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TRANSFORMING RELIGION: RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND THE RISE OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIPⁱ

by

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TRANSFORMING RELIGION: RELIGIOUS CHANGE AND THE RISE OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP

James V. Spickard

The title of this essay outlines a rather broad assignment, so I hope that you will forgive me if I do not cover all of it. I intend to approach this topic from the point of view of a sociologist. Not that I think that sociologists have the only, or even the best, perspective on religion. But I believe that sociology can provide some tools for thinking about how scholars study religion, particularly in the context of religious change. Religion has certainly changed over the last hundred years; it will likely change as much over the next hundred. The last set of changes moved the study of religion from the seminary to the academy; it is anyone's guess where the next set of changes will move it.

My strategy will be to query the history of the study of religion, asking three sociological questions. First, I shall briefly visit the history of the definition of 'religion', to see what that tells us about the circumstances out of which the study of religion emerged. Second, I shall take a brief look at the changing organizational location of the study of religion, specifically as it has moved from churches to the academy. I shall ask such questions as: What has been the effect or influence of this changed location on the identities and loyalties of those doing the studying? How has this changed the questions such scholars ask? How have these new questions reflected religious change? And how, perhaps, have they changed religion merely by being posed? Third, I shall explore another set of questions that parallels this one, though from a cultural rather than from an organizational perspective: What has been the effect or influence of

changed cultural identities and loyalties on the study of religion? How have these changed scholars' questions? And what has been the relationship between these changed questions and religious change?"

Even this is too broad, of course, as it calls for a definitional, institutional, and cultural history of the study of religion over the last few hundred years. Done adequately, that would extend to several volumes. I shall therefore further narrow my focus. I shall specifically explore the definitional, organizational and cultural correlates of some of the major views of what is happening to religion at the end of the 20th century. It strikes me that these views demonstrate some of the scholarly changes that have taken place over the last many years. They also grow out of specific institutional and cultural changes in the study of religion over that time.

I shall, however, have to begin with a caveat: I write from the perspective of an American. Though I suspect that I am more knowledgeable about Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America than are the vast majority of my countryfolk, including most of my political 'leaders', I know far too little about non-sociological religious studies outside my own country to know how much the Danish experience parallels ours. Particularly in the institutional sphere, I shall thus describe a set of relationships that Danes may or may not find familiar. You will have to decide for yourselves whether the patterns that I see apply on your soil.

I: Definition

First, let's look at definition. We have all grown up in a society that knows what 'religion' is – so much so that we do not realize that this is rather unusual.

When my undergraduate students sign up for my Sociology of Religion course, they invariably ask me whether they will get to visit churches. This is where they think 'religion' is located, particularly on Sunday mornings. Not that most of them have ever been inside a church; I do teach in California, after all – part of the great demographic unchurched belt that extends from Baja California del Sur in México through the U.S. and Canadian west coasts all the way to Alaska. Church attendance is higher there than in Scandinavia, but lower than anywhere else in North America. Still, these students identify churchgoing with religious life.

It was not always so.ⁱⁱ Before 1500 – that is, before the European "long reformations", both Protestant and Catholic – 'religion' happened in churches but it also happened in many other places. Holy wells, pilgrimage sites, wayside shrines and so on dotted the European landscape. Other than Holy Week, baptism and death, few commoners attended church and few others cared if they did. All, however, engaged in religious practices. A person might leave coins or cloth streamers at a particular saint's shrine, wear another saint's medallion, celebrate a third saint's feast day and declare devotion to a particular cult of the Virgin – all without ever (or rarely) attending Mass. Individuals could pick and choose their devotions, changing them to suit their needs. If devotion to one saint did not bring satisfaction, one could start devotion to another. Not only were people allowed to ride different spiritual horses, to use an equestrian metaphor; they could also switch horses in midstream. And there was no sense that all those horses had to be going in the same direction – other than through life, which is where everyone is forced to go anyway.

Some might call this ‘superstition’ – and it was later called that by reformers of both Protestant and Catholic persuasions. For those who practiced it, however, it was just ‘Christianity’ – a diverse and meaningful set of daily practices. The separation of so-called ‘religion’ from so-called ‘superstition’ was part of the intellectual project by which the institutional churches laid claim to ‘true religion’. For that is what these reformations were: a largely successful attempt to institutionalize religion, dominate it, control it, and – in the process – shift power to ecclesiastical authorities. The fact that it took the creation of competing churches to do this set the stage for those churches’ ultimate loss of power to the princes and to their newly formed states. The whole process, however, created so-called ‘religion’ as something apart from so-called ‘secular life’, and put that ‘religion’ under the sway of church authorities.

Skip forward 300 years and we can see the same thing happen in India.ⁱⁱⁱ Early 19th century India was awash with shrines, medallions, feast days, and cults, from which individuals could construct a meaningful life. ‘Hinduism’ as a so-called ‘religion’ was (and is) a socio-political construction. It was part of India's drive for independence – a cultural shout to Europeans that “We are not backward! We, too, have religion!” The neo-Vedantist participation at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago was thus a bid for equality – one that succeeded, though it may have contributed to India's later partition.^{iv} The cultural creation of ‘Hinduism’ is old news to scholars of religion, though most American sociologists have not heard it.

The same did not happen in China.^v Despite efforts to turn Confucianism into a Western-style religion – with beliefs, ecclesiastical hierarchies, and soon – China remained ‘irreligious’ in Western terms. Chinese intellectuals observed the missionaries

that visited them, and saw that missionary 'religion' involved an exclusionary commitment to both doctrines and to church organizations. They labeled the result *zongjiao* (which translates as "belief-cult") and said "We don't have those." This did not stop Westerners from studying "the religions of China" (as Max Weber named his book on the subject). Western academia, after all, had inherited the reformations' definitions of its subject matter. Beside the so-called 'world religions', we now study such things as 'tribal religions', which we define as tribal people's beliefs about the supernatural along with their accompanying rituals, priesthoods, and so on. Or, if we are more liberal, we follow Tillich in studying various people's "ultimate concerns", "grounds of being", and the like. That is: we reify religion based on the pronouncements of church officials and their intellectual acolytes about what falls inside and what falls outside their conceptual lines.

Whether this leads us to miss most of the world's religious life is an open question, but not one on which I shall comment here.^{vi}

II: Organizational Matters

Let me now turn to the changing organizational location of the study of religion. Here, I shall have to stick more closely to the American scene.

As you all know, many of the English colonies that eventually became the United States were founded by religious refugees. Though England had a Protestant state church by the end of the 16th century, it had not made a very radical reformation. The church was governed from the top, and the English ruling classes controlled religious education rather strictly. King James I supposedly said to a group of Presbyterian reformers, "No bishop, no king." He was right, of course, as his son Charles learned to

his sorrow. Before 1645, and again after 1660, many religious dissenters left for the New World, in hopes of finding a place to practice their religion unencumbered.

Not all of them were Puritans. Quakers dominated three colonies; Lutherans, Catholics, Baptists, and Dutch Reformed each had one. Most of the rest were more or less Anglican. By the middle of the 18th century, no one church dominated altogether; even those colonies with an established church had to make room for minorities. The famous First Amendment to the American Constitution promised individual religious freedom at least partly because the colonies could not agree about which church should receive government sponsorship; supporting none of them prevented a constitutional impasse.

As a result, the early study of religion took place in churches and in church-sponsored educational institutions. Harvard and Yale were founded to train ministers, though they soon expanded their clientele. Not widely, however: until the late 1940s, colleges were largely reserved for future ministers, doctors, and lawyers – plus the sons and daughters of the upper class.^{vii} (The expansion of the American university system to prepare teachers, engineers, accountants, and the like is a post-WWII phenomenon.)

Even today most ministers train at small bible colleges, not in major centers of learning. This varies by denomination, of course. Congregationalists and Presbyterians have always required an educated clergy – one reason for these denominations' decline as America moved westward. Methodists trained their clergy but did not require them to be intellectuals. Many became traveling ministers, each pastoring several backwoods congregations. Baptists soon became the largest American denomination, in part because their ministers came directly from the people: they would – and still do – accept

any farmer who felt a call to preaching. Thus it did not cost much to support a Baptist church, because those ministers required no education and had day jobs.^{viii}

Leaving aside the Baptists, none of these groups studied 'religion'; they studied "the Bible" or at most "Christianity". They were trained to preach more than to analyze and they were seldom trained to question. Some were, of course, native intellectuals, and questioned anyway. But few had much time for speculative learning. What theology they had was largely imported. Even when I was in school, my professors said that European theology was the tail that wagged the American religious dog.^{ix}

This changed somewhat toward the end of the 1930s, accelerating through the 1950s and 60s as America became more intellectually self-confident. At least three trends converged.

First, there was a rapid expansion of the American education system after World War II – an expansion that created a new middle class with both intellectual pretensions and a taste for religion as "the right thing to do".^x The 1950s, particularly, were a time of mainstream church growth: more Americans than ever before were churchgoers, and intellectually engaged religion came to be seen as an important part of American life. This was more than just civil religion, in Robert Bellah's sense, though it was not particularly sectarian. As President Dwight Eisenhower put it, "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply held religious belief – and I don't care what it is."^{xi} Religion came to be seen as an important source of meaning and identity; church organizations expanded accordingly. So did ecumenical outreach, particularly in the religious mainstream.

As a second trend, American mainstream religion developed its own theologians. On the Protestant side, there was the growth of neo-Orthodoxy, particularly through the work of the Niebuhr brothers and Paul Tillich. Their theology engaged intellectuals as little theology had done before. Thomas Merton similarly engaged Catholics, though not only Catholics. His exploration of Eastern religion opened the door to Zen and to medieval mysticism. Americans also imported European existentialism but in a religious rather than in a secular context.

All these streams emphasized ethics over doctrine. The question was "How do we live a Christian (or ethical) life?" more than "What are we supposed to believe?" This attracted the semi-religious as well as the religiously committed. By the mid-1960s, ethical reflection about both personal and social life had to engage religion in order to be taken seriously. (The fact that academic philosophy had abandoned ethics for the analysis of language left the field free.)

Then came the Vietnam War – the third major social factor that I shall mention. Opposition to that war crystallized in the mainstream churches and was largely sustained by them; only these churches had the credibility to stand up to the government – and they did so, if with hesitation. Doing so ended the war, but it also split the churches. Certain hierarchs saw the war as God's will; the majority of laity – especially the intellectually engaged laity – thought it an unethical breach of national responsibility. Church opposition to the war drove war supporters rightward, into the arms of Christian evangelicals. Its hesitations cost it the loyalty of the young. The American people are still religiously polarized: the Right Wing is largely churchgoing and emphasizes belief and personal virtue; the Left is at best quasi-religious and is

concerned with social responsibility. Some sociologists have misinterpreted this state of affairs, claiming that the mainline churches have lost membership because they gave up "old-time" supernaturalist religion in favor of social causes.^{xii} The situation is much, much more complex, involving the cultural mores of at least two generations, the development of global political consciousness, plus social class shifts. Exploring the details would take us too far afield.

Still, in the American context 'religion' is seen as the place where one finds meaning in life, and one must engage religious thought if one is to engage in ethical reflection. Outside of evangelical circles, two locations have developed for doing so. The first is in mainstream seminaries, both Protestant and Catholic. (I leave aside Jewish seminaries, which emphasize ethics in their own way.) The second is in the Religious Studies departments of secular universities.

The seminaries of which I speak are no longer simply centers for ministerial training. Union Theological in New York, Graduate Theological in Berkeley, Candler in Atlanta, Iliff in Denver, Chicago, Yale, and Harvard Divinities, and the like do train ministers, but most of their students are not future clergy or, if they are, they have already been ordained elsewhere. These schools attract students from the religious and quasi-religious Left. These students take ethics seriously and study religion as a path to personal transformation. If American mainstream congregation life is, as Nancy Ammerman has suggested, the place where people learn to be "good people" in the company of others,^{xiii} the mainstream "schools of religion" are where religious and quasi-religious seekers reflect on their faiths intellectually. They do not learn doctrine; they learn the history of doctrine. They do not learn answers; they learn how to

formulate questions. American religion in these places is an intellectually open experience, in many ways less doctrinaire than is life in the typical sociology department. Students certainly question their root assumptions more thoroughly.

Such schools have no institutional monopoly on the study of religion, however. Today, Religious Studies departments at secular universities are far more important. Whether at Indiana, Chicago, Santa Barbara, or any of hundreds of smaller colleges, these departments specifically engage religion non-religiously. That is, they take religion as an object of study, not as an object of belief. Just as many now-secular universities were once religious, many of these departments were formerly "departments of religion". The name change signals a mental shift. My own university,^{xiv} for example, no longer teaches Christian theology courses, though it does teach "Buddhist Theology and Practice", "Feminist and Womanist Theologies", and "Contemplative and Mystical Theologies" – the latter two of which include some Christian elements. Instead, it teaches "World Religions", "Women Sexuality, and Western Religion", "African-American Religion and Spirituality", plus several courses on ethics. It has more Asian offerings than Western; its course on American religious history emphasizes "social, political, and cultural" approaches in place of theological issue.

I shall not take time to deconstruct this curriculum, though it tells us a lot about what American academics think is important about religion today. I should remark that my campus has two active evangelical student groups, members of which seldom visit the Religious Studies department. The split between the academic study of religion and actual religious people is rather deep nationwide.

This summarizes the institutional situation in which religion is studied in the U.S. today. The gap between Right and Left puts the former on the side of dogma and the latter on the side of ethics; they have few points of organizational interaction. The mainstream seminaries produce religious knowledge, but their audience is not particularly devoted to churches, certainly not as a career. The study of religion in secular universities is even more disconnected from church life. The result is cumulative, as the Vietnam generation trains its successors to question authorities and to emphasize personal ethical action in society. We "acht-und-sechziger" (as the Germans put it) are the tipping point in a massive organizational shift.

III. Cultural Matters

There has been a parallel and somewhat simultaneous cultural shift, which I can summarize a bit more briefly. It centers around three themes, each of which has affected the study of religion.

The first cultural theme involves the ongoing conflict between religion and science. This well-known tussle is more complex than is usually portrayed in the popular press. In the U.S., at least, educated people, including scientists, attend church more often than do the uneducated. Mainstream religions have accommodated, even supported scientific investigation. In part, they do so by abandoning one of Christianity's traditional activities, which was to explain the nature of the physical world. Instead, they divide their allegiances: science explains the world-as-we-know-it; religion helps people learn how to live in that world. Most mainstream parishioners do not suffer from cognitive dissonance.

Fundamentalists are another matter. Doctrine matters to the Religious Right, who now seek to disprove evolution 'scientifically'. This has become a yearly fight over school textbooks, but only some of us have noticed that the grounds of that fight have shifted. Religionists now seek scientific rationales and use scientific arguments – if not especially good evidence. The cultural split between science and religion is not a split between reason and irrationality; indeed, no one advocates the latter anymore.

A second cultural theme involves the spiritualization of religion, its personalization, and the increasing importance of such a personal spiritual life in the formation of individual identity. This has several sources, among them the American Evangelical emphasis on personal faith. But the most interesting aspect is the shift from 'religion' to 'spirituality' as the center of the religious sphere. It is quite common in the U.S. – though I am told not so common in Denmark – to claim that one "is not very religious, but is very spiritual". I have even heard ministers and priests say this, the Protestants openly though the Catholics a bit more quietly.^{xv}

This is not a statement about belief. It is really a declaration of independence from religious institutions. 'Religions', in this view, are social organizations that constrict their members. 'Religions' are about control. They tell people what to believe, how to act, and so on. They judge. They divide the sinners from the saved. And, perhaps most importantly, they claim to be founts of virtue. This is particularly unbelievable, given the clergy sex scandals of the past decade. Today, the fallen televangelists Jimmy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart would be joined by dozens of Catholic priests as authors of that apocryphal book, Can Preachers Do More Than Lay People?

A claim to 'spirituality', on the other hand, is to claim a rich inner life, focused on the parts of religion that one claims 'really matter'. This may involve prayer and meditation. It may involve a personal sense of connection with 'humanity' or with 'the universe' – certainly with something all-encompassing rather than anything parochial. It involves ethical reflection and the importance of living an ethical life. It claims to respect that which it sees as 'central to all religions', and this suggests an essentialism that seldom survives rational scrutiny. But rationality is beside the point. So are all exclusive tendencies. 'Spiritual' religion is tolerant, ethically oriented, and universalistic. It is simultaneously personal, believing that all human beings could be good, were they to know their own hearts.

Survey researcher Michael Hout has noted a decline in organized religion's prestige, particularly among those in the religious Center and Left.^{xvi} There is no similar decline in regard for personal 'spirituality'. Culturally speaking, it seems that churches are less and less relevant to an active spiritual life. Religion has escaped its institutional bounds.

The third cultural pattern is a bit more complex. It centers on a kind of nostalgia for a community life that probably never existed (certainly not in America): small-scale, face-to-face, stable.^{xvii} In this imagination, people used to care about each other, family used to be important, localities used to have more control over their fates than they do today. The critique of mass society takes several forms, some of which make great sense in an era of unbridled capitalism and the undeclared class warfare being waged against the middle classes and the poor. Several of these critiques involve religions.

The most easily identifiable of these is the Religious Right's call for a return to the 'good old days', when people supposedly knew and took their place in God's Kingdom. Right-wing religion presents itself as a return to the tried and true. Rely on Jesus, read His Bible (exactly as He dictated it in King James' English), and all will be well. The nostalgia is clearly visible, though it is too easily co-opted by an American triumphalism that presents a very real world danger.

A less visible version of this nostalgia is the growing importance of congregations in American religious life – an importance that I suspect we could find elsewhere, were we to look for it. Many American studies show that the decline in national denominations is not matched by a decline in congregations; indeed, independent congregations are the fastest growing segment of the American religious population. These are not all right-wing. People across the religious spectrum value local religious or spiritual communities. One of the key areas of current research is to trace this quest for community in its new organizational forms. The study of the so-called 'new religions' is part of this project, but the project is broader than this study imagines.^{xviii}

These three cultural themes are, of course, connected. To mention just one phenomenon, I note the search for "spirit" at the heart of science embodied in the work of David Bohm, Fritjof Capra, and their ilk.^{xix} In certain parts of the U.S., their books outsell ordinary religious tracts; the comparative study of the shelf space devoted to religion or quasi-religion in mass market bookstores could be remarkably revealing.

I should note that such cultural manifestations are not new. One need only remember the mid-20th century European interest in Rudolf Steiner and G.I. Gurdjieff,

with their appeals to the scientific spirituality of "authentic hidden traditions", to see the depth and breadth of the patterns that I am discussing.

IV. Sociological Views of Religion

My final question is "How have these developments – definitional, institutional, and cultural – affected the study of religion, particularly by sociologists?"

I have elsewhere noted that contemporary sociologists of religion have generated six main narratives about religion's present state and future prospects.^{xx} One: Some sociologists see religion in decline and tell us about its loss of influence in daily affairs. The drop in European church attendance, the relative decline of American mainline churches, and a biographic loss of religiosity on the part of many intellectuals give this story much of its bite. Two: Many journalists and political scientists, though fewer sociologists, tell an opposite story: one which sees religion becoming increasingly fundamentalistic. A resurgent Islam certainly makes this story plausible. So does the intrusion of American right-wing religion into national politics – one of the causes of the world's current troubles. But these are only two views.

Other sociologists – especially American ones – see national-level churches shrinking but independent congregations growing; their story talks about religious reorganization. This third tale emphasizes the changing shape of religious institutions – something that indicates neither decline nor fundamentalization. Still other sociologists see religion as increasingly a matter of personal choice – a *bricolage* by which individuals create meaningful lives for themselves at a time when they can no longer rely for meaning on social institutions. That makes four. A fifth group thinks that both organizational change and personal choice have always been present. It focuses its

story on the shape of the markets for religious “goods” and the choices that individuals make in markets of one type or another.

Finally, a sixth tale locates religion in the midst of an increasingly interconnected world. It identifies the globalizing process as the motor of the current era – a motor that produces both religious declines and fundamentalisms, institutional reorganizations and personal choices. Each of these six views puts forth its supporting evidence, but it puts that evidence into a narrative that tells us where we are now and what we can expect in times to come.

It is relatively easy to connect some of these stories to the aforementioned definitional, institutional and cultural trends. In fact, several of these narratives gain as much of their plausibility from such trends as they do from the empirical evidence that they claim to marshal.

Those proclaiming the rational-choice market narrative, for example, are almost universally to be found in sociology and economics departments. They value science and accept a rather naive church-and-doctrine definition of religion.^{xxi} Their view of religion depends on their non-religious institutional framework, as well as on a social order that has raised individuals to the highest level of ideological worth. (It also depends on a neo-liberal economic ideology: the American folk-saying, "To someone who only has a hammer, everything becomes a nail," has more than a little relevance here.)

Interestingly, such theories have attracted the positive attention of religious supernaturalists. Evangelical triumphalists appreciate the 'prediction' that the 'winners' of the religious race are typically 'old-time' supernaturalistic faiths. Such triumphalists

also favor the "conservative religion is rising" view – at least in part because it puts them on the side of history. Is it any wonder that they find hope in the story of God's people defeating the forces of atheistic modernity?

The secularization story is similarly plausible to academics, though not just to sociologists and economists. Indeed, many religionists worry about religion's decline, and study it to find ways to make religion relevant again in a secular age. Usually found in mainstream churches and institutions, this view it attracts a different intellectual penumbra. These include people nostalgic for a supposedly lost enchanted world and as well as those who are thankful that moderns have 'outgrown' religion. The former regret an imagined loss; the latter celebrate an imagined gain. Both such imaginations reflect religious change as much as they reflect any scientific consensus about whither religion is bound.

Advocates of the secularization narrative define religion less organizationally than do rational-choice theorists, but more restrictively than do those who emphasize religious individualism. This latter group is, to my mind, the most interesting of the bunch. Rather than beginning with a strict definition of the religious sphere, these scholars note the places where terms such as "religion" and "spiritual" are used in everyday life. They also pay attention to people's implicit taboos – the moments when the breach of something 'sacred' causes a behavioral reaction. In effect, they apply religious analysis to everyday life. They become sensitive to the ebb and flow of religious and quasi-religious notions.

In general, these scholars are not particularly boundary-conscious, neither definitionally, organizationally, nor culturally. They locate themselves in various

academic fields; they have greater or lesser religious allegiances; and they participate or do not participate in the cultural movements that they study. To a significant degree, they embody their religious narrative: their approach to religion is often a personal *bricolage* that accurately reflects the religious *bricolage* that their research uncovers.

This is not, of course, to belittle either their evidence or their arguments, for a growing body of research on religion-as-lived supports their view of religious individualization. The fact is, however, that this view is only available to those willing to expand the definition of religion, to cross established organizational boundaries, and to be sensitive to cultural shifts. Those inhabiting more rigid definitional, organizational, and cultural worlds seem doomed to more rigid – and I think limited – views.

If it sounds like I am praising the interdisciplinary study of religion by this remark, then you are hearing me properly. That, after all, is where I stand and, like Luther, I can do no other. My sociological training, however, reminds me that my sense of what is happening to religion stems at least in part from my social location. My narrative is but one narrative – made plausible to me by the definitional, organizational, and cultural forces in the midst of which I live.

The questions of "What makes a given story about religion plausible?", "To whom is it plausible?", and "What institutional/cultural position encourages such plausibility?" are, of course, matters for empirical investigation. My point is simply that none of us dares forget that these questions do not just apply to others, but to ourselves.^{xxii}

NOTES

- ⁱ Please direct comments to the author, care of: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Redlands, Redlands, California 92373
- ⁱⁱ See Meredith B. McGuire, "Contested Meanings and Definitional Boundaries: Historicizing the Sociology of Religion," in *Defining Religion: Critical Investigating the Boundaries Between Sacred and Secular*, ed. Arthur L. Greil and David Bromley, Religion and the Social Order, vol. 10 (Amsterdam: JAI/Elsevier, 2003).
- ⁱⁱⁱ Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron, eds, *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National History* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995).
- ^{iv} Creating 'Hinduism' as India's religion simultaneously coded 'Islam' as something un-Indian. See Peter Beyer, "Defining Religion in Cross-National Perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions," in *Defining Religion*, ed. Greil and Bromley, 180.
- ^v Beyer, "Defining Religion," 174-77.
- ^{vi} See, *inter alia*: Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Spirituality and Materiality in Individuals' Religious Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Arthur L. Greil and David Bromley, eds, *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and the Secular*, Religion and the Social Order, vol. 10 (Amsterdam: JAI/Elsevier, 2003); Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- ^{vii} Joseph Berman and Arthur J. Vidich, *The New American Society: The Revolution of the Middle Class* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).
- ^{viii} Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).
- ^{ix} I attended Graduate Theological Union between 1978 and 1984.

- ^x For a detailed discussion, see Bensman and Vidich, *New American Society*.
- ^{xi} Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "When Patriotism Wasn't Religious," *New York Times*, July 7 2002.
- ^{xii} E.g.: Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*.
- ^{xiii} Nancy T. Ammerman, "Golden Rule Christianity: Lived Religion in the American Mainstream," ed. David D. Hall *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 196-216.
- ^{xiv} The University of Redlands is a primarily undergraduate, liberal arts university in the Los Angeles area. It was founded by the American Baptist Church, but has not been officially connected with that church for several decades.
- ^{xv} Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- ^{xvi} Michael Hout and Claude S. Fischer, "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations," *American Sociological Review* 67 (April 2002): 165-90.
- ^{xvii} See, *inter alia*, Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, *Small Town in a Mass Society: Class, Power, and Religion in a Rural Community*, revised edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).
- ^{xviii} Ammerman points out the importance of congregations in American religious life: Ammerman, "Golden Rule.". For an early statement of this approach, see R. Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993): 1044-93. (Warner has since modified his views).
- ^{xix} David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics: A Study of Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* (Boulder: Shambala, 1975).

^{xx} James V. Spickard, *What is Happening to Religion? Six Visions of Religion's Future*.
(forthcoming).

^{xxi} See my critique in Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002), 295-99. See also James V. Spickard, "Rethinking Religious Social Action: What is 'Rational' About Rational-Choice Theory?" *Sociology of Religion* 59, no. 2 (1998): 99-115.

^{xxii} For an extended discussion of the problems of reflexivity, self-reference, and scholarly representation, see the articles collected in James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, eds, *Beyond Personal Knowledge: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion* (New York: NYU Press, 2002).