it would not be in accord with Buddhist ideals—and especially the Mahāyāna Buddhist ideals of loving-kindness, compassion, generosity, moral discipline, patience, diligence,

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1 Smith, *Among*, 237.

2 Important examples include the non-sectarian approaches of the 3rd Karmapa Rangchung Dorjé (1284-1339); the iron bridge builder and father of Tibetan opera, Tangtong Gyelpo (1361/1365-1486); the 14th century religious luminary Tsongkhapa; and the great composer of encyclopedias, Jamgön Kongtrül (1813-1899), and so forth.

3 The Tibetan word that I am translating as "non-sectarian" or "ecumenical" is the Tibetan word "ris med." Literally, "ris med," means "impartial," "unbiased," or "not taking sides." Shabkar uses "ris med" to refer to his attitude towards religious diversity. However, it is important not to equate the "ecumenical" of this instance with the Ecumenical Movement of Protestant denominations in the early twentieth century.

4 Ringu Tulku, 4-5. It was fine to debate with the views of other religions and sects in order to clarify one's understanding, but that was not seen as a form of criticism of others' views; sectarianism and criticism for criticism's sake were forbidden.

meditation, and wisdom—to engage in perpetual conflict with others over doctrinal difference. This reminds us of the specific religious and cultural background from which Shabkar emerged and that his approach to religious diversity was deeply rooted in the beliefs and values that he cultivated throughout his life.

Secondly, I suggest that Shabkar's non-sectarianism was a direct reaction to the religious environment in which he lived. His autobiography contains constant admonishments reminding people not to be sectarian. In Kyirong, Shabkar tells the lamas there not to engage in sectarianism by dividing the Buddha's teachings into categories of "good" and "bad."[5] To the general populace, he advises refraining from hostility (*ma sdang*) towards the tenet systems of others since the teachings of all tenet systems are the teachings of the Buddha.[6] In Lhasa, Shabkar advises, "There is no holy Dharma that is not profound / People of Lhasa, do not be sectarian, there is no point."[7] In his final testament, he advises, "Disciples who after listening, reflecting, and meditating upon the teachings / Engage in sectarianism after several years / And belittle the Dharma of others. / Do not abandon the Dharma and accumulate negative karma."[8] The presence of these admonishments suggests that Shabkar was likely reacting to instances of sectarianism that he encountered throughout his journeys on the Tibetan plateau; it would be highly unlikely for him to admonish others for being sectarian if there were an absence of such a phenomenon.

It is also clear from recent secondary scholarship that Shabkar grew up in an environment where there were tensions between different sects—especially between the Nyingma and Geluk sects. Sometimes, it involved verbal sparring.[9] Other times, it involved criticizing another sect in the book that one was writing, [10] and still other times, it involved silent grudges.[11] Clearly, sectarianism was widespread in nineteenth-century Tibet.

Finally, as Shabkar points out in the colophon of the *Emanated Scripture of Orgyen*, it has been prophesized that the future demise of the Buddhist teachings will not be due to an outside enemy, but due to Buddhists "quarrelling over which are good and bad teachings, and fighting due to attachment and aversion."[12] Therefore, the very survival of Buddhism lies in inter-sectarian harmony.

Shabkar's Communicative Strategies

Regarding his own attitude to other religions and sects, Shabkar says to his disciples,

> I went about training with faith, devotion, and pure perception in whatever Buddhist and non-Buddhist tenet systems. Because of this, wherever I went, many beings made offerings, praised, and served me, and I brought benefit to both myself and others.

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[5] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 1, 675.1-.2. Ricard, trans., 386.
[6] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 1, 675.4. Ricard, trans., 386.
[7] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 1, 840.2-.3. Ricard, trans., 478.
[8] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 1, 952.3-.4. Ricard, trans., 534.
9 Yangdon Dondhup, 50.
10 Ibid. Drakgönpa Könchok Tenpa Rabgyé was a throne holder of the famous Gelukpa monastery Labrang in Amdo, while Rigdzin Palden Tashi was an important Nyingma *ngakpa* leader in Rebgong. For more information see Dhodup, 47.
11 We find passages where Shabkar feels compelled to defend the veracity and purity of the Nyingma teachings from sectarian slander directed against it (Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 2, 115.4.), as well as incidents of prejudice between members of different sects (Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol 1, 896.4-897.1. Ricard, trans., 507).
12 Zhabs dkar, *O rgyan*, 576.

Thus, you should do as I did, and it will be good.[13]

While the basis for Shabkar's non-sectarian attitude involved the cultivation of respect for other religious traditions, Shabkar's approach to religious diversity was by no means simple or passive. In particular, his strategy for communicating this non-sectarian paradigm was multi-valenced, involving his life example and varied literary and religious means. The primary way by which Shabkar promoted non-sectarianism was through his own life example, preserved after his death in his autobiography. Throughout his life, Shabkar made it a point to study Buddhism from masters of all sectarian lineages. Generally speaking, his childhood and youth were spent immersed in the tantric Buddhist practices of the Nyingma; he received his monastic vows from the great Gelukpa abbot Arig Geshé and studied their scriptural tradition assiduously. He spent years of his adult life engaged in the Kagyu meditative practices of Mahāmudrā in the Himalayas. By the eighteenth century, sectarian identity had solidified in Tibet to the degree where it was usually the case that individuals from a particular sect would practice the teachings within their own sect more or less exclusively. Shabkar is a rare example of a Tibetan Buddhist saint who managed to master the teachings of three distinct sects: the Nyingma, the Geluk, and the Kagyu. In this way, Shabkar was an interesting anomaly in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, and the paradigm of the non-sectarian attitude.

Shabkar's approach to non-sectarianism was active and full of energy: in addition to cultivating a profound respect for the religions of others, he actively sought out opportunities to learn more about them. In this way, Shabkar's approach to religious diversity resembles aspects of certain contemporary examples of interfaith or interreligoius dialogue, such as Diana Eck's Pluralism Project, that envisions "pluralism" as "*the **energetic** engagement with diversity*," and "*the **active** seeking of understanding across lines of difference*," and so forth.[14] Historical examples of interreligious encounter such as Shabkar's represent interesting models for which to compare to present day instances of "interreligious dialogue" or "interfaith dialogue." In any case, the merits and shortcomings of all approaches should be actively explored and debated.

In addition to his life example, Shabkar used a variety of literary genres that would connect to a wide audience—sermons, songs, life narrative, "emanated scriptures," and "elegant sayings." With his eloquent and easy-to-understand prose and verse, Shabkar was able to convey his message to a wide audience ranging from the educated monastic elite to illiterate nomads and farmers. Shabkar's methods for expressing his ideas resonates with the fundamental place of song, verse, oral literature, and storytelling in Tibetan culture, making his chosen media highly efficacious.

Shabkar also linked non-sectarianism to a series of powerful religious ideas. For example, Shabkar grounds non-sectarianism in Buddhist cosmogony associated with the Nyingma tantric tradition. By emphasizing the common origins of all phenomena in the primordial *dharmadhātu*, or "Dharma expanse," Shabkar emphasizes that the ultimate nature of all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and spiritual masters is fundamentally the same. This can be read as an indirect argument for the common origin of all spiritual guides and the ultimately trivial nature of sectarian divisions. Shabkar also grounds non-sectarianism in Buddhist soteriology. He argues that a significant part of reaching full enlightenment, or nirvāna, involves "training in faith and pure perception towards all spiritual teachings (*chos*) and peoples, making offerings, giving praise, and being of service." He continues, "If one does that and simultaneously requests the blessings of the Victor and Sons, one's mental continuum will naturally ripen and be liberated."[15] Finally, Shabkar grounds his promotion of non-sectarianism in a series of revelatory visions. Near the end of his life, Shabkar sees the enlightened

[13] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 2, 108.6-109.4.
[14] Eck, Diana. "What is Pluralism?" Bold added by this essay's author for emphasis.
[15] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 2, 28.3-.6.

figure Padmasambhava in a vision. Padmasambhava reveals to him that he is, in essence, the same as the greats spiritual masters Tsongkhapa and Atiśa, who had appeared to Shabkar in a couple of earlier visions. In terms of non-sectarianism, the significance of this vision has to do with the different sectarian affiliations of Padamasambhava (Nyingma), Atiśa (Kadampa), and Tsongkhapa (Geluk). Thus, this revelatory vision indirectly argues that the teachings presented in the great variety of Buddhist texts lead back to Padmasambhava and by extension to the Buddha. This claim is echoed in one of Shabkar's songs, where he suggests that different tenet systems – Madhyamaka, Dzokchen, and Mahāmudrā – lead to the same truth.[16]

Shabkar's Non-Sectarianism and Interreligious/Interfaith Studies

Returning to one of the questions that I posed at the beginning of the paper: is it accurate, acceptable, or productive to adopt the interfaith and interreligious studies vocabulary in the study of interfaith engagement in diverse cultural and historical contexts? At present, it is difficult to answer the question. From my perusal of the websites of organizations devoted to interreligious and interfaith dialogue, and to scholarly literature on this subject, the terms interfaith, interreligious, multifaith, pluralism, and so forth often refer to different things in different contexts. For example, take the term "pluralism": in Christian theology,[17] in Diana Eck's highly influential Pluralism Project, and in common parlance, the term takes on drastically different meanings. While the terms "interfaith" and "interreligious" are most often used interchangeably, there are significant instances where they mean different things to different communities. For example, on the website of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, the term "interfaith" is defined as "relations with members of the "Abrahamic faiths" (Jewish and Muslim traditions)," while "interreligious" refers to "relations with other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism." This is in stark contrast to the use of "interreligious" to mean the interactions between different religions, as in the case of J. Abraham Vélez de Cea's work, which engages intimately with the Christian theological vocabulary, and in the case of a recent symposium in Chinese religions at Hamburg University entitled, "Modes of Interreligious Engagement: Buddhism And Other Religious Traditions In Medieval China." Without some sort of consensus on the meaning of these terms, or at least some systematic attention paid to what they mean in different contexts, it is difficult and confusing to use them in discussion at this point. Moreover, it would be beneficial to interfaith and interreligious studies if there were to be some sort of systematic study of the ways in which the key terms within this field were used.

I suggest that an answer to the first question can come from considering the second question, namely, how the inclusion of religious traditions from different geographic and cultural domains affects the conversation in interfaith and interreligious studies. Most of the literature that I have come across in interfaith and interreligious studies deals with modern America and, to a lesser extent, Europe. I suggest that in the process of coming to a consensus regarding the meaning of "interfaith," "interreligious," "pluralism," and so forth, we should also consider examples of interreligious encounters in different cultural and temporal contexts—like pre-modern India, medieval China, and nineteenth-century Tibet.

In this paper, we have seen that many aspects of Shabkar's promotion of non-sectarianism in nineteenth-century Tibet are remarkably similar to many examples of contemporary interfaith dialogue. Like in Diana Eck's Pluralism Project, Shabkar is actively engaged in learning about the traditions of other sects and religions; like the cases documented by Gustav Niebuhr and Susan Thistlethwaite'e volume, Shabkar's fervent promotion of non-sectarianism was in part a response to

[16] Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 2, 236.3-237.3. Zhabs dkar, snyigs dus (2003), vol. 1, 231.5-232.2; Ricard, trans., 138.
[17] See for example Kiblinger, 2, and Schmidt-Leukal, 14.

inter-sectarian hostility on the ground; like Paul Knitter and many theologians, Shabkar's promotion of non-sectarianism was motivated by his own faith. At the same time, however, Shabkar's promotion of non-sectarianism teaches us something new about interfaith dialogue. For example, how many individuals engaged in interfaith dialogue—be they theologians, students on a university campus, or religious studies scholars—use a varied repertoire of literary and religious media to convey their message?[18] Or, to what degree are modern forms of interreligious and interfaith dialogue grounded in specific religious, cultural, and historical backgrounds, as Shabkar's clearly was?

In the end, this comparative enterprise reminds us that religious diversity is not unique to our culture or the contemporary world, and in turn, this encourages us to be more self-reflexive of our own interfaith and interreligious endeavors in a deeper way. We'll find that, while some cases from other times and cultures fit into our existent molds and models, others do not. Shabkar's approach to religious and sectarian diversity on the Tibetan plateau in the nineteenth century is a case in point: while he was clearly engaged in activities that promoted intersectarian and interreligious harmony, we could not equate his activities to "interfaith dialogue" or "interreligious dialogue" as it occurs in twenty-first century America, for example. These two phenomena simply come from two starkly different historical and cultural contexts. And yet, by looking at examples of interreligious encounter from varying temporal and cultural contexts, we will be able to expand the limits of knowledge in this emerging field of interfaith and interreligious studies by looking at how individuals from different cultures responded to religious diversity in the past.

To conclude, I suggest that in order to enrich and broaden the scope of the emerging field of interfaith and interreligious studies, it would be productive to analyze how groups and individuals from different cultural and temporal periods responded to religious diversity. Adopting the interfaith and interreligious vocabulary in these varied case studies would be a powerful way of including them in the conversation. However, as to whether or not it is accurate or acceptable to adopt the interfaith and interreligious studies vocabulary in the study of varied historical and cultural examples of interreligious engagement, we must first systematically establish what these words mean and in which contexts.

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[18] The closest example that I can think of is the Pluralism Project, with its use of multiple forms of media, and varied modes of engagement with different sectors of society.

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Mapping the Discourse: A Case Study in Creating "Interfaith Community" on a "Multi-Faith" Campus

By Denise Yarbrough

Introduction

During the academic year 2012-2013, the University of Rochester ("U of R") went through a collaborative process of creating a Statement of Policies of Affiliation for religious communities that serves students on the U of R campus under the auspices of the Interfaith Chapel. An older document, "The Covenant," had been in effect since the early 1990s. However, because the scope of the religious diversity on campus had changed significantly since that time, it became necessary to re-visit the procedure by which religious communities affiliate with the university through the Interfaith Chapel. The goal was to create a policy that would recognize all of the affiliated religious communities equally, not privileging any historical group and offering all groups equal opportunity to access university resources and support.

In the process of drafting the new Statement of Policies of Affiliation, a host of issues arose, many of which exemplify the challenges that come with a religiously diverse community. Many of the tensions and issues that we confronted as we thought through how religious communities would co-exist in our university environment parallel the issues that arise in local communities in our contemporary society as the United States adjusts to the increased religious diversity of our cities, towns, and villages. In addition, the issues that arose as we struggled to define how we would create and live in an "interfaith" university community offer insight into what makes "interreligious" or "interfaith" studies as an academic discipline unique and distinct from the study of comparative religion.

The critical marker of "interreligious" or "interfaith" is the "inter" prefix, which denotes relationship and encounter between the different religious or spiritual groups. Whereas comparative religion encourages learning about different religions and how they are alike and different in their own unique ways, interfaith or interreligious studies involves understanding how those similarities and differences are manifested in the lived experiences of the adherents of those traditions as they come in close contact with people of different religious traditions. That there are religious similarities and differences is a given for interfaith and interreligious studies. What those similarities and differences mean for real world interaction is the focus of this emerging discipline. In a real sense, interreligious and interfaith studies is a disciplined study of relationships between people of different religious traditions and of the impact of those relationships on community life.

Our struggle to articulate a policies statement that everyone could embrace was an incarnational experience of interfaith and interreligious dialogue that illustrates the core vision of the academic discipline of interfaith and interreligious studies. When religious communities live in close quarters and must share resources and space, a "comparative religion" approach does not work. Comparative religion may teach about what the various communities believe and how they practice, but it offers little or no insight into how those communities will impact one another when they must live and work together in one community. Interreligious and Interfaith Studies is the discipline through which these kinds of real world interactions can be analyzed and comprehended.

The process of fashioning our new Statement of Policies of Affiliation offers a case study in what happens when people of different religious traditions navigate the shoals of their similarities and differences as they try to live together in one community. That relational process is of the essence of interfaith or interreligious engagement. In drafting this new policies statement, we had to grapple with a number of issues that are universal when people of different religious traditions share living space, whether it be a common building like our Interfaith Chapel or a common community like a town or village. Some of the issues are quite predictable, such as how to share worship space and financial resources, how to schedule the groups in ways that are fair to all, and finding ways to juggle conflicts when holidays and special events for one community impact the others. Some more complicated issues included how to define a religious leader or chaplain, indeed what term or language to use for persons in that leadership role and what that role entails. A more subtle issue arose in terms of privilege, as the religious communities that had been on campus the longest found it difficult to let go of their privileged status and welcome other religious groups to the chapel, fearing loss of their privileged status. Just as conflicts in the larger culture erupt when the group that has been historically privileged (in the contemporary American context, Christianity) feel that privilege slipping away, so did those communities react when their status at the university seemed to be changing.

The issue which took the most time to resolve was that of proselytizing. The university's policy is that groups that affiliate with the chapel agree not to proselytize and to respect the integrity of all the other religious groups on campus. For those religious groups for whom proselytization is integral to the way they practice their religion (Evangelical Christians, Chabad Jews, Latter Day Saints), this topic was of crucial importance. Our collaborative process of working through that thorny issue offers another lived example of what it is to do "interfaith" or "interreligious" studies, since the interfaith/interreligious enterprise, both in the community and in the academy, requires that those involved refrain from proselytizing in order to enter into the interfaith/interreligious experience.

Setting the Stage

The University of Rochester is a secular research university with an undergraduate student body of 5030 students. The undergraduate colleges include the college of Arts, Science & Engineering, the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and the Eastman School of Music. Graduate schools include the Simon School of Business, the Warner School of Education, and the College of Medicine and Dentistry. A large percentage of the undergraduates major in STEM disciplines, including engineering, biology, chemistry, and business. The arts and humanities are less popular as majors for undergraduates. Students who are religious perceive the campus to be very secular and somewhat dismissive of religion.

The university has an Interfaith Chapel, a standalone building on the west end of the academic quad, directly facing the library on the east end with academic buildings and the student commons buildings in between. The chapel is situated on the banks of the Genesee River facing a walking trail and the water. The River Level of the chapel is large open space with bay floor to ceiling windows overlooking the river. The Interfaith Chapel was dedicated in 1970, having been built with funds donated by Virginia and Gilbert McCurdy, who were Baptists. The chapel was built intentionally as an interfaith building, with a large sanctuary that seats 500. The sanctuary contains no religious images or art. It has rainbow colored stained glass windows in the upper portion of the building, an organ, a grand piano, and a dais

upon which a table is placed for Christian worship. An ark, housing some of the Torah scrolls belonging to the Hillel organization, is at the back of the sanctuary and is moved to the front during the Jewish High Holy days.

The second level of the chapel houses the offices of the various chaplains who serve the religious communities that are affiliated with the chapel. It also has a large parlor/meeting room (Brennan Room), a conference room, a small meditation room, and a full kitchen. The River Level is a large open space that seats about 300 (in rows) with large windows overlooking the river and the walking trails. The river level is the most versatile room in the building and is used regularly by the Roman Catholic Community for their Sunday masses and by the Hillel community for Friday Shabbat services and dinner. On one side of the river level is an alcove containing a *bima*, an ark with Torah scrolls and a religious storage area for the Hillel Jewish community in which are kept prayer shawls, prayer books, and other paraphernalia for religious worship. On the other side of the river level is the Roman Catholic sacristy, containing all the accoutrements needed for the mass, vestments, and also the reserved sacrament. The river level also includes a "bride's room," as the chapel is a popular venue for weddings. The river level sports a kosher kitchen and a catering kitchen, both of which are heavily used by religious groups for regular weekly meals.

The Roman Catholic Newman Community and the Protestant Chapel Community are both celebrating fifty years of ministry on the University of Rochester campus in 2013-14. The Jewish community has been on the campus for nearly forty years previously as part of a consortium of Rochester area colleges that comprised one Hillel organization. As of 2013 the University of Rochester Hillel community has become its own not for profit organization and hired a new rabbi to run the U of R group. The University also has a Chabad group, served by a full time rabbi, with a Chabad House off campus, but a short walk from campus. The Chabad rabbi participates in the meetings of the Interfaith Chapel chaplains, although his students tend not to participate in interfaith programming. Chabad has been on campus for close to twenty years.

When the Interfaith Chapel was dedicated in 1970, the communities that comprised the chapel included the Roman Catholic Newman Community, the Jewish Community through Hillel, and the Protestant Chapel Community, which is a group of mainline protestant denominations that pool resources to employ one chaplain to serve the needs of Presbyterian, Episcopal, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, and Baptist students. The university offered space in the chapel to the religious communities, in return for which they supplied chaplains and programming to serve the religious needs of their various constituencies. In the early 1990s, the relationship between the University and the three religious communities was memorialized in a document called the Covenant between the Religious Communities and the University. That Covenant document was signed by the President of the University, the then-Director of University Religious Affairs, and the highest executives of the local Jewish Federation, the Roman Catholic Diocese, and the Genesee Area Campus Ministries board.

The Covenant established the parameters of the relationship between the University and the covenanting religious communities. The chaplains were paid by their various religious organizations, although their ministries received a financial subsidy from the university in addition to space in the Interfaith Chapel. The chaplains were also entitled to have university ID cards, use the library and the gymnasium, and receive free tuition for courses at the university. The university employed a director of University Religious Affairs, who was not

responsible for any one religious community, but worked to support the work of all of the covenanted communities and to foster interfaith engagement. The Director also taught in the Department of Religion and Classics.

Even when the covenant was signed in 1994, some criticized it as not recognizing the full extent of religious diversity on the campus. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish traditions were not the only ones on campus at that time, and some acknowledged that the covenant did not fully embrace the true religious diversity on campus, as it did not include Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, or even minority Christian groups.

A few years after the covenant was signed, an additional signature was obtained from the local Islamic Center representing the Muslim community, although at that time no Muslim chaplain was assigned to the university. As time went by, religious diversity on the campus continued to expand with the creation of a Christian group representing the African American Church tradition served by a part-time volunteer chaplain, the addition of a part-time chaplain serving the Orthodox Christian Fellowship, the creation of a Chabad Jewish group on campus, an increase in the Muslim population that did then require the appointment of a volunteer chaplain to serve that community, and the creation of a student group serving the Hindu population. In addition, the Christian diversity increased as evangelical parachurch organizations like InterVarsity, CRU, Agape, and Basic all formed groups on campus and had some connection with the chapel as they did so.

By 2012, significant tension had built up in the Interfaith Chapel as religious groups that were not part of the Covenant felt marginalized and ignored, while those original covenanting communities and their chaplains enjoyed a significant degree of privilege with respect to financial resources, space in the Interfaith Chapel building, and visibility on campus at various events like Freshman Expo, Student Activities fairs, and public events where a chaplain is invited to offer prayer. To ease that tension and to create a process that would be fair to all the religious communities currently operating on campus, we took on the task of drafting a new document to structure the relationship between the university and recognized religious communities.

As we continue to live with the policies statement and the principles articulated in it, we struggle to map the boundaries of what is permissible interference with a religious group's practice and what is not. This is the stuff of "interfaith" or "interreligious" dialogue and the academic discipline of interreligious and interfaith studies. How the various religious communities impact one another and what influence the presence of the religious other has on how one lives one's own religion is the very core of interreligious/interfaith encounter.

In our particular context, the Hillel Jewish community was counted among the "privileged" groups that felt threatened by the impending changes to the process of affiliation. The Chabad Jewish group was one among several of the newer religious communities that we were seeking to include in the life of the chapel, and the Chabad rabbi was active in his participation in crafting this new agreement that we hoped would be more fair to all of the diverse religious communities now using the Interfaith Chapel.

Terminology

In the emerging discipline of interreligious and interfaith studies, terminology is confusing! At the University of Rochester, we use the term "Interfaith Chapel," although not because anyone intentionally thought through which term to use when the chapel was

originally built and dedicated in 1970. At that time, "interfaith" was the term most often used outside of academic circles when referring to activities between different Christian denominations and between Christians and those of other religious traditions. It reflects the then-prevailing Christian code word for someone's religion as being his or her "faith." I would argue, however, that *interfaith* is possibly a more all-encompassing term than is *interreligious,* in that it can be understood to encompass practices, rituals, beliefs, values, ethics, and behaviors that are not part of any particular historic religious tradition and thereby incorporates the increasingly large number of people in the American population who consider themselves "not affiliated" with respect to religion, those the Pew Forum has recently dubbed the "nones." Indeed, the Secular Student Association at the University has chosen to affiliate with the Interfaith Chapel as a "spiritual or religious" group. They might have been less inclined to do so had the chapel been called the "Interreligious" Chapel, since they do not consider themselves "religious."

The term "multi-faith" appears in the policies document as a descriptive term. It recognizes the fact that there are multiple religious and spiritual groups present on the campus. But the term multi-faith does not suggest that those groups actually have any relationship to one another or interact in any way. The term interfaith, however, does signal relationality and interaction.[1] We ultimately determined that "multi-faith" described the fact of religious diversity on campus, and "interfaith" expressed the commitment to building and maintaining intentional community between and among the different groups. Our distinction between these terms parallels Diana Eck's discussion of "diversity" and "pluralism":

> The language of pluralism is the language not just of difference but of engagement, involvement, and participation. It is the language of traffic, exchange, dialogue, and debate. It is the language of the symphony orchestra and the jazz ensemble. … [P]luralism is the dynamic process through which we engage with one another in and through our very deepest differences.
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> First, *pluralism* is not just another word for diversity. It goes beyond mere plurality or diversity to active engagement with that plurality….Pluralism requires participation, and attunement to the life and energies of one another.[2]

So for our purposes "interfaith" worked out to be the best term as it felt more expansive than "interreligious," which seemed to presuppose a recognized religious tradition, and it suggests interaction and involvement, relationship and engagement between the various groups. [3]

Catherine Cornille's prolific works on interreligious dialogue and interreligious hermeneutics provides support for our argument that the word "interreligious" connotes interaction between recognized historic religious traditions. In Cornille's corpus, the articles and books all deal with recognized historic religions interacting, dialoguing, and engaging one

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[1] Stephen Graham, "Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multi-Faith Society: An ATS Project 2010-2102," *Theological Education*, Volume 47, Number 1 (2010), 5.
[2] Diana Eck, *A New Religious America,* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 69-70.
[3] Another very minor, but practical reality, is that *interfaith* is simply easier to say and spell! "The Interreligious Chapel" would be more of a mouthful than university administrators want to handle in day to day discourse! And, when the chapel was built and dedicated, that was the term used, and it is quite literally engraved in stone on the building.

another. The underlying assumption in Cornille's works is that the dialogue partners are members of recognized historic religions, including indigenous religions. [4]

Conversely, the term "interfaith" often appears to describe groups or organizations that may not be rooted in any particular existing religious tradition, but that may borrow from or use rituals, practices, texts, music, art, or other artifacts of different world religions, or such as are uniquely created for that group to express its own worldview, belief system, spirituality, or practices. An example would be a description on the website of the iNtuitiveTimes Institute, which trains "interfaith ministers" for ordination. On their website, they describe an Ordained Interfaith Institute Minister:

> OIIM Interfaith Minister has studied at least three, and usually six, different major religious traditions and is trained to help the individual to develop a sense of personal spirituality, drawing on the spiritual practices of many different religions. [5]

This group is just one of many that train specifically "interfaith ministers," people who are not rooted in one historic religious tradition, but rather learn about many different religions and pick and choose practices and beliefs from among those religions as they carry out their ministry. Whatever one may think of the training and ordination of such ministers, the fact that numerous organizations exist to train and deploy them suggests something about the market in our contemporary population for that kind of "interfaith" ministry.

The use of the term "interfaith" as described above feeds into a concern that many people within the historic religious traditions have about the whole enterprise of interfaith engagement. Some resist interfaith or interreligious dialogue, because they believe that such efforts are an attempt to create a "one size fits all" religion to which everyone must belong. There is a common misconception that "interfaith" or "interreligious" means that the separate identities of the various religious groups are sacrificed in the name of creating some uber-religion that will satisfy everyone, thereby either eliminating or watering down existing faith traditions. As described above, some people who call themselves "interfaith" are people who have chosen to affiliate with or create a community that intentionally borrows or incorporates rituals, beliefs and practices of a variety of world religious traditions, while not strongly identifying with any one of them. However, many of those who are committed to the "interfaith movement" are those who are deeply rooted in their own historic religious tradition and who wish to engage those of other historic religious traditions for social, political, personal, and spiritual reasons. The term "interfaith" may cause confusion if one does not probe to discover which version of the word "interfaith" is meant in a particular context.

The "interfaith movement," which is now a global movement incorporating thousands of different organizations and coalitions, committees, commissions, and dialogue groups both formal and informal all over the world, refers commonly to those who engage in dialogue between and amongst representatives of existing, historic world religions. This movement's origin is usually pegged to the first Parliament of the World's Religions that was held in Chicago in 1893. For people who consider themselves heirs of that movement, or who identify

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[4] See, Catherine Cornille, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue,* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Catherine Cornille, *The Im-Possibilty of Interreligious Dialogue,* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008); Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway, eds., *Interreligious Hermeneutics,* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010).

[5] See, http://interfaithministry.com/institute/minister.htm, Retrieved 10/17/2013.

with it, interfaith encounter means learning about the similarities and differences between and amongst the historic religious traditions and growing into the ability to celebrate and appreciate both the similarities and the differences. With respect to differences in particular, the goal of the interfaith/interreligious enterprise is to reduce the fear of difference so that the potential and the opportunity that it presents for innovation, wisdom, and deepened understanding of self and other and even of the divine, becomes possible. In our policies document, we made it clear that the mission of the Interfaith Chapel includes both supporting the individual religious communities to grow and thrive in their own right and to bring those communities into dialogue and engagement with one another in a variety of ways. However, our use of the term "interfaith" also has the side benefit of encompassing those who might consider themselves "interfaith," because they have chosen to follow a path that incorporates the beliefs, practices, or rituals of a variety of religious traditions. While this particular constituency was not represented in our policies document discussions, that group is not excluded by our use of the term "Interfaith Chapel."

Notwithstanding the ambiguity inherent in the choice of the term "interfaith," its use in our context is appropriate. In the University setting, we want our chapel to be welcoming to students who do not affiliate with any particular religious tradition as well as to those who do. The term "interfaith" captures what Douglas and Rhonda Jacobsen describe as the "pluriformity" of religion on university campuses today:

> This pluriformity has two sides. One side represents traditional, 'organized' religion, and the main change here is that the range of organized religions in America has increased exponentially…The other side of today's religious pluriformity, however, makes things even more complex and confusing: The boundary line between what is and what is not religion has become thoroughly blurred. If secularity is like freshwater and religion is like saltwater, life in America is now thoroughly brackish.[6]

So for our purposes, on a multi-faith secular university campus, the term "interfaith" is a good choice to describe the work and mission of the chapel. It encompasses both the historic religious traditions in dialogue and encounter with one another, and the more free form, do-it-yourself pluriform spiritual and religious practices and beliefs of many university students today. In addition, it signals that the important aspect of our life together is engagement with one another across our differences.

As the academic discipline of Interfaith and Interreligious Studies takes shape in the coming years, the inclusiveness of both terms will be important for scholars working in this emerging discipline. The academic enterprise will include study of the interaction and relationships between and among existing historic religions as well as the emergence of avowedly "interfaith" spiritualities and/or religious groups and their interaction with the pre-existing historic religions. Both terms are needed so as to embrace the pluriformity of American religious and spiritual life in the 21st century.

Participatory Spiritual and Religious Dialogue

One of the requirements of the policies of affiliation with the Interfaith Chapel is that all religious and spiritual groups that choose to affiliate must agree to participate in explicitly

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[6] Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

interfaith programming on campus, and those groups that are served by chaplains or adult religious leaders must send that leader to our weekly chaplains meeting so as to foster interfaith engagement, understanding, and cooperation. This is an integral piece of what it means to be part of an interfaith community. If we were merely creating a multi-faith chapel, each community could simply do its own thing and never interact with the other communities in the building other than to reserve space or work out conflicts in sharing the physical resources of the chapel. We were firmly committed to the proposition that being part of the Interfaith Chapel requires interfaith engagement on multiple levels. This requirement of engagement is integral to what it means to do interfaith or interreligious study. Just as our affiliated communities must be willing to engage in various types of activities with the other religious groups in the chapel, the discipline of interfaith and interreligious studies requires of the scholar more than merely the linguistic knowing that has been so much a part of the scholarly study of religions. The discipline moves the scholar out into the world of interfaith and interreligious encounter as a student of that encounter in whatever diverse ways may be required to apprehend the material being studied. As Ursula King has argued, "the challenge of interfaith encounter is both experiential *and* academic…both methodological and substantive."[7] Interreligious and Interfaith Studies can rise to the challenges King posed in her article on the future of religious studies:

> Yet, besides the challenging task of critical analysis, there also exists a great need for creative synthesis and forward-looking vision. Interfaith encounter and dialogue can be experienced as a liberating praxis freeing partners in dialogue from the oppressive, narrow boundaries of their own standpoints, revealing the limited positions of their respective religious and cultural traditions, through which the world has been mediated to them. Within a global context the active engagement with religious pluralism and encounter can lead to both mutual understanding and mutual transformation…[8]

Interfaith engagement is by its very nature, participatory. This affords different ways of knowing than merely studying texts or philosophical writings. As Ferrer and Sherman write:

> Contrary to the hegemonic claims of the linguistic paradigm, then, it is becoming increasingly plausible that epistemological frameworks that take into account a wider-and perhaps *deeper* engagement with human faculties (not only discursive reason, but also intuition, imagination, somatic knowing, empathic discernment, moral awareness, aesthetic sensibility, meditation, and contemplation) may be critical in the assessment of many religious knowledge claims.[9]

In crafting our policies of affiliation, we required participating religious and spiritual communities to commit to various kinds of engagement, including educational dialogues, shared worship experiences, shared community service projects, and shared social activities such as meals. In all these forms of engagement, the different religious communities have the opportunity to learn from and about one another in ways other than a purely linguistic epistemological approach to studying another religion.

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[7] Ursula King, "Is There a Future for Religious Studies as We Know It? Some Postmodern, Feminist, and Spiritual Challenges," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* Vol. 70, No. 2, June 2002, 377.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Jorge Ferrer and Jacob Sherman, *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies,* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 11.

This participatory engagement is of the essence of being an interfaith community. The kind of learning and knowing that happens in such an environment is of a different quality than a comparative study of another religious tradition. In comparative religion, the student learns about the other religion and compares it to his or her own or to another religion about which the student has learned. In comparative theology, the student delves deeply into the texts and traditions of the other religious tradition before coming back to the home tradition with new insights to bring to the theological enterprise in the home tradition. In both of these disciplines, the knowing is primarily linguistic and rational, using intellect and mind. In the participatory approach, other faculties of human knowing are employed to plumb the depths of human religious experience and wisdom.

In the participatory paradigm, the student uses different faculties to learn about the other religious tradition, including prayer, meditation, chanting, activities in the community, and social activities with those of other religious traditions. All of those lived encounters are ways of coming to know the religious other. As Ferrer explains, the participatory approach is "more sensitive to the spiritual evidence and honors the diversity of ways in which spiritual awareness can be expressed,"[10] as opposed to the purely academic or scholarly study of different religious paths. I submit that this participatory approach distinguishes interfaith and interreligious studies from its cousins, comparative religion or comparative theology. The actual participation in religious observances, in dialogues on religious, spiritual, or other issues of existential importance, sharing meals, sharing in service to the community, are all ways of coming to know the religious other and the religious ultimate (however that ultimate is named or apprehended in one's own tradition,) that are unique to the discipline of interfaith and interreligious studies.

In the process of creating the policies statement, some of the chaplains in the historic covenanting religious groups balked at the emphasis on interfaith engagement. There was some hesitation about the idea of having to engage with the other religious groups in the intentional way called for in the policies statement. When pushed to explain the concern, it became evident that they feared that the requirement that they participate in interfaith activities would detract from their mission to build up and foster commitment of students to their own particular religious community. I had to repeatedly emphasize that interfaith engagement could, in fact, become a vehicle for deepening the students' understanding of and commitment to their own tradition while simultaneously opening them up to the religious others in the university community in ways that would build up the larger community and allow for a genuine celebration of the diversity that exists on campus.[11]

Ferrer writes about the participatory turn and religious pluralism, explaining that the participatory approach can help to defuse the conflicts that often arise out of conflicting truth claims between religious groups. Ferrer ascribes to the belief that there are different religious ends to which each religious tradition is moving, and that, in fact, the different traditions are co-creators of spiritual reality.[12] Ferrer says, "Once traditions stop thinking of themselves as aprioristically superior or closer to *the* Truth, peoples from diverse belief systems can encounter each other in the spirit of critical dialogue, collaborative inquiry, and mutual

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[10] Ibid., 136.
[11] Denise Yarbrough, "Interfaith Encounter in the Pews: Bringing Interfaith Dialogue Home", *The World's Religions After September 11,* Vol. 3, *The Interfaith Dimension,* Arvind Sharma, ed., (Westport: Praeger Press, 2009), 220-221.
[12] Ferrer, 149

transformation."[13] Indeed, he adds, the religious differences then become cause for "wonder and celebration." He suggests the image of a tree to capture what it means to say that different religious traditions are co-creators enacting spiritual truth. The different religions, he suggests, have a common root,

> [T]he deep bond constituted by the undetermined dimension of the mystery in which all traditions participate in the co-creation of their spiritual insights and cosmologies…Like members of a healthy family, religious people may then stop attempting to impose their particular perception on others and might instead become a supportive and enriching force for the creative 'spiritual individuation' of other practitioners, both within and outside their traditions...This account would be consistent with a view of the mystery, the cosmos, and/or spirit as moving from a primordial state of undifferentiated unity toward one of infinite differentiation-in-communion.[14]

Ferrer's explanation of the different religions and spiritualities of the world as evidence that the spirit or cosmos is moving from undifferentiated unity toward a state of infinite differentiation is echoed by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. Sacks understands the differentiation between religions as evidence of humankind's progress towards spiritual maturity:

> The challenge to the religious imagination is to see God's image in the one who is not in our image. That is the converse of tribalism. But it is also something other than universalism. It takes difference seriously…The faith of Israel declares the oneness of God and the plurality of man. It moves beyond both tribalism and its antithesis universalism…Tribalism denies rights to the outsider. Universalism grants rights if and only if the outsider converts, conforms, assimilates, and thus ceases to be an outsider. …The critical test of any order is: does it make space for otherness? Does it acknowledge the dignity of difference?…If we are to live in close proximity to difference, as in a global age we do, we will need more than a code of rights, even more than mere tolerance. We will need to understand that just as the natural environment depends on biodiversity, so the human environment depends on cultural diversity, because no one civilization encompasses all the spiritual, ethical and artistic expressions of mankind.[15]

In insisting that religious communities on our campus agree to interfaith engagement, we affirm our commitment to continuing that journey from undifferentiated unity to a state of infinite differentiation-in-communion. We state our commitment to becoming a place where the dignity of difference is a core value. Our context in the Interfaith Chapel is somewhat analogous to those who live in interfaith families and marriages. Proximity, shared physical space, shared financial resources, and daily contact in the university community throw the various religious communities together in ways that require that they go beyond mere "tolerance" of the religious other. At a bare minimum, it forces them to "deep tolerance," where they cannot walk away when the differences between them cause conflict, but rather must find ways to work through the differences, hopefully coming to a place of deeper appreciation and understanding of those differences. In her study of interfaith families, Kate McCarthy writes:

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 150,151
[15] Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference,* (London: Continuum, 2002), 60-61.

> The discipline of committed relationship has pressed many of the interfaith couples I observed into deeper levels of respect for and engagement with one another's differences. … This sense of interfaith relationship as a process rather than a prenegotiated settlement is a hallmark of the deep tolerance I came to see in many mixed-faith couples…[T]he deep tolerance of living intimately with that difference can be difficult and hurtful.[16]

In many respects, life in the university Interfaith Chapel is its own form of "interfaith marriage." The communities live cheek by jowl with one another, share kitchens, living spaces, worship space, financial resources, and, in many cases, student participants. The Christian groups agree every year during Passover, which is almost always also Holy Week, to turn over the lowest level of the chapel building to the Jewish community so that it can be *kashered* and used exclusively by that community for the entire holiday. This means the Christian groups must move their worship venues, clean out one of their kitchens, and radically re-organize how they do their work during the busiest week of their liturgical year. That kind of intimate engagement of these various living religions is the stuff of interfaith and interreligious studies and dialogue.

For the academic discipline of interfaith and interreligious studies, the attitude of wonder and celebration at the differences between religious and spiritual traditions and the acceptance of those differences as inevitable, welcomed, and necessary is another facet of what it means to do interfaith or interreligious studies. There is no need to make the traditions or their conflicting truth claims cohere. It is not the ends to which these traditions are moving that matters, rather it is the process of their interaction with each other, which itself co-creates spiritual truths that is important. Again, this distinguishes interfaith and interreligious studies from comparative religion or theology.[17]

Our university struggled to articulate a process by which diverse religious communities could live together in an intentional interfaith community in order to better serve our students and the university's mission to prepare them for adult leadership in the 21st century. The veritable explosion of religious diversity both in American society at large and on our college campuses in the past two decades could lead to one of two responses: (1) celebrate the diversity and understand it as a gift to be mined for yet unimaginable creative riches, or (2) retreat in fear to corners of isolation and parochialism which would not promote understanding, compassion and peace among the different religions and cultures of our world, nor would it prepare the students in our university for leadership in the religiously and culturally diverse workforce into which we will send them upon graduation. We chose to grasp a vision of interfaith and interreligious enrichment even as it presented challenges to old ways of doing and being religious communities on campus.

Proselytizing in Interfaith Community

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[16] Kate McCarthy, "Pluralist Family Values: Domestic Strategies for Living With Religious Difference, *Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 612, (Jul. 2007), 196.

[17] The image of the tree with the trunk representing the common root out of which springs all the different religious traditions and spiritualities became the new logo for the Interfaith Chapel after we had completed this process of creating our policies of affiliation.

In the course of preparing the policies document, we engaged in considerable discussion about the University's non-proselytizing requirement. For a number of years, the religious groups affiliating with the chapel had abided by a statement entitled "Communal Expectations for Religious Life" in which religious communities at the chapel agree to cultivate interreligious understanding by facilitating interreligious exploration and learning among students. The Communal Expectations document states clearly, "Active efforts to convert or proselytize have no place in such a setting."

As we worked on the new policies document, members of actively proselytizing religious communities were part of the discussion and they pushed us to be more specific about what constitutes prohibited proselytizing on the university campus. The groups involved were Cru, an Evangelical Christian parachurch organization, Chabad, the Hasidic Jewish organization that actively proselytizes among Jews, and, to a lesser extent, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. All of these groups agreed that they were willing to curb their typical proselytizing practices in order to be affiliated with the Interfaith Chapel. They were willing to sacrifice certain proselytizing activities for the access to students, the recognition and status they would have as affiliated religious organizations, and the financial support they would receive from the chapel as affiliated religious groups.

Basically, the discussion on proselytizing led to an agreement that religious or spiritual group leaders and chaplains are not free to approach students on the campus to discuss religion or spirituality. They must wait for students to seek them out. They are permitted to have tables at student expos and activities fairs but must wait for students to approach them rather than their taking the initiative to approach students. The university regulates soliciting and flyering in dormitories and stipulates where flyers and notices of events and meetings can be posted on campus. Only recognized student groups can post flyers, and in the chapel, only affiliated religious groups may post notices. We require that all religious groups be clear about who they are in all their notices and flyers so that students do not inadvertently come to an event sponsored by a religious group not realizing that it is a religious group hosting the event. We wanted to prevent situations of spiritual "bait and switch" activities. We agreed that students may recruit fellow students and may approach their peers to talk about spirituality and/or religion, but cautioned the evangelical groups about not "training" students to become proselytizing agents in the student body. Genuine and spontaneous student conversations are encouraged. Premeditated and intentional attempts to coerce a fellow student into engaging in a religious or spiritual conversation that may not be that student's interest is actively discouraged.

The lengthiest discussion during this phase of our conversations was how to determine where the line is between talking about or sharing with someone about one's religious faith and "proselytizing." Our statement on this subject cautions religious and spiritual group leaders to "avoid any statements that would suggest to a student that they are in some way 'damned' or 'going to hell' or are misguided, or wrong if they do not belong to the leader's religious community." The document encourages students to use "I" statements when sharing about their faith and to avoid judgmental comments about other religious traditions, beliefs, or practices. The document also requires chaplains and religious/spiritual group leaders to exercise caution when working with students who express an interest in conversion to that leader's religious tradition, particularly if the student has been a member of a different religious tradition prior to entering college. Our policy encourages chaplains and religious leaders to encourage the student to speak with a religious leader in their home faith tradition

prior to making the decision to convert and to be sensitive to family dynamics and other social pressures that may be part of a student's decision to convert.

While we are clear that college students are absolutely free to make their own decisions about religious or spiritual affiliation during their college careers, we also tried to build in safeguards to ensure that students make an informed and appropriate decision, particularly when the conversion might be something that would cause significant familial consternation. In suggesting caution and collaborative consultation among the religious/spiritual leaders and chaplains, we instantiated in our chapel policies a principle declared by a consortium of Christian churches worldwide in a statement issued in January 2011, prepared by the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the World Evangelical Alliance, which cautioned Christians who engage with people of other world religious traditions:

> **Ensuring Personal Discernment:** Christians are to acknowledge that changing one's religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time for adequate reflection and preparation, through a process ensuring full personal freedom.[18]

In a college setting, where we intend to foster intentional interfaith community, this policy of caution and collaboration when students express interest in converting from one tradition to another is a way to be sure that the student is acting out of full personal freedom. And while the principle enunciated above was issued by an Ecumenical Christian organization, we applied it broadly to all the religious groups that affiliate with the Interfaith Chapel.

In the interfaith movement, the agreement not to proselytize is fundamental to any dialogue process. In the guidelines for interfaith dialogue promulgated by the World Council of Churches in 1979, an underlying assumption in all the suggestions for how to engage in dialogue is that the different parties to the dialogue will listen to one another with respect and that all parties to the dialogue are free to "define themselves." The WCC guidelines state unequivocally, "One of the functions of dialogue is to allow participants to describe and witness to their faith in their own terms."[19] As we wrote the document by which we would live out the intentional interfaith community that is the Interfaith Chapel, it was important to clarify the parameters of the agreement not to proselytize, trying to leave all groups with the freedom to exercise their religion as they see fit, and to share their religion with others while protecting students who might be vulnerable from subtle, manipulative tactics that might compromise their ability to exercise their own full religious freedom.

Interfaith and Interreligious Studies is particularly well suited to explore the dynamics of the tensions that arise around proselytization when groups and individuals of different religious traditions encounter one another. While a comparative religion approach would note that Christianity and Islam, for example, are both religions that proselytize, the Interfaith and

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[18] World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, World Evangelical Council, *Christian Witness is a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct,* http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world, Accessed 10/25/2013.

[19] World Council of Churches, *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, 02/10/2010,* http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/guidelines-on-dialogue-with-people-of-living-faiths-and-ideologies, accessed 10/25/2013.

Interreligious Studies scholar will probe deeply into what the encounter between those religious traditions and others looks like in the real world, and how those traditions manage to engage in interfaith/interreligious dialogue with integrity without completely abrogating that religious heritage of proselytization and evangelization. What texts do members of these traditions turn to when determining how to engage people of other religious traditions? What kinds of "dialogue" do these proselytizing traditions find most beneficial, and what poses the most difficulty? Indeed, the discipline of Interreligious and Interfaith Studies is uniquely poised to tackle the issue of proselytizing as such activity has historically been the primary reason for many religious groups to eschew interfaith or interreligious encounter. There has long been an assumption within evangelical religious circles that interfaith or interreligious dialogue is anathema because of its restriction on proselytizing.

In our discussion of the non-proselytizing requirement, we had a lively conversation about an encounter between members of the Cru organization and a Jewish student who had accompanied a friend to a Cru event. That Jewish student asked the leader of the Cru event some questions after the discussion was concluded and found herself being in "dialogue" for 90 minutes during which time the Cru leader encouraged the student to accept Jesus and to visualize Jesus accompanying her around campus. The Jewish student was traumatized by that encounter, including the promise by the Cru leader to pray for the student. The Jewish student did not want to be prayed for and felt threatened by leader's offer of prayer. After much conversation among the chaplains and religious leaders, it became clear that the Cru leader was not sensitive to the history of Christian anti-Judaism and its residual effects on Jewish students. She simply did not understand how viscerally a Jewish student might recoil at being pressured to visualize Jesus. In the course of our dialogue about this incident, a dialogue that included representatives from Hillel and Chabad and a variety of Christian leaders, we explored the issue of Christian privilege.

The Dynamics of Privilege

Notwithstanding the recent Pew Forum statistics, showing the steep decline in participation and affiliation with traditional, historic Protestant denominations and a significant increase in non-Christian religions in the American population as well as the significant rise in the percentage of the population who declare no religious affiliation, it is still the case that the United States continues to be a predominantly "Christian" nation. Those of religions other than Christianity continue to feel as though they are the minority, and their religious rituals, festivals, practices, and mores may or may not be reflected in popular culture. American Jews have certainly become more integrated into American culture in the past fifty years, and "interfaith" engagement has included dialogue and engagement between Catholics, Protestants, and Jews since the post-World War II period.

In our Interfaith Chapel conversations regarding the new policies document, the Protestant, Catholic, and Hillel Jewish communities were the three original "Covenant" communities on the campus, and they initially resisted the process of creating a new model for affiliation with the chapel out of fear of loss of that privileged status. This resistance to making room for the diversity of religions now a part of our campus community was an echo of the same kind of resistance and fear of the religious "other" that fueled anti-Semitism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the anti-Catholic hostilities that were part and parcel of our American religious life in the early 20th century, and the Islamophobia that infects our culture today. Even as interfaith and interreligious dialogue has exploded in our post 9/11 context,

"Christian privilege" has continued to be a factor impacting the dialogue process, particularly in cases where the Christians involved are not conscious of the extent of their privilege in our society. That Christians come to any interfaith or interreligious encounter in this country from a position of strength and greater power is a reality that some Christians are reluctant to acknowledge.

In a recent study conducted by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) between 2010 and 2012, the dynamics of Christian privilege were obliquely addressed as the ATS schools began to wrestle with what additions needed to be made to theological education of Christian clergy to better equip them for ministry in a religiously diverse society. The fact of religious diversity is undeniable. ATS recognized that clergy serving congregations in this religiously diverse society needed to achieve a minimal degree of world religions literacy and some training in interfaith and interreligious dialogue. For the purposes of that study, the theological framework for considering the issue of doing Christian ministry in a multi-religious world was the concept of hospitality, a Christian theological virtue that all denominations within the tradition could share, even as they differed theologically in significant ways with respect to how they think theologically about religious pluralism.[20] The ATS researchers noted, however, that even the concept of hospitality might imply Christian privilege and a hierarchy with Christianity on top. Ultimately the ATS study adopted that virtue of hospitality as its lens for examining what was needed in theological education of Christian clergy because, "offering hospitality without concern for gaining advantage is a hallmark of the biblical practice."[21] It is also a virtue that is shared by all the Abrahamic traditions and so can serve as a foundational concept out of which all three traditions can manage their interactions. It can be tricky to determine in any given situation who is guest and who is host, but at least the concept of hospitality, an open and embracing and welcoming attitude to the "stranger," provides an affirming and positive start to interfaith/interreligious engagement. If applied with some degree of humility, it can go a long way towards diminishing the power imbalance between the majority-privileged religion and its dialogue partners.

In our context the issue of Christian privilege came up in a variety of subtle ways. Something as simple as what is the appropriate title for campus religious leaders became a study in the effect of Christian privilege on the campus religious climate. Typically, campus religious leaders are called "chaplains," which is a peculiarly Christian term. It is also a term that connotes someone with a particular set of credentials, usually including graduate theological education and formal endorsement and "ordination" by a recognized religious body. The Christian chaplains were loath to extend the label "chaplain" to religious leaders from other traditions, and even to Christian religious leaders from the parachurch organizations like Cru and InterVarsity, because they had not had the same level of theological and pastoral training. Of course, not all traditions train their religious leaders in the way that Christians train their clergy or Jews train their rabbis. By and large, rabbis in the United States have become comfortable with the term "chaplain" when they are serving in prisons, hospitals, and universities, even though it is not a term that is indigenous to their tradition. Jewish rabbinical training in the Reform and Conservative movements is very similar to Christian Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy training, so the term chaplain seemed to work fine for those groups, all of whom at the University of Rochester made up the original Covenant partners. As we prepared to extend the "privileges" of chaplaincy to religious or spiritual leaders who did not have the same kind of training, those privileged chaplains balked. It took

[20] Graham, 2-3.
[21] Ibid., 3.

some time for them to become comfortable with the concept that other religious traditions must be free to determine who their religious leaders are and how they are prepared for that leadership. The conversations about what training is required before one can be considered a "chaplain" on campus illustrated the assumptions that Christians bring to an interfaith encounter and the extent to which these Christians, as the privileged religious group in this society, simply assume that the way they do things is the way all other religious groups should function.

The minority religious groups did not care much about whether they could hold the title "chaplain," but they did care about being eligible for the privileges the university would extend to a person with that title. As they have had to function in the university system, the minority religious group leaders have learned that the title chaplain does have meaning outside the chapel, so they embrace the term even though it is not a term that has meaning within their own religious traditions. Christian privilege continues to be present even as we implement these new policies. Ultimately, all religious leaders on campus who abide by the new policies document are eligible for the "chaplain" title. Most have chosen to use it when securing a university ID, because it confers status and privileges to them that they want in order to serve their constituency on campus.

Other indicia of privilege during our discussions included who gets space in the Interfaith Chapel building, how conflicts are handled when several religious groups are competing for the same space for worship and other activities, and how money is allocated to the religious groups serving the chapel. Ultimately, the original, "privileged" Covenanting partners did not lose their privilege, as we drafted the statement to distinguish between those communities that had part-time chaplaincies and those that had full time chaplains serving their communities. Unfortunately, the outcome of that compromise leaves the smaller, minority communities with fewer financial resources, less space in the building, and lower priority when conflicts arise with respect to reserving space. In the Interfaith Chapel, Christianity and Reform/Conservative Judaism are the privileged groups. Their worship needs take precedence over others, and they receive more financial resources from the University towards their activities. They also serve more students that the minority religious groups. Over time, as the minority religious groups grow, it is our hope that the resources we have available to support their programs will also grow.

For the academic discipline of interreligious and interfaith studies, the issue of privilege is woven into the enterprise. Wherever an interfaith or interreligious encounter takes place, there will be one religious tradition that is privileged in that encounter. In the United States, Canada, and Europe, Christianity would carry the privilege. In Saudi Arabia, Islam would be the privileged group. In Israel, Judaism carries the privilege. The dynamics of how the privileged group interacts with and offers hospitality to the minority religious groups is fodder for academic scrutiny. Privilege is culturally contextual, and the study of how that privilege is managed in any given context is integral to the interfaith/interreligious study of the phenomenon of the interaction.

In our context, the privileged groups did not actually give up any of the privileges they already enjoyed in terms of resources like finances and space. They merely opened the door for the minority groups to join them in enjoying those privileges. They did, however, have to compromise and let go of some of their preconceived assumptions about issues like religious leadership and how and where it is appropriate to share their religious faith with people who do not share that faith. The compromises they did manage to work out are slowly transforming

how the various religious groups see themselves in relation to the other religious groups, and that impacts how they perceive their own faith traditions as they confront other faith traditions. This is the very essence of interfaith and interreligious studies.

Conclusion

Interfaith and Interreligious Studies is an emerging discipline that bridges the existing academic disciplines of comparative religion and comparative theology through its unique focus on how different religious groups actually engage and interact with one another in the real world. The ways of knowing that inform this discipline include cultural/linguistic, intellectual knowledge and study, and also participatory forms of engagement and learning, such as prayer, meditation, chanting, dance, religious rituals, feasts and fasts and food, and engagement in the larger world around common concerns and social issues. The process of drafting the University of Rochester's Policies of Affiliation with the Interfaith Chapel was a microcosm of the way in which the faith traditions of the world are engaging one another in the larger American context and even globally. The issues of proselytization, privilege, limited resources that must be shared, religious leadership and its role in the culture, and the encounter of the sacred and the secular are all the stuff of interfaith and interreligious study and dialogue.

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"Clothed Upon With Glory": Sacred Underwear and the Consecrated Life

By Alonzo L. Gaskill

There are three ritual acts that pre-modern religions traditionally have in common: eating, washing and clothing. Ancient peoples engaged in rites of communion, wherein covenants with God and/or man were made and renewed through the partaking of food. Similarly, among most of the ancients, ceremonial washing was a requisite rite of passage with salvific connotations. The ritual act of clothing, receiving clothes, or being clothed has also held a sacral place in the faith of many of our predecessors.[1] While each of these acts is sacred and symbolic, our attention here will be on the latter of the three—the idea of clothing as a symbol of consecration.

"The transforming effect of clothes," one source informs us, "has always given them considerable emblematic power."[2] The significant role played by clothing in ancient society is particularly apparent in the Bible, where prophets used clothing metaphorically to make ethical exhortations, send theological messages, or to show the status or character of significant figures.[3] The importance of apparel in scripture and ceremony can be physical, economic, social, moral, or spiritual.[4]

Priestly or religious clothing is often intended to represent "the garb of God", and dressing in "special clothing" can denote a change in role or status.[5] The changing of one's clothes has long been a sign of consecration and preparation for "spiritual duties."[6] Thus, in the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem explained this about the Christian act of clothing: "As soon, then, as ye entered, ye put off your tunic; and this was an image of *putting off the old man with his deeds*." Cyril then added: "May the soul which has once put him off [i.e., the 'old man, which waxeth corrupt in the lusts of deceit'], never again put him on…"[7] Thus, the sense for early Christians was that donning religious articles implied that one was a new person; committed and consecrated to his or her God. In many cultures, sacred garments are seen as a representation of the wearer's moral and spiritual qualities—qualities developed largely because the wearer has faith in and devotion toward his or her God. Obviously not all clothing, in scripture or in life, is symbolic. Much of it is nothing more than practical. Nevertheless, literal and figurative meanings are intertwined in nearly every category of clothing.[8] The apparel we wear speaks as loudly about who we are, what we desire, and what we will become, as does perhaps anything else.

A Subject of Ridicule

While members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not publicize the fact that they wear covenantal clothing—sacred, symbolic undergarments—it is no great secret either. Adult Latter-day Saints, as one of their most hallowed and significant rites of passage, enter into one of their Temples to receive their "Endowment"—a term which means "gift".[9] This rite of passage was defined by Brigham Young, the second president of the Mormon Church, as follows:

"Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, ...and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell."[10] In other words, when a Mormon attends the Temple, he or she enters into covenants to live a moral, honest, faithful and Christian life. They hold that making these covenants helps them in their efforts to lay hold upon salvation. As part of that covenant-making process, Mormons receive a symbolic garment that they wear as a reminder of the covenants they have entered into—somewhat like a Roman Catholic priest and the clerical clothing he dons once he has taken holy orders. Catholic priests wear their clerical collars on the outside; Mormon's wear their garments underneath their clothing. But the concept is not dramatically different.

As it relates to their symbolic value, beyond representing the wearer's promises to God, for many Latter-day Saints the Temple garments are also a symbol of the flesh of Christ and the need for the wearer to seek to live a life of holiness. As faithful and consecrated living requires always keeping such truths at the forefront of one's mind, Latter-day Saints feel it appropriate to wear the garments every day. Of course, Mormons do not wear them when bathing, swimming or doing similar activities. But if an activity can be performed while wearing them, Mormons will leave them on, much like traditional underwear. What is sacred in the minds of LDS-Christians is not the underwear itself, but what the underwear symbolizes. Thus, there is nothing "magic" about these items of covenantal clothing. They are simply a sacred reminder of one's promise to try to be better; to be more holy in his daily walk.

While sacred covenantal underclothing is not unique to Latter-day Saints, their use of such apparel tends to be misunderstood, as similar clothing often is by those "outside" of Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism and Eastern Orthodoxy. As a singular example on August 24, 2012, NBC's "Rock Center" (with Brian Williams) aired a segment entitled "Mormons in America." A portion of the program probed the fact that Temple endowed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wear special underwear. As part of the program, interviewers asked members of the Church the purpose of the garment and then, in an apparent effort to inform the audience, a man and woman were shown wearing nothing but a pair of LDS Temple Garments. Whether intentional or not, the NBC segment presented the concept of religious underwear (common to many ancient and modern religions) in such a way so as to make the practice of wearing such clothing seem not sacred, but somewhat weird—even cultish. In all probability, the producers of the NBC piece were unaware of the fact that millions upon millions of people today—whether Jew or Gentile—wear symbolic undergarments to remind them of the covenants they have entered into. Thus, though sometimes misunderstood or even mocked, the practice is foundational to many traditions—and serves as a powerful means of consecrating and focusing the life of the wearer.

Priests of the Ancient Jewish Temple Cult

As attested in the Hebrew Bible, the priests and High Priest who served in the ancient Israelite Temple wore various articles of ritual clothing. It is widely accepted that one of those items of sacred apparel was a "special undergarment" in the form of "linen breeches" or underpants.[11] One text refers to these as "femoralia" or "drawers."[12] The books of Exodus (28:42) and Leviticus (6:10) both tell us that the priests were to wear these "linen breeches," which extended "from the loins even unto the thighs" (Exodus 28:42). In addition to the linen underpants, the priests also wore a "coat" or "shirt" on the upper half of their bodies, beneath their other liturgical vestments. In *AV* Exodus 28:39 we read: "And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen." One source suggested that this coat or shirt was worn next to the skin and had sleeves. While scholars are not in complete agreement as to whether this sleeved shirt extended just slightly past the hips (like the Roman *tunic*), or perhaps all the way to the ankles (like the Greek *chitōn*),[13] what *is* evident is that it was an undergarment of sacred significance.

The biblical text itself makes it clear that this priestly underwear was received as part of a process of consecration and induction into the holy priesthood. And while the scriptural text does not elaborate on their symbolic meaning, scholars almost universally hold that these garments were not simply practical: there was some emblematic meaning to the various articles donned by the temple priest.[14] One text interprets the meaning of this holy underwear as follows: "The subject of holiness…is seen typified in each of the garments made of the fine twined linen, giving us an appreciation of the term 'Holy Garments'. The coat [or undershirt] that clad his person would signify an holiness of the heart that beat beneath it…whilst these linen breeches [or underpants] that covered his nakedness declare an holiness of the flesh" or "desires and passions." This same source adds: "The white coat" worn as an undergarment was "the emblem of righteousness."[15] One text on rites of passage noted that exchanging things or receiving gifts—including the receipt of ritual garments—binds the receiver to the giver. The receipt (or exchanging) of such items is equivalent to "pronouncing an oath" or entering into a covenant.[16]

Orthodox Judaism

Drawing on their own scriptural tradition and liturgical heritage, modern male Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews also wear an undergarment required of the faithful men in Hebrew Bible times.[17] In Deuteronomy 22:12 we read: "Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself."[18] The garment of contemporary Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewry is not the "breeches" of the Levitical priest but, rather, an undershirt, of sorts, which they call *tallit katan*—sometimes translated "small tallit" or "little covering."[19] This holy article has the appearance of a small poncho-like shirt, and is worn under the outermost clothing by pious Jewish men.[20] On its four corners are twisted and knotted tassels called *ṣiṣit* (or *tzitzit*)—meaning "fringes." The 613 knots in the four tassels or cords are symbolic of the 613 commandments in the Law of Moses—commandments that Orthodox Jews seek to live each day.

While the wearing of this sacred undergarment is tied to the Torah, Jewish tradition also explains how and why God (i.e., YHWH) commanded the Jews to wear special underwear—different from that found among their non-Jewish neighbors.

> The sin of the Sabbath-breaker was the occasion that gave rise to God's commandment of *ṣiṣit* to Israel. For He said to Moses, "Dost thou know how it came to pass that this man broke the Sabbath?" Moses: "I do not know." God: "On week days he wore phylacteries on his head and phylacteries on his arm to remind him of his duties, but on the Sabbath day, on which no phylacteries may be worn, he had nothing to call his duties to his mind, and he broke the Sabbath. Go now, Moses, and find for Israel a commandment the observance of which is not limited to week days only, but which will influence them on Sabbath days and on holy days as well." Moses selected the commandment of *ṣiṣit*, the sight of which will recall to the Israelites all the other commandments of God.[21]

Thus, according to this traditional account, for Jews who wear the *tallit katan*, it is a gift from God. It is a daily reminder of the covenants, promises and obligations the wearer is under. It is a constant reminder of what God expects of him, and what he has promised his God he will seek to be. As the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states, "strictly observant Jews wear the *tallit katan* under their upper garment the whole day, so as constantly to fulfill the biblical commandment of *ṣiṣit* (Num. 15:39), a reminder to observe all the commandments of the Torah."[22]

For many of the most faithful, this undergarment has powers—powers by which the wearer can be protected.[23] Illustrative of this is the following story from the *Babylonian Talmud*.

> There was a man who was very careful in his observance of the *mitzvah* (i.e., the Law). He was ever found wearing the *tallit katan*, as the God of Israel had commanded. One day he heard of a prostitute in a far-off city and determined to make a visit. As the moment of his indiscretion arrived, now wearing nothing but his sacred undergarment, a miracle took place. The four knotted cords of his garment "struck him across the face", thereby awakening him to the sinful choice he was about to make. Stunned by the miraculous occurrence, he and the prostitute dropped to the floor to contemplate what they had just witnessed. As the man explained to the harlot about how his fringes had testified of his evil desires, she was spiritually moved. She left her life of sin, followed him home, earnestly studied the Torah, converted, married him, and they lived happily ever after.[24]

The Jewish undergarments (*tallit katan*) are not only a powerful symbol of the covenant relationship of the Jew with his God, they are also a gift from that God to protect and deliver the wearer from sin, temptation and, therefore, damnation. As one source notes, "to be enfolded by the *tallit* is regarded as being enveloped by the holiness of the commandments of the Torah,

denoting a symbolic subjection to the Divine Will."[25] The *ẓiẓit*, or "tassels" attached to the four corners of the sacred undergarment serve as a "talisman" or "amulet" for many who wear it. For the faithful, they function "as a protection against immoral conduct (an interpretation derived from Numbers 15:39)."[26]

Unique in our day, and different from the underwear of his neighbors, the Modern-Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewish man wears his *tallit katan* as a symbol and reminder of his commitment to live a holy, faithful and obedient life; and as a help in so doing. As one encyclopedia points out: "The rabbis regarded the *ẓiẓit* as a reminder to the Jew to observe the religious duties..."[27]

Zoroastrianism

Like Orthodox Jews, faithful Zoroastrians also have a sacred undergarment that is worn throughout one's adult life, and as a representation of the wearer's commitment to *Ahura Mazda* (i.e., God) and the ways of the Parsee tradition. Unlike in Judaism, however, in Zoroastrianism the garment is worn by men *and* women.

Somewhere between a child's seventh and fifteenth year[28] he or she participates in the *Navjote* (or *Naojot*) initiation rite.[29] During that rite the youth is washed and endowed with a rather plain white "sacred undershirt" which is to be worn next to the skin the remainder of the Zoroastrian's life. This undergarment, known as a *sudreh* (meaning "protection" or "advantageous path"), has a small pocket on the front side, in the center and right at the neckline. This pocket is called the *gireh-bân* (meaning "purse" or "bag of righteousness"), and the wearer is to metaphorically fill it with good works, good thoughts and good deeds each day of his or her life. It is a reminder to the wearer that while he or she is free to pursue wealth, seeking personal righteousness is even more important.[30] It is a "symbol of the necessity of (a) obedience to God, (b) closing up the door against sin and (c) breaking up the power of destruction."[31] Consequently, one text states that the wearer "makes his 'sudreh' an armor, a protection against which all attacks of demon or evil forces become futile. Thus he becomes the real conqueror of evil powers."[32] For Zoroastrians, then, this garment is a gift which provides the wearer with protection when it is utilized as God intended.

In addition to the sacred undershirt, initiates also receive a belt of sorts to be worn over the *sudreh*. This cord/belt is called the *kusti* (meaning "boundary" or "limit"—as it divides the upper body from the lower regions). Symbolically speaking, it is a reminder to the wearer of the need to nurture the body's "higher characteristics" (i.e., the things of the heart and brain), while controlling (and, in some cases, suppressing) the "lower characteristics" or physical appetites (e.g., greed, lust, etc.).[33] One Zoroastrian text informs us that "it is incumbent on all those of the good religion, women and men, every one [*sic.*] who attains to fifteen years [of age], to wear the *sacred thread* girdle." By this "girdle" it is believed "the whole of demons and fiends" are "made extinct."[34] Because the "sacred thread girdle" or *kusti* has traditionally been made out of wool, it represents to the wearer the need for innocence and purity. The 72 threads with which it is

woven are symbols of the 72 chapters of the sacred Zoroastrian scriptural text known as the *Yasna*. During his daily prayers, the wearer of the *kusti* unties and reties the knots of the "sacred girdle." This ritual untying and tying serves to "cement" the wearer's "commitment to the faith"[35] and protect him from sins.[36]

For practitioners of the Parsee faith, wearing this garment serves to remind them of their covenantal responsibilities to their God (*Ahura Mazda*). As they daily untie and retie the *kusti* (while reciting their prayers), their obligations to live a holy life are brought to their remembrance, as is their promise to fill the *gireh-bân* with good things—holy things. In Zoroastrian belief, God had twin sons: one "beneficent" and one "hostile." The good son sought for good things; the bad son for that which was evil. Just as these two sons chose different paths, each Zoroastrian has two paths presented to him—the good and the evil. The sacred undergarments of the Zoroastrians (the *sudreh* and *kusti*) are a protection from evil, helping the practitioner to focus on the path of God, and to not be seduced by the path of sin.

Sikhism

In the year 1699, the last of the mortal Gurus—*Gobind Singh*—founded the Khālsā; an initiated body of believers who had participated in the *Amrit Sanchar* (a rite of initiation appearing much like a Christian baptismal ritual). These initiated members of the order served as members of the 18th century Sikh military.[37] As part of their formation, *Gobind Singh* introduced the "Five Ks"; five articles worn by members of the Khālsā as a statement to the world about who they are, and as a reminder to the wearer as to what he was obligated by covenant to be. From that time forward, Sikhs who have been initiated into this "castless fraternity" stood out, because of their unique appearance.[38] The "Five Ks" consist of:

- *Kesh*—Uncut hair. This is a symbol for naturalness before God. For some Sikhs it represents the need to accept who you are and the way God has made you; to accept God's will, even if it *seems* to be different from your own.[39]

- *Kangha*—A comb, more symbolic than functional. It highlights the need for the faithful practitioner to exercise "mental order"; to control the mind and, thereby, control the body; to exercise "controlled spirituality" (i.e., to consciously live a spiritually centered life).

- *Kirpan*—A steel dagger, sometimes worn in the form of an actual knife, and other times worn as a pin or brooch. This is emblematic of the Sikh's willingness to stand up for the truth, and to push back on aggression toward their faith.[40] When a brooch made of two crossed swords is worn, it is sometimes seen as a symbol for the combination of political and

religious authority—acknowledging that man would do better if his civil laws were God's laws, rather than trying to create his own.

- *Kara*—A steel bracelet, typically worn on the right wrist. This is representative of the need to be disciplined in one's actions, thereby developing unity with God. It implies that what one does or pursues should be in accordance with God's will and wants. Consequently, the bracelet also denotes the human who seeks to develop the attributes of the Divine by living in harmony with the divine.

- *Kach*—Knee-length, baggy, white underpants. These stress the need to have "moral strength" and a chaste life. They are a representation of the Sikh commitment to not have sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage.[41]

While each of these items were originally associated solely with the Khālsā, today the "Five Ks" are commonly worn by many Sikhs—and by both sexes. One scholar noted: "Not all Sikhs have been members of the Khālsā. Nevertheless, the institution has come to define the image of the Sikh to outsiders and to be regarded by many within the community as the orthodox expression of its identity."[42] Elsewhere we read:

> Those Sikhs who elect to take initiation as members of the Khālsā must swear when they undergo the *pāhul* ceremony always to observe the Five Ks. Women as well as men can undergo this ceremony and the women who do so must also promise to wear the Five Ks. These are the Amrit-dhari Sikhs (those who have drunk the amrit of initiation), as opposed to the Kes-dhari (those who [simply] maintain the Kes [or uncut hair]). All Amrit-dhari Sikhs are also Kes-dhari, but only a small proportion of Kes-dhari are Amrit-dhari, for only a small proportion of Sikhs take initiation. No one knows precisely just what that proportion is…
>
> Are those who are not Amrit-dhari Sikhs therefore freed from observing the Five Ks? In theory they may be released, but the strict variety of Sikh thinking certainly does not agree. According to this strict view every Sikh, whether formally a member of the Khālsā order or not, is bound to observe the Five Ks.[43]

Technically, therefore, the "Five Ks" are marks of a particular order of Sikhs. However, a significant number of Sikhs who have never been initiated into the Khālsā wear them.

Though these commonly recognized marks of Sikhism are a unit—worn together—our concern here is the *kach*; the sacred underpants of Sikhism. While the other five "marks" are largely worn openly, for all to observe—like the priestly garments of ancient Israel, the *tallit katan* of Ultra-Orthodox and Modern-Orthodox Judaism, the *sudreh* of Zoroastrianism, LDS

Temple garments, and the phylakton *savanon* of Eastern Orthodoxy (which we shall discuss below)—the Sikh *kach* is worn beneath the clothing, concealing it from view.[44] It is an inward sign of an inward commitment. In outward behaviors, the wearer's commitment is manifest. But the garment, itself, is not shown. The "moral strength"[45] and "chastity"[46] it symbolizes is on public display (in the life of the practitioner), but the symbol, the reminder of the covenant made to God (i.e., "One True Name"), is hidden from all but the one who has covenanted. As with each of the faiths we have discussed in this paper, the undergarment is ultimately a private symbol of a consecrated life.

Eastern Orthodoxy

During the consecration of the altar of a new Greek Orthodox church, the holy table is prepared to be the "place of the sacraments" by being ceremonially washed, anointed, clothed with an altar cloth and then consecrated. For Eastern Orthodox Christians, the altar represents the tomb of Christ. Thus, metaphorically, His body lies therein. Consequently, the Orthodox hold that the altar must undergo its own ordinances akin to what an Orthodox Christian would participate in. Accordingly, the altar participates in a "baptism" (or washing), "chrismation" (or anointing), "clothing" in an altar cover (the newly baptized initiate typically receives a white garment to wear after his/her baptism), and the "receipt of the emblems of Christ's flesh and blood" (newly baptized children receive of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper).[47]

In conjunction with this ritual baptism of the altar, there is a practice in the Eastern Orthodox Church which mirrors much of what we have been discussing. Before washing and anointing the Altar Table the Bishop puts on a white linen garment called the *savanon* or *sratchítza*.[48] The garment is worn in addition to the Bishop or Archbishop's liturgical vestments, and throughout the majority of the rite of consecrating the altar.[49] Near the conclusion of the consecration, at the point that the "vigil light" is placed upon the altar, the Bishop removes the aforementioned white garment.[50] The *Savanon* is then cut up into small pieces and each person who attended the consecration is given a square of the white cloth to be used as a phylakton—"a blessed object worn by an Orthodox Christian as a protection against evil."[51] It functions as a sort of amulet or talisman for the faithful Orthodox Christian.

Certainly not all members of the Eastern Orthodox faith subscribe to the use of a phylakton; though the Greek Orthodox congregation in which I was reared did.[52] For believers, the encouragement was to pin or sew this piece of blessed white cloth—this piece of the archbishop's vestment—to one's underclothing, thereby insuring "protection against evil."[53]

In a sort of tangential use, but with related undertones, it has been common for families emigrating from Greece to send their sons to the "new country" to get established and to prepare a place for the rest of the family. These pioneer boys would often bring with them a phylakton as a source of protection and luck. One text notes that one of the family's "most important [parting gifts to their emigrating sons] was an amulet around their necks, a small cloth square enclosing a pinch of Greek earth."[54] The homeland "was holy to the Greeks."[55] Like the phylakton given to

those who attend the consecration of an Orthodox altar, this version of the phylakton is also seen as something which can serve as a shield and protection to the wearer. The Greeks held that there were four "dangerous hours" in one's life—times when divine protection was more urgently needed; times which caused great anxiety for families. These were between birth and baptism; between engagement and marriage; the first forty days after a woman gave birth; and during the period of later life when an elderly person lost his or her vitality. During these times, as well as in times of travel, Greeks would commonly use a phylakton. One source notes that they would sew little squares of white cloth, "enclosing in them a piece of holy scripture or a sliver of the True Cross…to withstand the Evil Eye." They then pinned these phylakton to their shirts or underclothing "for protection against evil."[56] Because the original use of these Greek amulets appears to be liturgical, it seems likely that the cultural use among newborns, the engaged, new mothers, the elderly, and emigrants stems from the religious use which preceded it.

While the Eastern Orthodox practice is, in many ways, different from the other traditions discussed above, nevertheless, at its core, the principle is similar: a white garment, worn in a way so as to not be visible, blessed and holy, to be used by the faithful as a shield and protection against evil and sin. The *savanon*, once distributed as a phylakton, becomes a symbol of a faith's covenants and relationship with their God—and of their God's promise to intervene, shield and protect.

Conclusion

Though the wearing of "sacred underwear" may seem strange at best to most Westerners, this ritual behavior is clearly ancient in origin, and common in practice.[57]

Additionally, there is a manifest similarity in the meaning of the garments in each of the faiths we have discussed. While there are nuances in the implications and symbolism, generally speaking, the sacred undergarments of the ancient temple priests, the Modern-Orthodox Jew, the practitioners of Zoroastrianism and Sikhism, the Latter-day Saints, and even the phylakton of Eastern Orthodoxy, represent covenants and consecration. They are reminders to the wearers of the sacred things God has done *for* them, and the promises He has made *to* them. Though worn discreetly, they encourage the wearer to live faithfully and openly his or her religion.[58]

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Notes

[1] Curiously, the Evangelical movement (developing in modernity) has largely rejected all three of these. For many within that tradition, while the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has a place, it is not a requisite

rite or a salvific ordinance. Baptism, though practiced by many Evangelicals, is also seen as more of an outward symbol, but not a saving rite. Consequently, a high percentage of those who consider themselves Evangelical Christians feel no need to be baptized. Finally, while many Christian denominations have clothing rites (for the baptized, the ordained, the married), the Evangelical movement typically does not.

[2]Jack Tresidder, *Symbols and Their Meanings* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2000), 134.

[3]Douglas R. Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation," in David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, six volumes (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:232.

[4]Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman, III, editors, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press,1998), 317. See also, Edwards in Freedman (1992), 2:232.

[5]See John Tvedtnes, "Priestly Clothing in Bible Times" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 665 & 666. Elsewhere we read, "The fact that God Himself revealed the pattern for these vestments should alert us to the possibility that they imitate the clothing that is worn by heavenly beings. And indeed, there is some evidence to support this view. A post-biblical Jewish commentary on the book of Exodus explains that the high priest's garments were like those worn by the Lord. And one extrabiblical source also describes an angel wearing eight garments, alluding to those worn by the earthly high priest. With this connection between the heavens and the earth, it is little wonder that they were called 'holy garments' (Exodus 28:2, 4; 31:10; Leviticus 16:4)." Matthew B. Brown, *The Gate of Heaven: Insights on the Doctrines and Symbols of the Temple* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1999), 81.

[6]See Ryken, Wilhoit and Tremper (1998), 319.

[7] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechetical Lectures," Lecture 20:2, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, fourteen volumes (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 7:147. Emphasis in original.

[8]Ryken (1998), 318. Even fabric, like wool and linen, had symbolic importance. Only priests, for example, were allowed to mix the two in ancient Jewish tradition (Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 22:11).

[9] LDS Temples are different from their Sunday meeting houses. While Mormon chapels are open to anyone—LDS or non-LDS—Mormon Temples are open to the public only prior to their dedication. Once dedicated, however, only those who are seeking to faithfully live the teachings of the Church are allowed entrance. Thus, even some who are members of the Church may have never entered an LDS Temple because they choose to not fully live the faith. Latter-day Saint reasoning for this restriction is twofold: (1) They wish the Spirit of the Lord to be there unrestrained. Having individuals in the Temple who are not seeking to fully live the commandments would likely influence that Spirit. (2) In their Temples, Mormons enter into covenants with God to live a holy life. Clearly those who are not committed to living the teachings of the Church are not ready to make such covenants.

[10] John A. Widtsoe, *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1998), 416.

[11] See Edwards, in Freedman (1992), 2:234. See also, Philip J. Hyatt, "Dress," in James Hastings, editor, *Dictionary of the Bible*, revised edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 223.

[12] See Janet Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1984), 153. The 1609 *Douday Bible's* rendering of Leviticus 6:10 is as follows: "The priest shall be revested with the tunike and the linnen femoralles."

[13] See Ramban Nachmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, five volumes (New York: Shilo Publishing, 1973), 2:484-485; Edwards, in Freedman (1992), 2:233; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," in Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, twelve volumes (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976-1992), 2:467.

[14] While Christians typically describe the meaning of these articles of clothing in terms of Christocentric symbolism, that view is generally held by scholars to be eisegetical. Most academics assume the priests of the ancient temple cult did not have the messianic lenses we do when it comes to their rites, rituals or ordinances. Of course, this is a point of debate.

[15] Charles W. Slemming, *These Are The Garments: A Study of the Garments of the High Priest of Israel* (London: Marshall, Morgan Scott, Ltd., 1945), 127 & 31.

[16]See Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, translators (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 29-30.

[17] This garment is worn by Ultra-Orthodox and Modern Orthodox Jews, but not typically by Conservative, Reformed or secular Jews. Orthodox women do not wear the fringed undergarment (*tallit katan*), although in recent years some females in Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist groups have begun to wear it.

[18] Similarly, in *AV* Numbers 15:37-41 we find this: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they *make them fringes in the borders of their garments* throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

[19] In the opinion of many, this sacred undershirt is related to, though not identical with, the aforementioned "fine linen" shirt (Exodus 28:39) of the Temple priests.

[20] Rarely, a special belt, known as a "gartel," may be worn in connection with the *tallit katan*. This likely stems from the "curious girdle" worn by the ancient priest (Exodus 28:8).

[21] Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, seven volumes (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 3:241.

[22] *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* corrected edition, seventeen volumes (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, n.d.), 15:745, S.v., "Tallit Katan."

[23] Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav maintains the garments "are a safeguard against immorality," pointing to examples in drunken Noah and in the Genesis creation myth. Thus by wearing the pure white *tallit katan*, we mitigate darkness and destruction. See Tzvi M. Rabinowicz, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism* (Maryland: Jason Aronson Publishers, 1977), 512-513.

[24] See *The Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate Menachot 44a.

[25] *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 15:744, S.v., "Tallit."

[26] *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 16:1187, S.v., "ẓiẓit."

[27] See *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 16:1187, S.v., "ẓiẓit."

[28] Among the faithful, this rite of passage always takes place by the end of the fifteenth year—as the age 15 is seen by Zoroastrians as the age of adulthood. Those who do not become initiated into the faith by that age are seen as "ill-behaved" and as placing themselves "in the power of the evil *druj*" (i.e., in the way of error and deceit). See Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), 144.

[29] The term *Navjote* (or *Naojot*) means "new birth", as the initiate is seen as a "new person"; one just now "born into" the faith of Zoroastrianism. [See Gherardo Gnoli, "Zoroastrianism," in Mircea Eliade, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* seventeen volumes (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 15:587.] The ceremonial investiture is preceded by a sacred washing rite, called *Nahn*.

[30] See Modi (1979), 145-146.

[31] Modi (1979), 149.

[32] Behman Sorabji Banaji, "The Warfare of Zoroaster," in *Advocate of Peace Through Justice*, Volume 86, Number 1 (January, 1924): 35.

[33] See Modi (1979), 150-152. See also Michael Strausberg, "The Significance of the 'kusti': A History of Its Zoroastrian Interpretation," in *East and West*, Volume 54, Number 1/4 (December 2004): 15.

[34] See *Sad Dar* 10:1 & 4, cited in E. A . West, translator, *Pahlavi Texts* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 268.

[35] See Firoze M. Kotwal, "Ritual Aspects of the Gathas and Their Continuity in Later Tradition," in *Iran & the Caucasus*, Volume 3/4 (1999/2000): 8.

[36] See Strausberg (2004): 10.

[37] Some Sikhs seem uncomfortable with connecting the *Amrit Sanskar* to Baptism, as its meaning and purpose are not the same as Christian baptism—though the forms are akin to each other. See W. Owen Cole, Review of W. H. McLeod's, *The Chaupa Sing Rahit-Nama,* in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* Number 1 (1989), P.184.

[38] Sikh Missionary Center, *Sikh Religion* (Detroit, Michigan: Sikh Missionary Center, 1990), 200. One scholar of Sikhism has pointed out that while most Sikhs accept that Guru Gobind Singh was the source for these special items of clothing, some historians believed that they were not part of the faith until the end of the nineteenth century. See, for example, Hew McLeod, "The Five Ks of the Khalsa Sikhs," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Volume 128, Number 2 (April-June, 2008), Pp. 328-331.

[39] This is sometimes also spelled *Kes*.

[40] Early in their history Sikhs were heavily persecuted by Muslims.

[41] "These are a reminder of the duty of purity and also a reminder to Sikhs to act for the faith." Though a less common interpretation, one source suggested that the Sikh underpants were "to indicate alertness

and readiness to fight." Michael Molloy, *Experiencing The World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change*, fifth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 206.

[42] Willard G. Oxtoby and Alan F. Segal, editors, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 334. Men and women can participate in the amrit initiation and wear the 5 Ks, which were originally associated with the Khalsa, but today are generally embraced by all Sikhs. There is no specified age of initiation. One must simply be old enough to read scripture and to comprehend the articles of the Sikh faith. See Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, "Sikhism," in Lindsay Jones, editor, *Encyclopedia of Religion,* second edition, fifteen volumes (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 12:8395 & 8397.

[43] McLeod (April-June, 2008), pp. 327.

[44] The *Kangha* is openly worn in the hair of a Sikh woman. On male Sikhs, however, it is often obscured by their turban. This is not an attempt to hide the comb, as they hide the undergarment. It is a practical matter (i.e., the turban helps to control their hair).

[45] John Bowker, *World Religions – The Great Faiths Explored and Explained* (New York: DK Publishing, 2006), 84.

[46] Bowker (2006), 95. See also *Sikh Religion* (1990), 200.

[47] See Taxiarchae-Archangels Greek Orthodox Church, *The Consecration of Our Beloved Church* (Watertown, MA: Taxiarchae-Archangels Greek Orthodox Church, 2000), xvi.

[48] See Isabel F. Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (New York: Association Press, 1922), 493-511 & 613; Taxiarchae-Archangels (2000), xv-xvi. Hapgood notes that this white garment caries several symbols: that it encircles the neck symbolizes the wisdom and obedience of the wearer; that it covers the body, particularly the breast, symbolizes the Word; that it shrouds the loins symbolizes the wearer's purity and strength. See Hapgood (1922), 613, note 2.

[49] One text on the rite states: "Functionally, the *savanon* is a large bright white garment in the shape of an alb that protects the bishop's vestments during the washing of the table. Symbolically, it represents the mortification of his body to all sin and the vesting of purity and blamelessness which he must possess in order to complete the consecration rite. The envelopment of his body with the brilliance of the cloak shows him to be mystically, on the one hand, Christ, and, on the other, a living altar." Gus George Christo, *The Consecration of a Greek Orthodox Church According to Eastern Orthodox Tradition: A Detailed Account and Explanation of the Ritual* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 28, footnote 25.

[50] Hapgood (1922), 501; Taxiarchae-Archangels (2000), xviii.

[51] Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, "Savanon" (Kansas City, MO: Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, 1987), back cover. See also Christo (2005), 28, footnote 25, where we read: "Once the entire consecration procedure is over, the bishop divests of the *savanon*. It will be cut into tiny pieces and distributed to all the members of the congregation at the end of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The tiny pieces are a *phylacton* or a *phylactery* (a blessed object worn as a protection against evil)." In addition, see Nicon D. Patrinacos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (New York: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Dept. of Education, 1984), 17-18.

[52] For dissenters, the use of blessed objects, like the sacred garment (or vestment) of the Archbishop (i.e., the *Savanon*), is superstitious nonsense. The notion of wearing a white piece of blessed or holy cloth somewhere on one's underclothing for protection against evil or temptation is, to some, superstitious at least, and potentially blasphemous at most. For those who are non-practitioners (or non-wearers), this tradition sounds like an extension of the iconoclast controversy of the 8th and 9th centuries. See Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, new edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 30-35.

[53] Explanation of the power of phylakton, Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation (Kansas City, Missouri: October 4, 1987), back cover.

[54] Helen Papanikolas, *An Amulet of Greek Earth* (Athens: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 2002), 4.

[55] Papanikolas (2002), 53.

[56] See Papanikolas (2002), 29 & 53.

[57] Biblical Judaism is traditionally dated to the life of Abraham, placing its origins in the second millennium BCE. (Though some would place the wearing of sacred undergarments to the era of Adam and Eve – Genesis 3:21). Zoroastrianism dates somewhere between 1,500 and 1,000 BCE. Eastern Orthodoxy traces its origins to the founding of Christianity in the first century of the Common Era. Setting aside Mormonism, Sikhism is the most modern of the faith's we've discussed; originating in the 15th century. Though technically neither Sikhism nor Mormonism qualify as "ancient," the culture from which Sikhism stems is, indeed, ancient, and Latter-day Saints see themselves as a "restoration" of primitive or ancient Christianity.

[58] A lack of reverence for that which is sacred to one tradition ultimately shows disrespect to all because those who are deeply religious are really interconnected in ways which easily go unnoticed. The sacred undergarments of these various traditions, and the commonality of their purpose and meaning, are an invitation to ecumenism and appreciation for each other's tradition, and the deeply spiritual things which we share. Thus, we must never ridicule that which we do not understand. We are always better served by attempts at building bridges and understanding—and by seeking to highlight the ties that bind us one to another.

Religious Diversity Within the Limits of Radical Neo-Enlightenment

By Mark Manolopoulos

Abstract

This paper begins by briefly sketching a 'return to universality' with what the author calls a 'radical neo-Enlightenment' that is driven by a revolutionary rationality. As part of this delineation, the essay discusses how this rationality is itself delimited, and how the apparently 'unlimited' figure of divinity is itself also delimited. The work then sketches how Christianity (for example) may be refigured according to this logic, publically expressing its revolutionary ethico-political core and privatising its speculative aspects. In other words, radical neo-Enlightenment would work towards retaining what is truly divine in religions and spiritualities, and excising their destructive excesses.

It is with some trepidation that I shall propose limits: after all, our epoch is witness to the philosophical and cultural reclamation of difference, divinity, infinity, excess – figures that challenge the limit; 'figures of the limitless,' one might say.[1] But I shall argue for limits with only *some* trepidation: with all the crises that plague the planet – for example, ecological devastation and anthropogenic climate-change, driven by the delusion that there are no planetary *limits*; or the financial collapses, predicated by a capitalistic logic of *limitless* lending and spending – with all these crises precipitated by a perverted limitlessness, we *must* propose parameters, we are forced to enforce the need for boundaries. Indeed, the time has come – and has perhaps even passed – for us to recognize and embrace what we are required to do today: to *love (or* re-love) limits, and to lovingly apply them (even if ruthlessly) – even when it comes to something as cherished as 'diversity.' For if there is a tendency in multicultural societies in general and postmodern theory in particular (including – and perhaps *especially* – theology) to valorize or even idolize limitlessness, we run the risk of validating the various plagues of excess ruining the Earth: 'capitalism,' 'democracy,' etc. – and, yes, in some ways and to some degree, even 'religion' and 'religious diversity.'

The Return of Universality

I must stress that radical theory's reclamation of the limitless is a good thing, but even one of the leading advocates of the very legitimate reclamation of particularity (and the concomitant deflation of any over-inflated universal Reason), John D. Caputo, recognizes that it is time we reclaim "some version of universality:"

> There certainly have been circumstances in which it was important to insist upon the universal over the particular. With the advent of modernity that is precisely what we had to do: to insist upon the universal rights of people as opposed to the particular privileges of certain people. Now the postmodern situation *presupposes* modernity and that we've passed through this universalizing element. . . . So today our insistence upon singularity is in the context of having already moved through the Enlightenment. And now we want to protect difference. But we only want to protect difference *given* that we have certain universal conditions – the universal rights of all human beings – respected. That is why today, in our culture of differences, we see still another phase, in thinkers like Alain Badiou, who say we presuppose differences and must find universality or the same. That would be the next dialectical phase.[2]

My ambitious claim is that this "next dialectical phase" – or perhaps the ultimate phase, a definitive, conclusive phase that is nevertheless somewhat revisable and open-ended – should be nothing other than what I am calling 'radical neo-Enlightenment,' whose basic mission is nothing less than the configuration and ethico-political deployment of a universal Reason which transforms humanity and saves the Earth. Expressed otherwise: radical neo-Enlightenment is the logic of the coming revolution. The passionate thinking that will devise and drive the revolution is neither modernity's bloated yet narrow hyper-rationalism whose offspring include scientism and New Atheism, nor an impotent rationalism which may have unfortunately lost its universal force as a consequence of postmodernity's rightful reclamation of that which exceeds or eludes Reason. Our neo-rationality avoids these excesses and retains its noble task of thinking humanity's transformation and Creation's renewal.

One could immediately interject that such an ambitious conception of Reason contradicts my critique of limitlessness with which I began, for now it appears that I am making a case for a limitless thinking, since a universal reasoning is – it would appear, and by definition – limitless; that it has no limits – that is what makes the universal *universal*. A valid objection, to be sure. But I have already intimated that there are two types of limitlessness, good (divinity, for instance) and bad (capitalistic excess, for example). And could we not propose – quite tentatively, to be sure – that something which might differentiate them is that a good limitlessness paradoxically possesses some parameters?

Two examples might suffice to augment this tentative argument, offered with fear and trembling. First, a bad limitlessness. I have already noted that capitalism is driven by a greed that knows no bounds; various crises and disasters we are presently experiencing exposes capitalism as a bad limitlessness, and any 'limitations' imposed by government are likely to be cosmetic and ultimately ineffective (as witnessed by the ongoing climate-change and financial crises). The second example is theological: the divine (if there is any) is perhaps the most exemplary example of the utterly unlimited, whose infinity is one of its 'defining' characteristics; but it nevertheless possesses other defining and delimiting characteristics: that it be loving, just,

reasonable, etc. After all, the rational person would not believe in an insane or evil deity – or, at least, one could not adore it. And so, even divinity is/would be delimited in some ways.

The rationality that inhabits radical neo-Enlightenment, then, is a good type of limitlessness, to be deployed everywhere *because* it has its own limits or guidelines. After all, how could such a radical logic avoid the excesses of both over-inflated and impotent rationalisms if it is not itself a self-restrained thinking, whose parameters ensure that its self-confidence does not become bloated and arrogant? Radical neo-Enlightenment's rationality is, in other words, a limited limitlessness, quasi-unlimited, a thinking whose very boundaries allow it to be unbounded. But by what is this thinking demarcated? This huge question cannot be comprehensively addressed in a relatively short paper which is itself bound by the immediate task of articulating how this thinking re-figures religious diversity and its limits – but at least aspects of this new or renewed Reason will be variously indicated and intimated throughout the present exposition.

The Unlimited Delimited: Openness and God-dess

To begin with, radical neo-Enlightenment is driven by a philosophical open-mindedness: it accepts and affirms undecidability, and it is open to various possibilities which have been traditionally shunned by excessive rationalisms. For instance, this neo-rationality is very open to the possibility of divinity. We must recognize and insist on the divine's characterization *as a possibility* – for that is what it is, given that there is no absolutely watertight proof or evidence for the divine (for the time being). And such a stance is rigorously theological: belief is, by definition, *belief in* something, *not knowledge* of something. The question of divinity is undecidable, with faith (or unfaith) being a decision that occurs in the midst of this inescapable undecidability.[3] True faith is marked by uncertainty, by doubt, thus ensuring that faith remains faith; the thoughtful believer (or unbeliever) thus always remembers that they may be wrong, that their belief may be false, their hope hollow. There is, then, obviously no room for dogmatism in radical neo-Enlightenment; no tolerance for fundamentalisms and extremisms.[4] And this philosophical intolerance obviously also holds for any reverse fundamentalisms, such as hyper-empiricist or scientistic logics that dogmatically shut off the possibility of divinity.

I must also stress that this philosophical openness is *not* indiscriminate or absolutely/unlimitedly open; this openness should not be construed as the conceptual equivalent of 'anything goes' – far from it. Indeed, the fact that I am proposing limits to religion and religious diversity signifies that our openness is a critical openness, an open-mindedness that is 'nevertheless' discerning, delimiting. I thus emphatically insist on the difference between radical neo-Enlightenment's rational openness and the hyper-relativism riddling this world.

Consequently, I insist on the difference between our critical openness and the kind of almost unrestricted openness exhibited by a pro-actively multicultural society such as Australia. One should assert, in an apparently anti-politically-correct and *seemingly* 'conservative' way, that the substantially unrestricted religious freedom that prevails in the West today (barring,

perhaps, some 'cults' or the occasional media bashing of Scientology) is a manifestation of an 'anything goes' attitude. In an age of the unrestrained exhibition of supposed difference, we can already begin to perceive a need for limits to religion and religious diversity. And it is already obvious, then, that our open-mindedness is very different to an 'anything goes' liberalism, and that this discerning openness itself inhabits and reflects a thinking that is both universal and self-restrained – universal precisely because it is self-restrained.

'Binding' God-dess

So, radical neo-Enlightenment makes room for the possibility of divine 'existence.' But we must also ask *what kind* of deity is admissible? In other words, what figurations of the divine are not offensive to Reason and the revolution? What depictions of divinity *inform* and *inspire* revolutionary skepsis and praxis? I have already cited some defining characteristics of an acceptable and affirmable deity: good, loving, just, rational. I will not attempt to define these qualities here, for two opposing reasons: on the one hand, I would anticipate that rational beings would reach broad agreement in terms of what these concepts mean; on the other hand (and somewhat paradoxically), some of these ideas might be somewhat abyssal (e.g. 'What is justice?') and lead us beyond the limits of this paper. After all, what is most pressing for our present purposes is how divine characteristics and construals hold up under the scrutiny of an ethico-political rationality which asks: how are these notions used or abused by humans? In other words, are our figurations of divinity enlightening and emancipatory, or do they continue to enslave ourselves and the planet?

A simple, brief, concrete example will suffice here: the continued portrayal of an exclusively male deity, represented by gender-exclusive terms such as 'God' and its pronouns ('He,' 'Him'), perpetuates patriarchy and sexism by giving them 'divine sanction.' But with the "next dialectical phase" and the coming revolution, there is no room for a gender-exclusive theo-logic and lexicon, which doesn't automatically mean jettisoning existing terms, but rather re-figuring them e.g. "God" may be expressed as "God-dess": not only is the deity thus configured as perhaps both male and female, but the all-important hyphen also signals a divinity that is perhaps beyond or otherwise than gendered.

If we are to offer content to the divine possibility, then, we must proceed with extreme caution, so that this content aligns with – indeed, even inspires and assists – human enlightenment and progressiveness rather than tyranny and oppression. This is the challenge for faith, since history tragically shows how traditional theologies and spiritualities have been constructed and deployed by the powerful (emperors, clerics, politicians, the media, etc.) to keep the masses 'in the dark,' subjugated. That is why we, today, should insist on beliefs that are thoroughly thoughtful. Rigorously rational religion, then, is open, anti-dogmatic, feminist, ecological, homophilial, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist, and so on.

And so, the only acceptable belief in the coming age of radical Neo-Enlightenment will be that which aligns with a passionate thinking. Does this mean the invention of an absolutely new

religiosity, and the concomitant rejection of existing religious traditions? In line with our philosophical openness, we should allow for the possibility of some kind of radically rational belief independent of our existing religious traditions. Time may tell. But we should also allow for the possibility/probability that we also remain open to existing religious traditions – albeit in radically transformed forms. How so?

Christianity Ltd.

I can speak from experience in this regard. During my tertiary education, postgraduate studies, and continued exposure to the truths of philosophical currents such as feminism, deconstruction, ecological criticism, Marxism, etc., these epistemic forces have informed and re-formed my Christian faith, so much so that I am now a self-described 'anti-Christian Christian.' What does this mean? To begin with, I recognize my faith *as faith*, so I may be wrong: the divine is a possibility which may be real or imagined. Deity (if there is any) is or would be characterized by a love for the whole Creation, by the desire for justice, for a global community of equals (and therefore some kind of proto-, and/or even neo-, communism) – biblical motifs that unfortunately remain submerged, even in faith communities (primarily because of their subversiveness).

And of course there is no Christian faith without some kind of appropriation of the Christic event; obviously any reclamation must be critical, thoughtful, discerning. Jesus of Nazareth was perhaps or probably a historical figure who may have some kind of special relation with divinity. Maybe, maybe not. I thus remain open to the possibility of a triune deity, but we open-minded ones also remain open to the possibility of a unitarian divinity, or a deity that may somehow be both ('Trinit/Arian'), or neither, otherwise. Until any possible Second Coming, the Nazarene's theological status remains an open question. In the meantime, we just don't know. What we *do know* is that the dogmatic imposition of the Trinity, the silencing of the Arians, and irrational hereticization is the kind of violence that we vehemently reject and has no place in radical neo-Enlightenment.

More important for the mission of this radical rationality is how the progressive, enlightened aspects of the Nazarene's life and words may be ethico-politically instructive today: to love, to give, and to forgive; to be on the side of the poor, the outsiders, the freaks; to oppose and overthrow oppressive religious, political, and economic institutions; to be willing to sacrifice one's life in the mission to liberate and enlighten the world. What this sacrificial element entails is that we revolutionary believers (in both senses of the phrase) must be willing to face criticism and resistance, and for those living in less enlightened and downright oppressive places in which the Dark Ages are alive and well, our sisters and brothers shall be faced with persecution and death.

And how does radical neo-Enlightenment approach the Scriptures? Given that we have access to the Nazarene's life and teachings via multifarious and contradictory biblical texts, we must be ruthlessly discerning, not swallowing it whole, but instead retaining whatever is

enlightening and emancipatory in them, and rejecting whatever is conservative and oppressive. In other words, we must read with Reason.[5] As an anti-Christian Christian, I also abandon the clerical, superstitious, ritualistic aspects of Christianity and retain its revolutionary ethico-political core (to love, to share, to hope, and so on). The result is a neo-Christian faith that is 'simultaneously' rational and inspiring, tentative yet programmatic, epistemically humble yet brashly offering some ethico-political content, some revolutionary guidance (to love, to share, to be passionate and compassionate, to act, to be willing to offer one's life for the Cause, etc.).

One may already begin to perceive the private and public aspects of this kind of Christianity. On the one hand, the radical Christian should remain private about the speculative aspects of this faith (e.g. belief in some kind of divinity; that Jesus may be some kind of divine 'site'; etc.): these beliefs should not play a role in terms of one's interaction in society; they should not impact how one relates as a citizen of the world. In other words, there should be strict limits on this speculative aspect of faith: it should not be admitted into the public domain, for it cannot be logically or empirically substantiated. On the level of the public and universal, it holds no traction, and must be bracketed – even though it may be true. On the other hand, the radical ethico-political core of Christianity certainly aligns with the rational ethico-political goal of a society structured by solidarity and sharing, so this aspect of Christianity should certainly be admitted in the public domain. Indeed, it should be allowed to encourage, inspire, and motivate the Christian in becoming involved in revolutionary ethico-political praxis.[6] This imperative is driven by both Christianity and Reason. They both share this common ground.

Rationality as the Ground of a True Ecumenism

This very limited sketch of a particular faith that aligns with the "next dialectical phase," radical neo-Enlightenment, is obviously and certainly applicable to other religions and spiritualities, to all belief systems. For this neo-rationality – which arguably happens to arise out of the 'Greco-Christian West' – is radically indiscriminate in this regard: it does not favour one region or religion above others. Radical neo-Enlightenment is not Eurocentric or Christocentric but ecocentric and universal. With this next phase, non-Christian and Christian believers alike will be called upon to practice radical-progressive versions of their faiths that align with this universal rationality, re-aligning their belief systems within its limits.

Whether by the art of gentle persuasion or by just force, the world's religions and spiritualities shall thus be critically delimited for their own sake and for the common good of humanity and the planet. The critical delimitation of belief systems will also mean that ecumenical and multi-faith movements shall be *truly* united, bound by a radical rationality, a critical openness, the rejection of dogmatism, the abandonment of restrictive beliefs and practices, and so on. As paradoxical as it may appear, religious dialogue can only truly, meaningfully, take place in the context of a universality that imposes parameters on belief. As paradoxical as it may appear, it is these very thoughtful borders which provide the shared ground, the truly common ground, between the various faiths and spiritualities.

Another affirmative consequence of rationally-circumscribed belief systems is that they will will be able to form alliances with an equally rational atheism (an atheism that is otherwise than the 'New Atheism,' which is dogmatic, and therefore nothing new), for we will have more commonalities than differences, given the common ground of a radical rationality. And of course this solidarity will extend to those between belief and unbelief, agnostics. Yes, true intra-faith and inter-faith harmony and unity. Progressives of whatever persuasion, then, will be united and driven by the task of transforming culture and thus saving Creation.

And so, radical neo-Enlightenment allows for religious 'diversity' in a nuanced and limited sense. Only such an apparently excessive measure will effectively overcome the ongoing horrors of religious dogmatisms, fundamentalisms, extremisms, and their countless socio-political correlates. For only a universal Reason shall offer the rules for all of us getting along (including getting along with non-human others), a getting-along which shall also enable the re-flourishing of the Earth. With radical neo-Enlightenment, religions will thus be compelled to privatize elements of belief (for example, one may privately believe that a Jewish carpenter is some kind of 'concentrated' site of divinity); religions will be forced to dispense with their oppressive elements (their sexism, dogmatism, etc.); but they shall also be allowed and indeed encouraged and invited to bring to the public sphere those elements of their faiths that align with Reason, with a radicalized rationality open to the possibility of the divine, thus contributing to radical neo-Enlightenment's task of ethico-political emancipation and transformation.

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Notes

[1] This paper was originally intended to be presented at the Australasian Philosophy of Religion Association's 2012 Conference: 'Religious Diversity and its Philosophical Significance.' (I was unable to present the paper due to illness.)

[2] John D. Caputo and Mark Manolopoulos, "Good Soup and Other Gifts: With John D. Caputo," *With Gifted Thinkers: Conversations with Caputo, Hart, Horner, Kearney, Keller, Rigby, Taylor, Wallace, Westphal* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 51-73, 64-65.

[3] Whilst Jacques Derrida should be credited with heralding/recalling the pivotal role of undecidability, two thinkers who rigorously explore undecidability's significance for faith are Caputo and Robyn Horner. Refer to John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Robyn Horner, *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida, and the Limits of Phenomenology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001); also refer to Mark Manolopoulos, "When Marion's Theology Seeks Certainty," *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory* (2002) 4.1 http://jcrt.org/archives/04.1/manolopoulos.shtml.

[4] One could perhaps object – as somebody did in relation to another paper in which I also stress anti-dogmatism – that my position is "rather paradoxically dogmatic in its rejection of dogma": without buying into this sophistry, I would just point out that the key word here, 'paradoxically,' is telling: a paradox is some kind of 'contradiction' whose logic Reason cannot reject. (The full details of the article in question is: "Reading Scripture with a Scalpel," *Sino-Christian Studies: An International Journal of Bible, Theology & Philosophy* 13 [June 2012]). A book that explores the question of non-dogmatic belief (albeit from a perspective that differs somewhat from mine, a perspective that has less faith in universal reason) is Jeffrey W. Robbins' *In Search of a Non-Dogmatic Theology* (Aurora: The Davies Group, 2004).

[5] Refer to Mark Manolopoulos, "Reading Scripture with a Scalpel," *Sino-Christian Studies: An International Journal of Bible, Theology & Philosophy* 13 (June 2012) which offers instruction as to how the thinking believer should rationally discern the Scriptures – which, of course, applies to any religious texts.

[6] In an interesting sort of way, there is a parallel here in the way in which deconstruction delimits – or at least acts as a "lever" on – religion: for Jacques Derrida, deconstruction will say nothing about any private or secret experience of the divine (so Derridean deconstruction presumably remains open about such a possibility), but deconstruction has leverage once this experience is translated into public discourse. Refer to Jacques Derrida in Jacques Derrida, John D. Caputo, Kevin Hart, and Yvonne Sherwood, "Epoché and Faith: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood and Kevin Hart (New York: Routledge, 2005), 27-52, 37.

Abortion in Buddhism: An Evaluation of a Moderate Pro-Choice View

By Todd E. Johanson

Abstract

This article evaluates the moderate pro-choice Buddhist perspective of Michael G. Barnhart in light of the traditional ethical precepts of the Theravada tradition. Barnhart argues that the tradition is sufficiently vague on the issue of when life begins to allow for a modest accommodation of abortion legitimately within the tradition and beyond the cases of rape, incest, and threat to the mother's life. Barnhart claims that his middle way between pro-choice and pro-life extremes is both acceptable in Buddhism and also more compassionate toward women in crisis pregnancies and therefore is more karmically fruitful as well. Barnhart's perspective is critiqued in light of the traditional interpretation of the Theravada tradition and is found to be ultimately incompatible with it as well as actually having the opposite effect of Barnhart's contention by increasing suffering. The article concludes with an argument for adoption as the best way to uphold both extreme reverence for life and compassion for women in crisis pregnancies.

Abortion is a perennially visible and divisive issue in America, and also remains an important issue globally, as attested by the fierce wrangling in the United Nations and elsewhere over the perceived conflicts and the complexities of this issue and related ones in the areas of fundamental human rights, reproductive rights, population control and contraception, etc. As globalization continues, ethical issues like these bring different worldviews more and more into contact, with ethicists from different traditions bringing their varying perspectives to bear and highlighting the ever-increasing need for dialogue both within and among the various worldviews. Religious traditions must be able to effectively continue to speak to ethical issues in relevant ways that can offer guidance on issues like abortion that affect the lives of the global community. Dialogue both among and across varying religious traditions is a pertinent and necessary way to help us all reflect on and clarify our thinking and convictions on such a complex issue. It also helps us to learn how we can better communicate with and come to understand the numerous voices in the world market of ideas, as well as providing a venue for expressing our convictions and potentially influencing each other in seeking the common good of all.

In light of these considerations, I will evaluate the perspective of Michael G. Barnhart of the City University of New York, who represents a Buddhist, moderate[1] pro-choice stance. Barnhart is proposing a "middle way" between the "extreme" pro-life and pro-choice views typically found in America, which purports to take seriously the moral status of the unborn,

while still allowing for abortions beyond the typical pro-life allowances only for rape or a threat to the mother's life.

Barnhart's Argument for Pro-Choice Buddhism

> Barnhart's opening paragraph in his article captures the essence of his position:
>
> It is quite clear from a variety of sources that abortion has been severely disapproved of in the Buddhist tradition. It is also equally clear that abortion has been tolerated in Buddhist Japan and accommodated under exceptional circumstances by some modern Buddhists in the U.S...Superficially, the situation seems not unlike that of Roman Catholicism, where abortion, though disapproved of in the strongest terms by Church authorities drawing on the canonical tradition, is nonetheless practiced by a large number of devout Catholics and defended by at least a few, sometimes renegade, theologians and philosophers, as acceptable in some circumstances. Therefore, if it makes sense to speak of a possible Catholic defense of abortion, then it makes equally good sense to speak of a Buddhist defense of abortion.[2]

Barnhart also maintains that choosing to have an abortion can be done in a way that is consistent with Buddhist principles, and that Buddhism has a plurality of moral voices on this issue. He admits that Damien Keown is right in asserting that the large majority of the Buddhist tradition is "overwhelmingly antiabortionist," particularly in the ancient Theravadin scriptures. He notes that "Especially in the *Pitakas,* or in Buddhagosa's commentaries, it seems quite clear that the practice of abortion is considered unacceptable."[3] He identifies this as Keown's first line of argument. Keown's second line of argument has to do with his interpretation of these scriptures in light of basic Buddhist principles around the nature of personal identity, karma, rebirth, and the *skandhas*.[4] The *skandhas* are the five aggregates that make up the mind/body complex; they are the form/body, and the mental components or processes: consciousness, feelings, perceptions, and predispositions or karmic tendencies (Barnhart calls the last two thought and character). These collectively are what comprise the *gandhabba* (being-for-rebirth or rebirth consciousness) that transfers, arrives, or arises at conception, and thus the mind aspects or rebirth-consciousness joining the body formed by conception and forming the bridge between lives. There is disagreement in Buddhism as to whether the *gandhabba* is actually an intermediate-state-being or simply the instant transfer of the rebirth-linking consciousness from the instant of death to the instant of conception, but either way a permanent self, spirit, or soul migrating from life to life is denied unanimously.[5]

Barnhart states that in spite of the scriptural evidence, "when it comes to connecting the apparent condemnation of abortion with the deeper inspirations of Buddhism, the case is less compelling and perhaps affords a toehold in the Theravada tradition for a different evaluation of abortion." He continues:

> While respect for life is undeniable, the abortion issue usually hinges on whether the fetus is indeed a life in the relevant sense…though Buddhism values life, it does not value all life equally, and human life as a karmically advanced stage is particularly important. The fetus at any stage in its development is certainly in some measure living, but it is not obviously a recognizable human being at every stage. As a mere conceptus it lacks, of course, many of the attributes one might label distinctively human except its genotype. Therefore…one cannot say that a fertilized egg is a karmically advanced human being just because it is a fertilized egg. In other words, one needs a theory as to what constitutes a human being, a human life, and therefore a thing worthy of the greatest possible protection.[6]

He criticizes Keown for emphasizing consciousness as the most important of the groups, which constitutes or underlies the others as the foundation of a being; consciousness alone can be singled out to know that a living being is present, and is the basic moral criterion for respect as a living being. Keown prefers to translate *vinnana* as "spirit" instead of "consciousness," because he holds that this spirit is what functions at a deeper level and underlies all of the powers of a being. He claims that *vinnana* resembles certain Aristotelian aspects of the soul in Christianity, a spiritual principle that drives the rest of the being. This is what essentially defines someone as the individual that they are, like electricity in a computer. He also identifies *vinnana* as what carries a person's moral identity from one life to the next, equating *vinnana* with the *gandhabba* or intermediate being. This implies some sort of continuing or permanent identity that transmigrates through *samsara*, like an ego or self.

Barnhart believes that Keown's perspective resembles the concept of *atman* in Vedantic Hinduism more than any Buddhist concept of *vinnana*. Therefore, he finds all of this to be rather un-Buddhist-like. The Pali cannon and *skandha* theory emphasize all five groups equally, all being equally essential to a living being, with no continuing permanent self, ego, soul, spirit, or individual. The whole is simply the sum of the parts. "Buddhists…seem to feel that they can get along quite well without anything which might subtend the processes of existence, of *samsara*, and provide 'moral identity,' ontological continuity, or the spiritual DNA explaining anyone's present predicament. The question really comes down to whether *vinnana* or any other quality need endure to explain personality or transmigrate in order to explain rebirth and karma."[7] Of course, Barnhart answers no, it need not. Since the *vinnana* does not endure, it is not the *gandhabba*, and the *gandhabba* does not confer the singularity necessary to view it ontologically as an individual.[8]

If this is a fair representation of Keown's view, then Barnhart seems thoroughly "orthodox Buddhist" in his analysis. Then he relates his rejection of Keown's view of the *skandhas* and the *gandhabba* to his pro-choice view. He says:

> Given the distinction between the groups, I see no reason why a committed Buddhist can't hold that just because one has a body, form or *rupa*, one doesn't

> necessarily have a human life, especially one worthy of the strongest protection. A human life, in the moral sense, starts unambiguously when *all* the *skandhas* are in place, and the Buddha as well as the early Buddhist scriptures leave room for a rather large number of interpretations as to exactly when such a condition occurs in the process of embryonic development…Buddhism need not take *vinnana* to be present at any particular point in the process of embryonic development. That is, *vinnana* or consciousness is present whenever one would customarily say it is and that could be just as well at viability as at conception. In fact we would generally hold consciousness to be present only when, minimally, the cerebral cortex develops and perhaps later.[9]

Barnhart contends that Buddhism has no strong principle that would require the presence of either consciousness (*vinnana*) or an intermediate being (*gandhabba*) at any particular point in the biological process of human development. Buddhism also separates the biological basis for life from the individual life itself, so a zygote is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a new life being present, as all of the groups, including consciousness, must be present to complete the development of a new life. The presence of the mere "biological platform" and its growth and development does not necessarily imply a human being, and *vinnana* is not essential to the life of a biological organism. Hence abortion, while still having moral implications since it does compromise future life, is not in itself a violation of the First Precept. As long as consciousness is not deemed present, this is only the material basis for life, but not the individual life itself.

He agrees with Keown that consciousness is the key to having the status of an individual human being. Once there is a developed capacity for consciousness, then the presence of consciousness, as the "platform on which mind and body are conjoined," whenever it becomes present thereafter, signifies a "karmically significant stage" of an individual life that can then either fail morally and go through rebirth, or succeed and enter Nirvana. "Without your consciousness you do not exist."[10] He proposes that the only way to reasonably answer the question of when life begins is through analogizing about the relative similarity that other beings bear to us as living, conscious, morally significant individual human beings. He then asks whether a fetus is a morally significant being, and answers that it would depend on how much like us an individual fetus is. He asserts that a late-term fetus is sufficiently like us to be considered a karmically significant individual being, but a fetus just before viability would be much less so, and an embryo even much less so, to the point that we could reasonably conclude that an embryo is not an individual human being.[11] He concludes:

> In short, though Buddhism encourages compassionate action, the question as to what is compassionate in the case of an unwanted pregnancy cannot be peremptorily answered by metaphysical proclamations as to when life begins. Thus without leaving the province of a conservative Theravada Buddhism, a traditionalist Buddhism, one need not embrace the radical antiabortionism of

> Keown's Buddhist…because Buddhism allows a distinction between the biological basis for life and its higher cognitive as well as affective aspects and insists that an individual human life requires the conjunction of all such aspects, no Buddhist need equate a presentient fetus with a sentient human. Thus, Ochiai's insistence that in dealing with the messiness of everyday living, abortion may qualify as a compassionate response need not contradict Buddhist principles. Especially if we are dealing with the material platform of an individual being before the point of cerebral development sufficient for the developed capacity for consciousness, then the moral seriousness of its claim to life may well be outweighed by other considerations.[12]

Evaluation in Light of the Theravada Tradition[13]

Barnhart asserts that the Pali canon and the Theravada tradition are sufficiently vague on the issue of when life begins as to allow a "toe-hold" for a Buddhist pro-choice view from legitimately within the tradition. He contends that the tradition is not clear as to when all five of the *skandhas* or groups arise. But even a brief investigation of the issue seems to oppose Barnhart. For example, Peter Harvey claims explicitly that the *Vinaya* teaches that life begins at conception. As an example, he notes that monks are able to be ordained twenty years from when the first mind-moment has arisen while being an embryo, rather than at birth.[14] While it is true that this passage does not explicitly state that life begins at conception, nonetheless this conclusion is strongly implied. If the critical point is not conception, what sense can be made of the passage? If it is an indefinite time that could occur a few months later, or (as Barnhart would contend) anytime in the pregnancy, or not at any particular point or time in fetal development, how could this be used as a basis for specifically calculating when twenty years has passed from being an embryo, as opposed to at birth? The only logical conclusion points to conception. Harvey also quotes from the *Suttas*:

> In Buddhism's rebirth perspective, human life is not seen as something that gradually emerges as an embryo develops. Consciousness is not regarded as an emergent property of this process, but is itself seen as one of the conditions for it to occur, as expressed in a passage from the Theravadin collection of *Suttas*: 'Were consciousness, *Ananda*, not to fall into the mother's womb, would the sentient body be constituted there?' 'It would not, Lord.' 'Were consciousness, having fallen into the mother's womb, to turn aside from it, would the sentient body come to birth in this present state?' 'It would not, Lord.' (*Digha Nikaya,* II. 3-4). Thus the flux of consciousness from a previous being is a necessary condition for the arising and development in the womb of a body endowed with mental abilities which amount to sentience: feeling, identification, volition, sensory stimulation and attention. (*Samyutta Nikaya,* II. 3-4)[15]

Harvey also notes that the *Abhidhamma* calls this consciousness the "arising mind," which is described in the same way as the consciousness in the *Sutta* passage above, and is explicitly said to arise when the consciousness is transferred immediately from death to the new life, being accompanied by all the other *skandhas*, at that time. The *Sutta* seems to indicate that the body is constituted as a result of the consciousness from the previous life entering the womb. Hence, although not in Keown's sense, consciousness is in a way even prior to the other *skandhas*, and as Barnhart emphasizes, all five are needed for there to be a living being, yet only noting the presence of consciousness is enough to know that a living being is present, as it necessarily appears with the other *skandhas*. In other words, Barnhart thinks that a body (a biological human being) can be present without consciousness, yet acknowledges that the presence of consciousness (in the context of after conception) necessarily includes a body and the other *skandhas*, i.e. is an individual human being. This is precisely what these passages demonstrate. Harvey gives another example from the Theravadin Pali canon:

> If there is, here, a coitus of the parents, and it is the mother's season, and a *gandhabba* is present, it is from the conjunction of these three things that there is descent of the embryo [and not if only the first, or only the first and second, condition is met]. Then, monks, the mother for nine or ten months carries the embryo in her womb with great anxiety for her heavy burden. (*Majjhima Nikaya* 1.266)[16]

Harvey explains that "descent of the embryo" probably does not mean the embryo moving down the fallopian tube to implantation, but most likely simply refers to the *gandhabba* entering at the instant of the conjoining of egg and sperm.[17] Either way, the passage makes it clear that the presence of the *gandhabba* is necessary for the descent of the embryo, i.e. it does not happen without consciousness, as this is precisely what the *gandhabba* is, and therefore there cannot be an embryo without it. It takes all three: sperm, egg, and *gandhabba*. So, there is no conceptus without consciousness. This is further evidenced by the passage emphasizing that after this, *then,* the mother carries the embryo for nine or ten months. Obviously this is not happening at viability or after the development of the cerebral cortex; the passage clearly excludes this possible interpretation, as do the others. The exegesis in which Harvey engages, while seeming quite solid in its own right, is not merely his interpretation; it is the standard exegesis of the tradition.

Buddhagosa and Vasubandhu are two of the greatest Buddhist scripture scholars in history. Regarding the arising of the new life, they both held the same interpretation as Harvey (and many others). Buddhagosa interpreted the *gandhabba* as a being about to enter the womb, ready to exist in the new life, and driven by the force of karma. It seems that being driven by the force of karma is "karmically significant." The *gandhabba*, driven by the lingering craving and ignorance of the last moment of consciousness from the previous life, enters the womb. "It is known as the rebirth-linking consciousness. Not being carried over from the previous life, this rebirth-linking consciousness newly arises at the precise moment of conception."[18] Buddhagosa, unlike Vasubandhu, did not see the *gandhabba* as an intermediate-state being, but simply as the

instant transfer of the consciousness, with its arising at conception. Vasubandhu did see it as an intermediate-state being, and gave a description of it:

> Driven by karma, the intermediate-state being goes to the location where rebirth is to take place...There it sees its father and its mother-to-be, united in intercourse. Finding the scene hospitable, its passions are stirred...Stirred by these wrong thoughts, it attaches itself to the place where the sexual organs of the parents are united, imagining that it is there joined with the object of its passion...Thus do the *skandhas* arise in the womb.[19]

This is clearly a being that is conscious and karmically significant, driven by unwholesome thoughts into the new life. Vasubandhu explicitly links conception and the arising of all of the *skandhas*, as seen here and in another quote by R. E. Florida: "*Vijnana* [consciousness] is the *skandhas* [the physical and mental components of a being] at conception. The five *skandhas*, within the womb, at the moment of reincarnation or of birth-of-existence." From this quote of Vasubandhu, Florida concludes that "...what all this boils down to is that Buddhists have traditionally understood that the human being begins at the instant of conception when sperm, egg, and *vijnana* come together. As Taniguchi puts it, 'there is no qualitative difference between an unborn foetus and a born individual.' Therefore, the precept against taking life applies in the case of abortion."[20]

From this brief survey of relevant passages from all three major divisions of the Pali canon, it is clear that Buddhism does hold that life, in the karmically significant and like-us sense, including all five of the *skandhas* that give rise to a full human being, does in fact begin at conception, and that a fertilized egg necessarily includes the *gandhabba*-consciousness. Barnhart notes that it seems Buddhism can "get along quite well" in having a full, First-Precept-protectable, karmically significant human being without a permanent self, soul, or anything continuing on through each transmigration. It seems that Buddhism can also get along quite well with all five of the *skandhas*, including consciousness, arising at conception without viability or a developed cerebral cortex, or a demonstrated capacity for consciousness. In other words, there is no need for a soul or a cerebral cortex to have the five groups arise at conception, thus beginning the next life in the same fullness that exists after birth and that falls under the protection of the First Precept and the laws of Buddhist countries.

In his conclusion, Barnhart states that seeing the fetus' status as dubious, combined with the strong Buddhist value of compassion as applied to women in unwanted or crisis pregnancies, leaves room for a legitimate pro-choice stance. He admits that the fetus, even before the development of the cerebral cortex, is a living being. So, Barnhart frames the issue as a conflict of interests between beings of different moral status, with the mother, as a full human being, outweighing the fetus' interests in the name of compassion for the woman. But even if we grant Barnhart's premise that a fetus can legitimately be seen as less than a full human being from a Buddhist perspective, it is admittedly still a living being. So, can it be killed in the name of compassion based on Buddhist principles? The answer is still no, it cannot be.

In addressing this issue, Harvey uses an analogy in which he places the value of the life of the fetus as less than an adult, or even a baby, but more than any animal, even a more valuable one like a chimpanzee. He concludes from this that the fetus could be killed if there were a serious threat to the mother's life, and possibly for rape or certain very few, very extreme other circumstances, but that is all, as even animals cannot be killed for most human interests beyond protecting against an immediate threat to life.[21]

So even in Barnhart's view, as a living, biologically human being, the fetus would seem to have at least the moral or life-respect value of a more valuable animal, and probably a little more. One must keep in mind the extreme reverence for life in Buddhism, and not underestimate it. The basic problem is that abortion is still the mother, either directly or through someone else, and whether with full knowledge, choosing to kill her own (at least nearly fully human) child to attempt to relieve her own suffering. (I say "her own" as a convenience to emphasize that its biological component is based on her, and it is located inside her, but on Buddhist principles, it is not hers, which only increases the child's life-reverence value. Also, her suffering is not hers, but all of ours, as is the child's when it is killed, which also increases its value). The point is that one cannot relieve suffering by intentionally taking innocent life, as this only causes more suffering. The suffering for the child increases as it is killed, the suffering for the mother and anyone else involved increases, and all of our suffering increases as a result of abortion.

Francis Beckwith also notes this, saying that "…the benefit of the doubt should be given to the unborn, because the magnitude of the evil one may be committing (i.e., killing an innocent person for the sake of relieving one's own suffering) is so great that it should be avoided at all costs."[22] Killing to attempt to relieve suffering in the name of compassion is contrary to Buddhist ethics; killing any being (at least when not for self-defense against threat to life), whether a person or not, is certainly unwholesome to say the least. It is important to keep in mind the primacy of intent in the degree of unwholesomeness; abortion is the intentional killing of a child, or at least a living being that is nearly fully human, which is causing great suffering and therefore much karmic unfruitfulness and further entrapment in *samsara* for all. Buddhism is ultimately about relieving suffering, so Barnhart's view goes against this foundational Buddhist principle.

Buddhist compassion and reverence for life, as enshrined in the Pali canon, the eight-fold path, the five precepts, and the core Buddhist values of non-greed, non-hate, and non-delusion, demand showing lovingkindness, compassion, care, and concern for all living beings. There is a way to do this, without abortion, that is truly consistent with Buddhist principles and a wholesome, skillful, karmically fruitful way of showing compassion for, between, and among the mother, the unborn child, and the rest of the community: adoption. Granted, this is idealistic, but it seems to be the only truly compassionate possibility in the case of an unwanted pregnancy. Harvey notes that contraception is acceptable in Buddhist ethics, and when combined with adoption and a compassionate, helping, supporting stance toward women in unwanted or crisis pregnancies, this is what should be strived for on Buddhist principles.[23] A

better way than Barnhart's for dealing with this issue in Buddhism is for others to compassionately help and support the mother through the pregnancy, without judgment or stigma, and for the mother to have compassion for her child and childless couples who are desperate for a child by giving her up for adoption. This could be seen as the ultimate act of generous giving, very skillful means indeed. When it comes to an unwanted pregnancy and the options it presents, a true middle way between killing and keeping one's child can be adoption.

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1 "Moderate" in this context means with some limitations, especially once consciousness arises following the development of the cerebral cortex. This is as opposed to an absolute pro-choice stance which supports legal abortion for any reason during the entire pregnancy, as currently enshrined in American law under the Supreme Court's rulings of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*.

2 Michael Barnhart, "Buddhism and the Morality of Abortion," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 5 (1998): 277. See also Damien Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics*.

3 Barnhart, 278.

4 Ibid.

5 James McDermott, "Abortion in the Pali Canon and Early Buddhist Thought," in *Buddhism and Abortion,* ed. Damien Keown (New York: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 1999), 173-75.

6 Barnhart, 279-80.

7 Ibid., 284.

8 Ibid., 285-86.

9 Ibid., 286-87.

10 Ibid., 287-91.

11 Ibid., 291.

12 Ibid., 292-93.

13 I am choosing to focus on the Theravada Pali canon specifically because that is the canon that Barnhart uses to justify his position, and even in the Mahayana tradition it is widely regarded as sacred scripture.

14 Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 311-12.

15 Ibid., 311.

16 Ibid., 312.

17 Ibid., 312.

18 McDermott, 173-74.

19 Ibid., 175.

20 R. E. Florida, "Buddhist Approaches to Abortion," *Asian Philosophy* vol. 1, no. 1 (1991): 41.

21 Harvey, 317-26.

22 Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 150.

23 Harvey, 351-52.

Gender, Energy Healing and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints: An Exploratory Pilot Study

By Sophia Lyn Nathenson

Introduction

From the early 19th century, Mormon women preformed various healing techniques both in and outside of the home (Newell 1987, Stapely & Wright 1993). Over time, as the modern orthodox biomedical model was emerging in America, and healing by faith, laying of hands, and anointing with oil became part of an institutionalized healing ritual reserved for the Priesthood that excluded women. This pilot study investigates whether Mormon women continue to engage in healing rituals outside of both the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints (LDS) institution and mainstream biomedicine. Emphasis is placed on their perceptions of healing, faith and acceptance. Findings from this research are placed in the broader context of Mormon health philosophy historically and current trends in the health behavior of Americans.

Research Questions and Significance

The research questions posed are:

1. *Do Mormon women seek out healing modalities and forums for exercising healing gifts despite exclusion from the healing practices connected with the modern LDS (Latter-Day-Saint) church?*
2. *What are their views on health and healing, and are they reflective of the historical health attitudes of Mormons?*
3. *How do they feel their practices affect their faith, and vice-versa?*
4. *How do they feel their church community as well as the greater LDS institution view their practices?*

These exploratory questions are significant on many fronts. Current scholars have acknowledged the benefits to the LDS church and communities of recognizing women's healing gifts (Lindsey 1992). Understanding the scope of the healing modalities currently employed by some Mormon women could provide avenues for other Mormon women who feel called to heal but lack a structure to do so, facilitating social and health care networks. In regard to the current state of health care in the U.S., this research broadens the awareness of alternative modalities of healing (outside the biomedical model) currently used by Americans.

Recent medical and social research has documented a marked increase in both public and professional interest in the relationship between religion and medicine. In fact, Eisenberg's study of alternative medicine use in America reported prayer as the most common healing modality used outside of conventional biomedicine (Eisenberg 1999). Improved understanding of how religious and alternative healing is practiced by the wider society may serve to alleviate tensions surrounding these practices within the LDS community, an issue addressed by several participants in this study.

Historical Background

During the time of Joseph Smith, founder of the LDS church, both Greek medicine and Native American medicine were practiced in America. Treatments included administering various types of substances that warmed, cooled, and purged the body. Native American medicine consisted mainly of various herbs allegedly discovered by British settlers that were used by natives to remedy ailments. Although these remedies were outside the scope of what was becoming the orthodox medical profession, America was at the time filled with self-taught 'doctors' who employed much of the wisdom of the natives in regard to health. Of these self-taught doctors, Samuel Thompson gave perhaps the most significant contribution to the organization of health care for laymen (Divett 1981). Thompson believed himself to be predestined to be a healer, and proceeded to patent his "system" of medicine which was based on "botanic" medicine, using herbs, food, as well as a healthy lifestyle, to cope with illness.

Members of the LDS church (colloquially referred to as "Mormons"), whose health decisions and philosophies were in part a reflection of Smith, preferred natural remedies as outlined by Thompson. Although the Mormons under Smith eventually adopted the mainstream ways of overseas-trained doctors, healing by faith and herbs and mild food, as stated in the *New Testament*, was still a primary modality in treating illness. Joseph Smith himself was involved in the trade of Ginseng, a potent herb from China believed to cure nearly all ailments. Smith steadfastly challenged norms surrounding supernatural religion and folk healing (Fleming 2008).

As heroic medicine faded from the American mainstream, Mormons followed suit, and Joseph Smith even made public announcements against it (*Wayne Sentinel* 1824). While Joseph Smith revealed the role of evil spirits in causing illness, many Mormons of the 1830s sided with the socially normative opinion of bodily stimulation causing disease. At this time, it can be assumed that the first line of defense against disease for the LDS community was having faith in God to heal you and having the intention of wellness. The LDS community were informed on what herbs and food to consume, as well as what to avoid (toxins such as tobacco, tea, and alcohol) in order to keep healthy, as advised by Joseph Smith from his revelations from God. Personal responsibility and individual effort are among the themes present in early LDS healthcare. However, the successes and failures were not credited to individuals. Individuals may tap into the healing power of Jesus Christ through faith, but if illness persists it is chalked up to lack of faith, and death too was seen simply as God's will. While employing some of the

practices from modern medicine such as certain surgical operations, Mormons were open to both men and women having spiritual gifts of healing from God by the light of Jesus Christ, understanding their personal potential and responsibility to remain in good health. It was not until 1977 that the church's attitude toward health had markedly changed, as evidenced by an editorial in which Mormons were advised not to "test" their abilities to heal themselves and others, and that their faith should not replace professional health care (Bush 1993:103).

Historical Precedent of Women Healers

In the early days of the LDS church, women too participated in healing blessings both in and outside the home. Women healers were also endorsed by Joseph Smith, who felt that "there could be no devil in it, if God gave His sanction by healing; [and] that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick then in wetting the face with water." He followed in recommending, "if the sisters should have faith to heal, let all hold their tongues, and let everything roll on" (Moroni 10:17). At first women did not participate in the ritualized practice of anointing with oil reserved for the priesthood; later on, women joined in these rituals. Some wives were even "set apart" to perform as healers doing washings and anointing. In 1880, the First Presidency stated "it is the privilege of all faithful women and lay members of the church, who believe in Christ, to administer to all the sick or afflicted in their respective families, either by the laying on of hands, or by the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord" (Newell 1981). Women who practiced as healers did not do so with the power of the priesthood, and were said to confirm their anointings rather than "seal" them, as was the case with priesthood members.

The Relief Society, the women's branch of the LDS church, served as a major forum for women exercising spiritual gifts to heal (Lindsey 1992). Women in the Relief Society often performed blessings on each other, and were ordained to do so. One such ordained woman reported, "I was…ordained and set apart under the hand of Joseph Smith the Prophet to administer to the sick and comfort the sorrowful. Several other sisters were also ordained and set apart to administer in these holy ordinances" (Newell 1981). Like Joseph Smith, his successor Brigham Young also supported women as healers and later Apostle Franklin D. Richards too acknowledged women's "right" to administer to the ill, and advised they do so (Lindsey 1992). It is clear that in the beginning, the healing power of Jesus Christ was thought to be legitimately accessed both in the church by priest and elders, but also by individuals, including women, who wished to heal the sick with faith and intention. Over time, the church soon took the stance that women should be wary of participating in healing rituals that should be reserved for the priesthood, but this change was gradual. At the turn of the century, a Mormon editorial proclaimed, "an ordinary anointing of the head, according to the established ordinances of the Church…should be done by one holding the Priesthood, not by a sister when an Elder is present…[which would] be clearly out of order" (Bush 1993: 86).

In the decades to follow, while women had the opportunity to accompany their husbands to lay hands on the ill and under certain conditions to wash and anoint other women, Elders or priesthood members preformed healings. (Newell 1981). There is no official provision made by

the LDS church that grants women the right to participate in any administrations for the sick, and despite this public limitation of healing rights, women likely continued to privately treat their families. The reorganization included rationalization of church theory that included the institutionalization of healing rituals. This is significant when studying how Mormon women healers today perceive their acceptance by the church, as well as how they feel their faith is affected by their practices (and vice-versa). The historical evolution of church policy and attitude toward healing also provides a useful reference when studying women healers today. There is a clear historical precedence for women in the LDS church having the gift and desire to heal others. Where the priesthood is now the main avenue for exercising spiritual gifts, it is hypothesized that women today might seek out other forums for this, realizing their spiritual call while not engaging in a practice reserved for Priesthood holders.

Themes of personal responsibility, natural remedies, and the desire to appear within the bounds of the mainstream, are present in reviewing the historical evolution of Mormon health attitudes and their stance toward orthodox biomedicine. In light of this, it should be noted that alternative medicine as well as religious healing lies within a broader context in the United States today. Within present day America, the link between religion and healing in medicine is increasingly studied; bringing together two fields that were historically one and the same (Sloan, Bagiella & Powell 1999). The growing popularity of both alternative medicine and spirituality in America will be discussed further in relation to the women's perceived acceptance of their practices by the church community. Based on this historical and present social context, it is postulated that Mormon women may be open to alternative healing modalities and forms of healing that are outside the realm of biomedicine. However, it is hypothesized that the practice of such modalities might be kept private in line with LDS conformism, and may not necessarily reflect rejection of biomedicine or Priesthood authority.

Method

This pilot study draws on research and literature related to LDS health philosophy historically as well as in-depth interviews with five Mormon women who currently use alternative healing modalities. A convenience sample was drawn from various contacts made by the author of healers that were also practicing Mormons. Participants could employ any healing modality outside the scope of biomedicine related to intuition and energy work. Therapies that are considered "energy healing" are both practically and philosophically similar to faith healing, the laying on of hands, and anointing. To participate in the study, the women also had to be active members of the LDS church.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used (see questions in Appendix A). Participants responded to forty open-ended questions. Demographic information was obtained, including their race, marital status, sex, age, and whether they were born LDS or had converted. Information was gathered about the types of healing modalities they used, what motivated to heal, and whom they practice on. Participants were asked how they see their role in healing, how they see it affecting (or being affected by) their faith, and how they define healing and curing.

They discussed the perceived efficacy and acceptance of their practices as well as their opinions on conventional biomedicine. Interviews lasted two hours on average and were all conducted by the author between the dates of October 30th and November 20th of 2008. Interviewees were briefed on the purpose and nature of the project (see Appendix B). All names and identifying information were kept confidential. Data was handwritten, then transcribed and analyzed by way of identifying common attitudes and key words, synthesizing participants' thoughts on each main subtopic: practices, motivation, faith, perceived acceptance, and attitude toward biomedicine. This process of data-reduction and comparison of interviews yielded common themes and conclusions are drawn from the analysis of these themes.

It should be noted that it is problematic at best to use such a small group to provide insight on the Mormon women energy healer community. This study should be considered a pilot study to provide initial insights on these understudied issues. The attitude presented of the LDS church, its priesthood, and ward members toward health and healing is solely the perception of the women who participated in the project.

Findings

Results of this pilot study are organized according to themes that emerged from the interview schedule as well as spontaneous comments from participants. Much consensus was found among interviewees' perceptions of the healing process, roots of illness, and efficacy of care. In addition the women expressed similar ideas on the acceptance of their practices and how they meshed with their faith. Finally, although none used the historical precedent of Mormon women healers to justify their behavior, insights emerged in regard to the priesthood, gender, and healing.

Participant Characteristics

The entire group of women energy healers in this study describe themselves as "very active" in the church, using the term "devout" to describe their practice of the Mormon faith. The types of alternative healing modalities the women used all fall under the categories of energy work and intuitive healing. Energy work is defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine as:

> Therapies involving putative energy fields are based on the concept that human beings are infused with a subtle form of energy. Vital energy is believed to flow throughout the material human body, but it has not been unequivocally measured by means of conventional instrumentation. Therapists claim that they can work with this subtle energy, see it with their own eyes, and use it to effect changes in the physical body and influence health.

The women interviewed employ Reiki, touch for health, chakra balancing, prayer, EFT, polarity therapy, and essential oils. EFT stands for emotional freedom technique, which is based on the

idea that tapping on an individual's energy field, which is sensitive to emotional disturbances, will restore balance to the afflicted person. Polarity therapy similarly manipulates the energies in the body to get rid of blocks that can cause psychological stress and disease. The women were mostly white, born LDS, and aged 31 to 53 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Age	Race	Occupation	Marital Status	Born LDS	Healing Technique
37	El Salvadorian	Biologist	Single	Yes	Chakra balancing
52	Caucasian	Homemaker	Married	Yes	Touch for health, Chakra balancing, prayer, essential oils, EFT
39	Caucasian	Counselor	Single	Yes	Massage, polarity therapy
53	Caucasian	Entrepreneur	Married	No	Reiki, EFT, essential oils
31	Caucasian	Social Worker	Single	Yes	Chakra balancing, aura smoothing

The Healing Process and Roots of Illness

Using their intuition to heal, the women collectively see themselves less as "healers" and more as "guides," someone who uses her intuition and spiritual guidance to help the patient become more aware, someone who can inform the patient of certain parts of his or her spiritual, emotional, or physical self that need attention. Also mentioned as part of their role was being a conduit for Jesus Christ's healing power, and giving "good energy" to the afflicted.

> In reality, I'm just kind of a guide. We can all heal ourselves; we just sometimes don't have the tools. So I just show them the tools. (*Entrepreneur, Age 53*)

In this way, healing comes about through a process that is largely dependent on the patient rather than the healer:

> When I balance the charkas its in a physical way, like I'm *doing* something. It's a very temporary thing, but then I get them to start a conversation that's more honest and real. If they aren't ready to be honest and process their emotions, their symptoms will come back. (*Biologist, 37*)

Just as the healing process is more about the patient's willingness to be healed, the techniques utilized serve to cultivate their own ability to release limiting thoughts and emotional blocks. The healer's role can be described as a guide and facilitator. Overall it is clear that the healing modalities mentioned by the women interviewed have non-specific, often emotional and spiritual goals, where the objective is not necessarily simply ending physical pain and suffering. This makes sense considering every woman interviewed pointed to emotions as the root of illness (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Health Philosophy

Cause of Illness	Mechanisms of Healing
-negative beliefs or thoughts	-releasing emotional blocks, negative thought patterns
-emotional trauma	-balancing the energies of the body
-poor relationships	-cultivating acceptance, forgiveness
-perfectionism	-being honest with one's self
-spiritual crisis	-embracing one's spirituality and potential

Etiology of disease is seen as based not only in the physical realm, but the emotional and spiritual. The following quotes exemplify this philosophy:

> There is always an emotional base. Whether it manifests into physical pain or not, there's always emotions behind it.
>
> (*Entrepreneur, Age 53*)

> If my relationships are suffering, my stomach hurts. That can eventually develop into something like cancer.
>
> (*Social Worker, Age 31*)

> People that do it [energy work] on people see the same types of emotional issues connected with the same parts of the body. (*Biologist, Age 37*)

> I've noticed patterns…upper body pain can signify a burden, chest pain shows feeling unsupported and lower back pain means money and relationship issues. I noticed that my mom has chronic shoulder pain and has a very perfectionist personality. I've noticed similar patterns with other people.
>
> (*Counselor and Massage Therapist, Age 39*)

These perspectives did not derive entirely from the women's experiences with other people. In fact, all of the women were entirely or in large part motivated to become healers by way of personal experience with physical and/or emotional health issues.

> I went into a really heavy depression. During a priesthood blessing I was told I would go through a trial, which I did. Then I started having people do energy work on me. It's my belief that we all have a great capacity to heal ourselves and

> help guide others to heal themselves. I don't feel like I'm a "healer" per say. I see it as something everyone can have.
>
> (*Biologist, Age 37*)

The emotional trauma the women mention also speaks of a larger issue present in literature on Mormon women, both historically and presently. More than half a century ago Noall (1944) wrote of the blame of children's sickness that was placed on the Mormon mother. A recent qualitative interview of Mormon women mentions an interviewee speaking of "Mormon Women Syndrome," citing the religion as a source of social pressure (Beaman 2001). As such, the healing goals of the women are often psychological and involve becoming aware of and working through emotional disturbances and imbalances, whether due to a specific trauma or the strains of daily life. All women agreed that conceptions of *healing* are distinct from *curing*. Three women mentioned becoming "whole" as a goal of healing, and two brought up the idea that biomedicine only addresses the physical. Where curing can mean the absence of a formerly present disease, healing is on more of a fluid continuum where wellness is the goal. As opposed to curing, healing:

> …is more holistic. Not only are you getting rid of their pain, but the emotional source of it. They will either be healed to health or into transition. (*Entrepreneur, Age 53*)
>
> …is a process, and everything is connected. You never stop healing.
>
> (*Social Worker, Age 31*)
>
> …is becoming whole. Embracing your spirituality, your potential, peace, happiness.
>
> (*Biologist, Age 37*)

The role of spirituality in healing is a topic that in recent decades has proliferated clinical and social scientific research literature (Levin 2003). The concept that spirituality impacts one's health has permeated mainstream America to some extent (Benor 2001), but questions and debates persist as to the efficacy of spiritual interventions in the healing process (Dossey 1993). Despite long standing conflict among psychological, medical and religious ideologies with respect to illness, a wealth of literature has emerged which demonstrates salutary effects of religion and spirituality on health and healing (Koenig 2001). It is conceivable that reliance on spiritual means of healing may be more pronounced with ailments that reveal the limits of biomedicine (for example, chronic pain or emotional issues). The women are part of a larger phenomenon in which parents' religious ideas suggest there are limitations in biomedicine in addressing the whole person (Barnes et al. 2000).

View of Biomedicine

How do these conceptions of illness and healing fit with traditional LDS and biomedical philosophy on health? All of the women interviewed agreed that their first step when confronted with illness would be to use their own or other alternative healing modalities and diets before ever consulting a medical doctor. Most have not been to a medical doctor in some time, which they attribute to their healthy lifestyle and use of alternative medicine. Of the women who said they did consult a medical doctor, all reported they did so only for an annual check up or for surgery. Two women said they would not share their use of alternative medicine with their medical doctor, while the other three said they would not only share, but that they believed their doctor would be supportive. Four of five women were confident that their healing modalities would only compliment any treatment they would receive from a general practitioner.

> I don't go to the doctor very often. The last time I went was over seven years ago. The alternative things I've used have helped me keep my body healthy.
>
> (*Biologist, Age 37*)

> I haven't been for years and years. The only reason I would go would be for surgery. There's no other reason to go for me, and I think that in itself is very empowering.
>
> (*Counselor & Massage Therapist, 39*)

> I go for an annual check up, but I would try other things first. Whatever the doctors would do, it will make that work better. (*Entrepreneur, Age 53)*

The women's faith in food and natural remedies are reminiscent of the Mormon health philosophy historically and are rooted in the scriptures which say to use herbs and food to protect against disease. Their attitudes toward biomedicine are mostly critical, and many voiced hesitancy and frustration with biomedical care, particularly pharmaceuticals.

> People are spending billions of dollars on alternative medicine, and now doctors are having to go to these conferences about it. Even in pharmacy we had to take an herbal supplements class. Medical doctors are closed-minded and they think they are experts. Scientists and biologists are more open-minded because they have to be. We have to be open to new ideas because things surprise you all the time.
>
> (*Biologist, Age 37*)

It is evident that although Mormons as a subculture have accepted modern medicine, there is still much importance given to diet and natural, health-promoting behaviors, as well as faith in God and willingness to take personal responsibility for health. The concern over medicine ignoring the emotional, spiritual, and religious contexts of healing is one shared by the larger public and professional sectors of American society (Marks 2004). The avoidance of some of the women to seek medical care is empowering to the women themselves but may also be a way of avoiding tensions that often arise between medical doctors and certain religious groups and faith healers (Barnes, et al. 2000).

Faith and Acceptance

The therapies these women are discussing lie outside conventional medicine in America and all attempt to manipulate the energies of the body through the power of intention and the healing universal energy that is often attributed to the light of Christ. Despite their separateness from conventional medicine, alternative modalities are commonly used in America. Recent studies show that about four in ten people in America use alternative medicine, and the number rises to over six in ten if prayer is included (Eisenberg 1998). Most of the study participants refrain from talking about the therapies or using them on people who would react negatively. Most reported that it just felt natural, and although they are hesitant to take credit as being a born healer, some feel they are carrying out their spiritual gift to heal. This coincides with the LDS cultural movement away from specifically setting apart women as healers even as women continued to demonstrate their healing gifts, thought to be given by Jesus Christ. Overall, the women cited the "culture" of the church as part of the secrecy, as opposed to the theological principles of their religion. The perceived acceptance of the women's healing practices vary according to whom they share it with, and although all of the women are open about it to their close Mormon friends, they are hesitant to bring it up with those who might not understand (see Table 2).

> [The church] wouldn't be accepting. My family is really supportive, but I wouldn't go to my church community. I have an aunt that knows and she has started sending me articles that say I am going to hell.
> (*Counselor & Massage Therapist, Age 39*)

Table 2. Disclosure of Practices

Church community				X	
LDS relatives	X	X		X	
LDS friends	X	X	X	X	X
Non-LDS peers	X	X	X	X	X
Church leaders					
Medical doctor	X	X			

The majority does not think it would be accepted or understood by the greater LDS institution, but none of the women seem interested in gaining that approval or justifying their practices; the consensus is that it meshes quite well with their faith and that there should be no reason to explain or justify it. Although there was considerable hesitation to be open with energy healing to the larger LDS community and church leaders, the women unanimously felt their practices served to strengthen rather than conflict with their faith. Their experiences with energy work allow them to better understand religious texts and the nature of Jesus Christ. The women feel their healing practices make them more connected to God and the spirit world, and most backed up their opinions with messages from the scriptures.

> It helps [my faith], and makes me really aware of the spiritual world, because that's what energy is to me, it's spirit. There's a common Mormon saying, 'we are spiritual beings having a human experience'.
>
> (*Social Worker, Age 31*)

> There is a scripture that says everything has a story. To me intuition is being able to listen to that story. Since everything was made from God, it is all infinite wisdom. I feel I'm tapping into that.
>
> (*Biologist, Age 37*)

These women healers believe that even if their practices were misunderstood or rejected by their church community or institution, their practices nevertheless both support and strengthen their Mormon faith. The women agreed that the LDS church has no official stance against their practices and that closed mindedness about alternative healing modalities stems from fear and misunderstanding.

> They ask you if you affiliate with it. I think they would think I'm making a mockery of the priesthood. I would never force it on anyone. We're just going outside the cultural norm—usually you go to a male with the priesthood to get a healing. It's cultural, and it's very patriarchal.
>
> (*Counselor & Massage Therapist, Age 39*)

Although the women did not specifically point to the historical precedence of Mormon women healers as means of justifying their practices, all but one knew of the presence of women healers as the church got its beginnings in the 1800s, and one woman has even written a book on the subject. When asked to speculate about why the "right" to heal by way of the church had been eventually revoked from Mormon women, all of the women held the LDS "culture" responsible for the change.

> It seems like after they [the Mormons] got to Utah they had to conform to societal standards. They just took on the culture of the '50s era and kept it. In the last fifty or sixty years it has gotten so rigid about everything. It's just the culture. Early on

> it was more accepted. I think the church would benefit now from acknowledging women healers but I don't see it happening for a while. They're so intent on keeping people in a box…I can't believe that something that feels this good is *wrong*.
>
> (*Counselor & Massage Therapist, Age 39*)

Although the women assume they would face opposition from the church if they were more public about their healing practices, it is apparent that they feel comfortable with how their healing fits with their Mormon faith. The attitudes of the women in this study seem to reflect Ozorak's idea of "cognitive restructuring," in which Mormon women reinterpret their environment (in which some members disapprove of energy work) in a way in which they can "maintain self-esteem without abandoning their religious beliefs" (Beaman, 2001). While the women feel some members of the church or priesthood may not approve of their practices, including many of their family members, the women make a point to explain the encouragement they get from their interpretation of scriptures and how it relates to energy healing.

Gender, the Priesthood and Energy Healing

All of the women interviewed agreed with the statement that women have a different healing style than men (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Gender and Healing

	Men	**Women**
Healing style	Ritualistic	Intuitive
Principles used	Concrete	Fluid/emotional
Energy exchange	Directive/focused	Natural/automatic
Healing technique	Institutionalized	Dynamic

The women explained these gender differences and how their practices differ from healings done by the priesthood, making the point that they did not compete with, threaten, or desire the priesthood. The general consensus is that women are naturally healing and do so intuitively, whereas men structure healing around a more well defined or institutionalized ritual. The women agreed that their healing practices were inherently different than the healing rituals practiced by the priesthood. For these women, it is not important to justify or prove anything to anyone, or to compare their practices with those of the priesthood. For them, healing is a spiritual and intuitive practice, and it makes them feel good.

Feelings of empowerment and spiritual sensitivity mark the experiences of these women when relating their practices with those of the priesthood. In recent decades, the church has become more rigid in its definition of the priesthood, and the hierarchy has done much to prevent support for more roles for women. Beaman (2001) notes that women protect their beliefs by separating the church leadership and priesthood from the teachings of Mormonism. She also notes that the LDS culture can serve women with a sense of security. These themes come out in the way the women make such a distinction between their practices and what the priesthood's healing rituals entail, as well as how some noted that differing men's roles *allowed* them to practice their own ways of healing.

Shirts (1991) discusses gender and the priesthood, noting that women's roles are now described as "auxiliary" when in reality women are doing many things the priesthood does, including exercising gifts of the spirit such as healing. The shift from delivering the "keys to this society and the church" directly to women to having women receive them via their marriage to their husbands started the process that ended women's visible exercise of those gifts. While Shirts and others have suggested that women need "outer form" to realize those gifts (Shirts 1991), it seems as though some Mormon women seek out that form in the way of alternative healing modalities without expressing any interest in holding the priesthood.

Study participants disclosed that they were not asking for approval, attempting justification, nor seeking to be set apart or given the priesthood. For these women, doing energy work is separate and unthreatening to the priesthood and LDS culture. They are not interested in persuading people of this: their interest lies in their faith, knowledge, empowerment, and ability to heal themselves and others, bringing greater depth and meaning to their lives and their faith.

Discussion

This study was limited by time and the number of participants, but nevertheless contributes to the relatively small body of research on Mormon women healers. Generalizations cannot be made about all Mormon women healers, and this study makes claims only for the women interviewed. Still, common themes present in the interviews conducted provide interesting insights into the practices and attitudes of Mormon women using alternative healing modalities. It is clear that, although barred from the institutionalized healing rituals of the LDS church, Mormon women still actively work as healers by means of energy healing and using their intuition. The women who participated in this study acknowledged the fact that their practices may be feared, misunderstood, or rejected by their community church and the greater LDS institution, but they firmly believe in the compatibility of their healing modalities and their religion.

It can be gathered from this research that alternative healing modalities are not seen by its LDS practitioners as contrary to the LDS religion, and that some women feel their faith is strengthened by their use of alternative healing. The health philosophies present in the Mormon community historically resonate today as well, as all of the women interviewed sought out

natural remedies and foods before ever turning to orthodox biomedicine. The general consensus regarding the evolving LDS policy on women healers in the church was that the church would benefit from acknowledging women healers, but that is not the prerogative of these Mormon women healers. Themes of personal responsibility, empowerment, balance, and faith can describe these Mormon women healers of today, who acknowledge the role of biomedicine but feel confident that alternative healing is a healthier route toward preventing illness.

This is an exciting area of research, and future studies should further explore how Mormon women incorporate alternative healing modalities into their own lives and communities. A larger, more diverse sample of participants chosen by a more random sampling strategy would help better to determine the homogeneity of the attitudes and practices of the group of interest. It is not possible to extrapolate the views of this select group of women to all Mormon women who use energy healing. At the same time, these women are clearly not alone in their views of their religion, their healing practices, and health care in American society.

Religion and alternative healing are an important component of the health care of these women, as it is for many Americans. According to a recent poll, nearly three quarters of Americans believe that praying for someone will help cure them, and even more believe God can intervene and cure someone or themselves (Barnes et al. 2000). Despite the differences in the health philosophies of these particular Mormon women from mainstream biomedicine, there is emerging evidence of a reconnection between spirituality and medicine. Over 30 medical schools have added classes on spirituality and medicine (Ruggie 2004). Studies show spiritual beliefs and practices, which fall under the umbrella of complementary and alternative medicine, improves recovery from operations and enhances immune functioning (Koenig et al. 1997).

In terms of Mormon culture and church hierarchy, there is evidence of reorganization as an attempt to further rationalize and correlate LDS practice and religious theory (Shirts 1991) which gives insight into the church's institutionalization of healing rituals and perceived skepticism of alternative healing modalities. Additional research is needed on all fronts of the complicated religion-culture-health dynamic. Although the women reported feeling uneasy about sharing their practices and health views with some, there is evidence to suggest that they are on the cutting edge of where health and healing in America is going.

It is evident that the women included in this study perceive a blessing in their ability to engage in healing rituals, and that the institutionalization of healing by the church is not necessarily a hindrance to exercising healing gifts. They appear comfortable with their work as healers, whether or not it is accepted by the church. They are aware and respectful of church policies and are grounded in the synthesis of their religion and healing practices. Above all, the Mormon women healers of today are grateful they are able to be useful to others through alternative healing modalities that have enriched their lives and their faith.

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perceptions. Currently she is developing a program in medical sociology geared toward students entering the health professions. She received a Ph.D. and M.S. in sociology from the University of Utah and a B.S. in psychology from the University of Tulsa. In addition to teaching and research, Sophia works to connect academics, research and practice in health care in a way that reflects America's unique social, cultural and epidemiological profile.

Interreligious Exchange in Elementary Education: Expanding Horizons at the Islamic Academy of New England

By Celene Ayat Lizzio

Like many Islamic schools across North America, the Islamic Academy of New England in Sharon, Massachusetts strives to integrate Islamic learning throughout its curriculum. Founded in 1996, the school currently serves students in Greater Boston and Northern Rhode Island. Yet, the school is also a place where learning occurs spontaneously across religious divides.

Raised Catholic, Kathleen Kelley recently obtained her master's degree in education and now teaches first grade at the Academy. In our conversation below, she shares her insights on teachable moments, on Islamic schools looking to diversify their staff and students' exposure, and on her own growing familiarity of the cultures and faith of her students and their families.

[CAL] Kathleeen, how did you initially sense that the Academy would be a good fit for you, and what suggestions would you have for religious schools looking to add diversity to their staff?

[Kathleen Kelley] My advice for schools is to express their openness and acceptance of people of other religions and a willingness to have open conversations about religion with them and within the school culture. When I interviewed at the Academy for a teaching position, it had been explained to me that I was free to inform the children of my religious background and that other non-Muslims have previously worked there. I took the position knowing that I did not have to hide my own background. The school administration and board also openly expressed their acceptance of people with different religious affiliations and appreciated my willingness to have an open conversation about religion.

[CAL] Have you been able to have open, interreligious conversations thus far?

[KK] Indeed. Once, during a field trip we took to an apple orchard, a student of mine learned that I eat pork. This was perhaps one of the first moments that this child had engaged in a conversation about people who are not Muslim and who do not have the same beliefs. It seemed difficult for him to understand, so I asked our school's religion teacher for guidance. It was important to me that this child have a serious conversation about what he was feeling and perhaps have his questions answered.

During my class's religion period, she emphasized that there are many good people of all different faiths. She said that one should judge people on their actions, not solely on their faiths. She also spoke to the student one-on-one, relieving any uncertainties and discomfort he may

still have had.

[CAL] Indeed, learning to care for one another across the boundaries of human difference can be a profound lesson in a young person's development. What else has been challenging or stimulating for you about teaching in a Muslim school? What are you learning about Muslims?

[KK] While I am still trying to understand different things about the Muslim faith, I do find much of the culture and beliefs to be beautiful and inspirational.

Praying is such an important part of daily life at the school, which has led me to learn much about it. I love that praying is both a unified and individual event, and that both the words and the movements hold such powerful meaning. I have come to love the sound and script of the Arabic language, and have even started taking informal Arabic lessons with one of the teachers. Oftentimes I will be in the classroom while the students are having religion class, which has taught me many things. I now understand one of the reasons of fasting, which is one of the most important practices in the Muslim faith. While fasting, you are challenging your body and mind to stay faithful. If you are able to fast, then you can handle other difficult situations that life deals you. Of course, I do not have a full understanding of the religion and all its practices, but I am learning.

While I do not fully understand some of the beliefs and practices of others, there is much more that I respect and agree with. It is important to keep in mind the culture and history that people came from, and without being open to conversation and friendship with people from different backgrounds, you can never truly understand the connections and similarities that people across the world share.

I have traveled to many different countries across Europe and have become close to my colleagues at the Islamic Academy of New England, who come from diverse countries, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Singapore, to name a few, as well as the some who were born in the United States. Differences will always exist between people, but finding the connections and sharing joy with others different from you is where acceptance begins.

[CAL] I understand that the Academy has a mandatory headscarf policy for teachers, how have you adapted?

[KK] I do not mind wearing the headscarf while I teach. It's actually rather cozy! However, I do think it is important that children be exposed and learn to accept people of all religions and backgrounds. But I understand that many of the parents want their child's teacher to set a particular example for them.

[CAL] Indeed, these are profound negotiations. You have a very even-handed and open approach that allows you to be true to your own identity while in relationship with others from a different faith and culture; what has been a formative influence on this orientation?

[KK] For one, my father, [Joseph Kelley Ph.D. and D.Min., Dean of Experiential Learning, and Director of the Center for Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations at Merrimack College in North Andover] has been a great source of support and information for me. While I now feel comfortable asking my peers about their religious beliefs, when I first began working at the school, I was able to ask him about the culture, history, and beliefs of the Muslim religion. Initially, he was the connection I had with the Muslim faith.

I can probably speak for many people my age coming from a similar background when I say that my exposure to the Muslim religion was minimal, and it was largely drawn from media sources. Now that I have had the pleasure of meeting and learning from people of the Muslim faith, my understanding of the religion is more enriched and comes from a place of real human connection.

[CAL] Kathleen, thank you for sharing, and may you have a rewarding teaching career, may you continue to make cross-cultural connections, and may your students learn from your openness and example.

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Bioethics and Law of Karma

By Subhash C. Jain

Studies of problems in the field of bioethics show a variety of interpretations and solutions that are based on different ethical theories. As these theories are not universal, i.e. they are not valid everywhere and all the time under all circumstances, human actions considered ethical by one theory are deemed unethical by the other theories. The purpose of this article is to resolve some of the bioethical issues using the universal karma theory.

The law of karma is the cardinal principle of Jainism. According to the law of karma, only humans have the capability to manage their karmic loads that are governed by the universal karma theory. This unique, inherent capability of humans implies that only humans are capable of transforming their behaviors. With this capability comes the duty of using this human birth (*manusyagati*) for the minimization of their karmic loads, as it leads to propitious conditions for all living and nonliving entities. The purpose of human life, according to Jainism, is the minimization and eventual annihilation of an individual's karmic load. The soul remains imperfect as long as it carries the karmic load and becomes perfect only after shedding the entire karmic load.

All human actions performed by impure souls are imperfect; all of them attach karma to the soul and increase the karmic load, some more and some less. However, the human action that increases less karmic load is less imperfect than the human action that increases more karmic load; a less imperfect action (*punya*) is better than the more imperfect action (*pāpa*). Using the concept of the karmic load, the following universal criterion for selecting one's conducts is proposed. Among the various potential actions one should perform the action that attaches the least karmic load.

Before proceeding further, a brief description of the karma doctrine is essential to understand the universal, karma-governed ethics in contrast to the non-universal, human-governed ethics with which we have some familiarity.

Karma Doctrine

Some of the salient features of the karma doctrine are as follows:

- For the law of karma to be meaningful, it should be valid everywhere and all the time. If not, a person can make the law meaningless by performing bad actions at the place where, and time when, it is not applicable. The karma doctrine is, therefore, a universal doctrine.
- The karma doctrine governs only those consequences of actions, termed universal consequences, which depend on actions only, not on the time and place of actions.

- An action includes both the physical action of mind, speech, and body, termed *yoga*, and the spiritual action steered by attachment-aversion that includes motivation, desire, intention, etc., termed *moha*. In short, an action is an activity performed with *yoga*-plus-*moha*.
- The universal consequences of actions are individualistic, i.e., they affect the agent (*kartā*) solely, and no one else.
- As DNA molecules carry instructions needed to construct components of the body cells, in the same way the karmic particles, termed *karma*, carry the instructions needed for delivering the universal consequences of the actions to the agent.
- The consequences of *karma*, called *karma phal*, affect the qualities (*guna*) of living beings (*jiva*) composed of a soul and living matter. *Karma phal* are individualistic, i.e., they affect the soul and living matter of the agent (*kartā*) solely, and no one else.
- *Karma phal* not only depends on *karma* but also on the efficient cause (*nimitta kārana*) of fruition of *karma*.
- Human beings have the freedom to pick the potential efficient cause of fruition of their *karma*; consequently control the *karma phal* in the form of karmic load.
- Human beings constantly attach new *karma* and also constantly detach past *karma* after its fruition.
- The attached karma is considered as a load, termed "karmic load", which the soul carries with it.
- The karmic load is a function of the intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha* and it increases with the increase in the intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha*.
- The intensity of *yoga* is controlled by *prāna samyama* (discipline of vitalities) that requires correct regulation of the four *prāna* (vitalities), namely, senses, power (of body, speech and mind), respiration and age.
- Our *prāna* that manifest itself in violence, falsehood, theft, unchastity, and possession are controlled by living with five types of abstinence: abstention from hurting, injuring or killing living beings (*ahim□sā*), false or hurtful speech (*satya*), theft or illegal and immoral transaction (*asteya*), unchaste sexual acts (*brahmacarya*), and craving for and hoarding worldly possessions (*aparigraha*).
- Our *moha* is controlled by constant contemplation on the discriminative knowledge and repeated practices of self-disciplinary methods.

- Discriminative knowledge enables us to discriminate between the soul and the body. Once we gain that knowledge, we lose attachment with our body.
- Self-disciplinary methods are: confession of, and repentance on, past misdeeds and negative thoughts; resolution to renounce the feeling of attachment to the body and worldly possessions and unrighteous conduct; and expiation through introspection, self-analysis, and meditation.
- Among the various potential activities, one should select the activity that can be performed with the least intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha*.
- One should never be involved in the activity of injuring or killing living beings, as it attaches massive karmic load to his or her soul.

Bioethical Issues

Some of the bioethical issues are analyzed using the proposed criterion of selecting one's conduct.

Dying

What course of action should a person who is terminally sick or unable to function self-sufficiently due to the debility of old age or infirmity follow? The course of action depends on the objective of his or her life. If one wants to continue achieving the objective specified by his self or her self in his or her life and if, at a particular state of his or her life, that objective can be achieved only by pursuing a particular practice, then the pursuant of that practice is not only his or her right, but is requisite, provided it does not harm others. For a person who believes that the purpose of his or her life is the minimization of his or her karmic load and wants to continue to decrease his or her karmic load, the pursuit of the practice of *sallekhanā* is the only course of action for him or her. It is a process of facing voluntary death through fasting without *moha*. The intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha* during the period of *sallekhanā* is feeble, and it results in attaching less karmic load.

After spending his or her life in pursuing the *sādhanā* (discipline) of reducing karmic load, then comes a time in his or her life when he or she is no longer able to continue his or her *sādhanā* of reducing karmic load due to the debility of old age, infirmity, or incurable disease. It would be incredible to squander the fruits of his or her *sādhanā* away in the remaining short span of his or her life. Thus, he or she should seek *sallekhanā* to continue attaching less karmic load.

It should be pointed out that *sallekhanā* is not suicide. There is a major difference between suicide and *sallekhanā*. The former always involves intense *moha*, malice, frustration,

etc.; hence, it results in more karmic load. The latter does not involve *moha*; one merely withdraws conscientiously from eating and drinking in a gradual manner without disrupting one's inner peace. No body can avoid death, but one can learn the 'art' of dying so that one dies without *moha*. People who live a spiritual life are able to observe *sallekhanā*.

Birth Control

The issue of birth control is concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the various methods of contraception. In considering the use of contraceptives it must first be determined which sexual act, with or without contraceptives, attaches more karmic load? If the intensity of the volition activities with which the physical action is performed stays the same in both sexual acts, then both sexual acts attach the same karmic load. The use of contraceptives is, therefore, morally neutral. It should be mentioned that in both sexual acts, the violence in killing sperms is same, and the only purpose of having sex is the physical pleasure. But there are practices of birth control other than the use of contraceptives, such as limited celibacy and practice of rhythm method. These practices, which require reduction in the frenzy for sex and thereby *moha*, are better, as they attach less karmic load.

Abortion

Many reasons are given for wanting abortion. Some main reasons are: endangerment of a woman's health by the pregnancy; serious defect in the baby; pregnancy as a result of rape; the pregnant woman does not want any more children; the pregnant woman's family cannot afford additional children due to low income; and the pregnant woman does not want to marry the man.

According to Jainism, the fetus is a human life. As mentioned above, the killing of any living being attaches massive karmic load and should be avoided at all costs.

Artificial Conception

When a couple is unable to become parents due to any physical or medical impediment, they currently have three options; adopt a child, have their own child by artificial insemination, or hire a surrogate mother. Which option does attach the minimum karmic load? One can argue that the intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha among* all three options stays the same. All three options attach the same karmic load; hence, from the ethical viewpoint proposed herein, the couple can choose any option. However, the practice of controlling one's desire to become parents is better as it attaches less karmic load.

Gene Therapy

The increase in the karmic load depends on the intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha*, not on the nature of the medical interventions, including gene therapy. Medical interventions have no effect on the karmic load. However, the development of most genetic procedures involves injuring or killing

other living beings and has karmic consequences. A person who avoids medical interventions while maintaining equanimity attaches less karmic load.

Conclusion

In conclusion, any use of unnatural means such as contraceptives, artificial insemination, surrogacy, and medical interventions such as genetic manipulations, has no effect on the intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha*, hence on the karmic load, provided it does not cause injury or killing of living beings. The intensity of *yoga*-plus-*moha*, which varies from one person to another, is the foremost factor in considering the modern bioethical issues.

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Reverence for Life – A Moral Paradox?

By Predrag Cicovacki

In his ambitious book, *The Conduct of Life*, Lewis Mumford analyzes the crisis of Western civilization and the possibilities of its renewal. Although this book was first published in 1951, the deepening crisis of Western civilization makes it still actual. Let us then try to get a sense of how Mumford identifies the crisis and where he sees its potential solution:

> But if Western civilization escapes the evil fate that its over-commitment to mechanism and automatism, its wholesale denial of human values and purposes, now threatens it with, if it overcomes its delusions of atomic grandeur and its psychotic compulsion to suicide or genocide, then the form that life will take, and the type of personality that will nurture it, is the form and the type that Albert Schweitzer has embodied. On such a basis, the renewal of life is possible.[1]

The person who Mumford singles out as a prototype for the renewal of life, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), was a theologian, philosopher, and musician who abandoned his already highly accomplished academic and artistic career to become a medical doctor. In 1913, he opened a hospital in the equatorial Africa. In that hospital, the only one in the radius of one thousand miles, Schweitzer spent the rest of his life. He dedicated it to his patients, but he also continued to play music and write. In the last fifteen years of his life, Schweitzer engaged in a vocal opposition against all nuclear testing. Just at the time when Mumford's book was written, Schweitzer started receiving worldwide recognition for his humanitarian and artistic work. Among other prestigious awards, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954.

Like Mumford, Schweitzer also believed that our civilization is experiencing a very deep crisis. He thought that, while the material aspect of civilization has been overemphasized, we have lost significant moral ideals and vital moral energy needed for striving toward the full development of our humanity: "Technical progress, extension of knowledge, do indeed represent progress, but not in fundamentals. The essential thing is that we become more finely and deeply human."[2]

If our civilization can achieve an ethical renewal, insists Schweitzer, it must be through the ethics of "reverence for life." According to his most famous definition, "Ethics consists…in my experiencing the compulsion to show to all will-to-live the same reverence as I do to my own. There we have given us that basic principle of the moral that is a necessity of thought. It is good to maintain and to encourage life; it is bad to destroy life or to obstruct it."[3]

Interestingly enough, Mumford has a much higher opinion about Schweitzer's life than about his philosophy: "His life says, better than any book he has written, that however deeply our own lives suffer from the passive breakdown or the active destruction of our civilization, it is

still possible to create a plan of life based on more solid foundations and directed toward higher ends: a life more organic in structure, more personal in expression, no longer the victim of specialism, nihilism, and automatism."[4] Schweitzer's philosophy, by contrast, Mumford finds "sometimes contradictory and inadequate."[5] The clearest objection to it is what Mumford calls the "final paradox" of Schweitzer's ethics: "if all forms of life prospered equally their very success would bring about life's own end; and before that happened, the higher forms would die out. No choice can be sanely made in terms either of the will-to-live or the derivative doctrine of unqualified reverence for life."[6]

While most commentators struggle with the possibility of reconciling Schweitzer's call to treat every life with reverence (including those of animals and plants) with the necessity of killing (for food or in self-defense, for instance), Mumford objects to something opposite to that: if we assume that everyone takes Schweitzer's call to treat all life with reverence, the full realization of this ethics would lead to its self-refutation. We cannot bring about even the prosperity of the entire human race – that may already endanger the survival of the species. Much less can we attempt (as Mumford implies that Schweitzer did) the preservation and prosperity of all life. Schweitzer's very idea, according to Mumford, is therefore paradoxical.

The word "paradox" literally means "beyond belief." I will argue that what Mumford finds paradoxical does not lead to any contradiction and is based on a misunderstanding. Yet Mumford is right to claim that Schweitzer's ethics is based on a paradox – only this paradox is much deeper and more consequential. Perhaps the very possibility of the renewal of our civilization – the goal of Mumford's philosophizing, no less than Schweitzer's – depends on the acceptance and resolution of this paradox.

When Schweitzer claims, "it is bad to destroy life or to obstruct it," he is not saying that killing should not and will not happen. What he means is that destruction or injury to any form of life should never be inflicted thoughtlessly or needlessly, but always – when it cannot be avoided – quickly and mercifully, reflectively and reverently. There is thus no real danger that, because of the universal application of reverence for life, the forms of life will multiply beyond control, so that their sheer number would bring about the destruction of life – and especially the destruction of its highest form, i.e., humanity.

To understand Schweitzer more fully, let us reflect on the phrase "reverence for life." When Mumford talks about "the conduct of life" and "the renewal of life," he primarily thinks of human life. But Schweitzer treats life as a universal phenomenon, and speaks not only about the concrete manifestations of life – say this patient that he now needs to treat as a physician [life as a biological category] – but also and perhaps most about the symbolic manifestations of life. Of such symbolic manifestations of life we need to distinguish at least the following three: metaphysical, ethical, and socio-historical. Schweitzer would say that, as a living being, a patient standing in front of him is a manifestation of the universal will-to-live, of an impulse, drive, and energy aiming to sustain its own existence. Everything that is alive, plants and animals no less than human beings, has this drive, impulse, and energy to sustain its existence. Through this

shared feature, each life is part of the enigmatic, and Schweitzer thinks ultimately unexplainable phenomenon of life. Following Schopenhauer, Schweitzer thinks that this will-to-live is one of the metaphysical building blocks of the universe.[7]

The universal presence of the will-to-live leads inevitably beyond the mere metaphysical consideration, for we realize that it must affect our attitudes and practical behavior toward other living beings. As a conscious human being, I am aware of this ultimate metaphysical drive not only in myself but in everything else that lives: "I am life that wills-to-live, in the midst of other lives which will-to-live."[8] The very impulse of the will to live is the same in all living beings; the recognition of the will-to-live does not provide ethical grounds for any hierarchy of living creatures. Rather than to lead toward their separation, the recognition of this impulse brings different lives together.[9]

For Schweitzer, life is one of the central ethical categories. Some philosophers have tried to ground ethics in an external source of authority (such as God or Nature), while others have tried to root it in something related to human beings (reason, pursuit of happiness, social solidarity, etc.). Schweitzer insists on rooting it in life, which is something both internal and external, both most intimate (since each one of us is a vehicle of life) and a manifestation of something independent (the ultimate purpose of which we can never grasp).[10] Although Schweitzer ties his ethics of reverence for life to the basic ethical concerns regarding good and evil, his central preoccupation is broader – it is the meaning of life, specifically of human life, and he argues that ethics has to reflect this general and ultimate preoccupation. Ethics is a way of dealing with life – my own and the lives of others; not just human life, but life in the entire cosmos. And from this "cosmic perspective we are specks of dust, vulnerable from every direction, destined to die, and able to help others in only limited ways. Rather than promoting despair, however, this humility paves the way for moral commitment."[11]

Before we clarify the nature of this commitment, let us first notice that, despite his insistence on the centrality of life, Schweitzer's position should not be characterized as "vitalism." Ethics is not about "row life," life that refuses form and structure, life that is an unrestrained energy, or life that is a sheer power.[12] Ethics consist in the *human attitude* of reverence for all life. Many commentators have pointed out that, in its original German form (*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*) this phrase already contains a sense of awe that we cannot translate into a suitable English phrase. The whole phrase, *Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*, means (roughly) respect for life which is understood as being far more than sheer existence.

Religious and mystical elements are already implied in this attitude, and this is why Schweitzer speaks of reverence rather than of, say, respect. Reverence is more emotionally charged than respect, which also why Schweitzer frequently speaks about love. Yet the term love is notoriously ambiguous; Schweitzer finds it useful only insofar as it clearly brings to our attention the relevance of the personal motivation for ethics: whatever we do, we need to do it with sympathy and compassion; whatever we do, we need to do it with enthusiasm and devotion.

Schweitzer clearly understands reverence for life in terms of a life-centered spirituality. It is important to emphasize, however, that his ethical stance is not tied to any particular religious view, nor does it encourage any religious irrationalism or fanaticism. Although Schweitzer was brought up as a Christian and even served as a Lutheran pastor before going to Africa, his inspiration for the ethics of reverence for life came not only from Christianity but also from Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The ethics of reverence for life is compatible with many versions of theism, pantheism, and even atheism. Schweitzer often mentions how Plato and Aristotle, the two pagan philosophers, emphasize that philosophy begins with wonder. Schweitzer extends this idea further to claim that ethics also begins in wonder and even presupposes the continuation of this healthy attitude (of wonder) throughout our lives. In his words: "To experience the world as a secret always again … that is a great gain."[13]

To experience the world as a secret is to experience it as something overwhelming, as something much bigger than any one individual human existence, or even bigger than the existence of the entire human race. For Plato and Aristotle, the wonder they describe as the source of philosophy deals with the beauty and order of the cosmos, which for them is a living being. Schweitzer also understands the universe as a living being (he calls it an "infinite Being"), yet (unlike Plato and Aristotle) his attitude toward the cosmos is not primarily cognitive but ethical. Schweitzer thinks that we will never be able to grasp the world as a whole, but that we nevertheless have to change our prevailing attitude toward this mysterious world. It should not be one of negligence and contempt – the world is not a playground for the satisfaction of our needs. Nor should we continue to think that human life can flourish only at the expense of other forms of life.

Mumford points out how Schweitzer understands ethics in terms of self-sacrifice and service to others. (As Gabriel Langfeldt emphases, "it must be a self-sacrifice that is really felt as a renunciation of other needs that otherwise it would have been more natural to satisfy."[14]) Precisely in this regard Mumford sees Schweitzer as a potential pointer to the resolution of the ills of our civilization and the renewal of life: "But in order to remain a whole man, Schweitzer committed the typical act of sacrifice for the coming age: *he deliberately reduced the intensive cultivation of any one field, in order to expand the contests and the significance of his life as a whole.*"[15]

Mumford now comes close to the realization of the central paradox not only of Schweitzer's life, but of his ethics as well. To renew life, we need not attempt to dominate, control, or exploit it in ever more efficient and diverse ways. To renew life, we need to make sacrifices and put ourselves in the service of other life. In Biblical terms often quoted by Schweitzer: "Only he who loseth his life…shall find it."

This is paradoxical, yet Mumford argues that by means of service and sacrifice Schweitzer manages to become "a whole man" and to expand "the significance of his life as a whole." If this is what Mumford praises about Schweitzer, and if he sees Schweitzer as a prototype for the future renewal of life, then he needs to explain what is so fruitful about it. Yet

Mumford did not do so, and for an account of this paradox and its possible resolution we need to turn back to Schweitzer, for whom this is one of the central issues of his ethics of reverence for life.

Trying to base his ethics to something natural, Schweitzer points out toward two elementary impulses in all human beings: the impulse toward self-preservation on the one hand, and sympathy for the suffering of others on the other. Schweitzer is convinced that even (some) animals display analogous impulses. Yet although these impulses are necessary – they provide a natural ground for ethics – they are not sufficient. Ethics consists precisely in the ennoblement of such impulses, in making sure that they are not fleeting desires but lead to genuine ethical commitment, which he then calls "reverence for life." In Schweitzer's words,

> All that is ethical goes back to a single principle of morality, namely the maintenance of life at its highest level, and furtherance of life. The maintenance of one's own life at the highest level by becoming more and more perfect in spirit, and the maintenance at the highest level of other life by sympathetic, helpful self-devotion to it – this is ethics.[16]

If this is ethics, it has to resolve what Schweitzer himself does not call a paradox but the "weighty question" (*die gewaltige Frage der Ethik*): "What is the inner connection between the struggle for self-completing and action for the common advantage?"[17]

Put differently, the weighty question is how to reconcile the two fundamental ethical impulses: one that leads in the direction of the preservation and development of my own life, and the other which leads me to sacrifice my interests and serve others. The first impulse, which Schweitzer calls intuitionistic, is directed inwardly; the second impulse, which is altruistic, is directed outwardly. These impulses often clash, and this is why virtually all ethicists pronounce one of them as the most fundamental and base their ethical theory on that one impulse. Schweitzer argues that both impulses are equally basic and equally indispensable. He then stakes his ethical theory on an attempt to reconcile them. This attempted reconciliation, and not what Mumford calls by that name, is the central paradox of Schweitzer's ethics. Yet an account of how Schweitzer reconciles this paradox and an evaluation as to what extent he succeeds in this, we need to save for another occasion.

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Notes

[1] Lewis Mumford, *The Conduct of Life* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1950), 215.

[2] Albert Schweitzer, "Man and Man," in *The Teaching of Reverence for Life*, trans. R. and C. Winston (New York: Holt, Renehart and Winston, 1966), 41.

[3] Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, trans. C. T. Campion (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1987), 309.

[4] Mumford, *op. cit.*, 214-15.

[5] *Ibid.*, 207.

[6] *Ibid.*, 213.

[7] Jackson Lee Ice compares Schweitzer's will-to-live to a psychoanalytical rendering of this issue: "While Freud introduced into psychology what is called the pleasure principle, or the will-to-pleasure; and Adler made us conversant with the role of the will-to-power as a main factor in human behavior; and while, more recently, Victor Frankl, a one-time Freudian psychiatrist now a psychotherapist, stresses the will-to-meaning, Schweitzer speaks of the will-to-live, which includes all of the above and several other important factors which he believes more adequately account for man's nature"; *Schweitzer: Prophet of Radical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 101.

[8] Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, 309.

[9] What is more, this black patient whom he needs to treat now, this concrete will-to-live, Schweitzer also sees as a member of the race exploited by the generations of white colonizers. The conditions of life for the primitive people may have been bad even if they were left on their own, but Schweitzer was fully aware of the numerous evils of colonization which only made the lives of the natives more complicated and, in more cases than not, progressively worse. So, when treating a native patient, Schweitzer was also aware of shared responsibility that the white men have for the terrible conditions of the natives.

[10] In his letter to Dr. Oskar Pfister of December 19, 1926, Schweitzer points out that life "is the most universal and yet the most immediately determined phenomenon."

[11] Mike W. Martin, *Albert Schweitzer's Reverence for Life: Ethical Idealism and Self-Realization*, (Berlington, VM: Asahgat 2007), 6.

[12] Mumford has also noticed that "Western civilization has lived for more than a century under the sign of power: forgetting, in our pride, that uncontrolled power in any of its manifestations, as heat, as light, as physical force, as political compulsion, is inimical to life; for life flourishes only to the extent that it is able to regulate power, screening off its direct impact and reducing it to those amounts that are favorable to vital processes"; *op. cit.*, 13.

[13] Schweitzer, *Die Weltanscahuung der Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben – Kulturphilosophie III: Erster und zweiter Teil*, eds. Claus Günzler and Johan Zürcher, vol. 1, (München, Verlag C.H. Beck, 1999), 443. Also (*ibid.*, 439): "Thinking has to concern itself with the two greatest secrets (mysteries): my life and the infinite being."

[14] Gabriel Langfeldt, *Albert Schweitzer: A Study of His Philosophy of Life*, trans. Maurice Michael (New York: George Braziller, 1960), 90.

[15] Mumford, *op. cit.*, 209.

[16] Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, trans. Mrs. Charles E.B. Russell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1936), 260.

[17] Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*, 164.