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Benedict's Jerusalem Message on Religious Pluralism

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Several articles of mine published in *The Ecumenist* have shown that Pope John Paul II and his successor, Benedict XVI, had different attitudes towards religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue.[1] Twice in his pontificate, in 1986 and 2002, John Paul II invited representatives of the world religions to come to Assisi and pray with him for peace in the world, which was threatened by armed conflicts. On other occasions, John Paul II used to praise what he called the Spirit of Assisi. In contrast, in a book published in 2003, Cardinal Ratzinger, then the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, criticized the interreligious meetings at Assisi, fearing that they would foster relativism among the faithful.[2] Catholics, he argued, were not allowed to pray with non-Christians.

Dominus Iesus

In August 2000, the Congregation, chaired by Cardinal Ratzinger, published the Instruction *Dominus Iesus*, which reaffirmed that God had revealed the saving truth in Jesus Christ and made it available to humanity in the Catholic Church. According to this Instruction, dissident Christians and non-Christians may well be touched by divine grace, but their traditions and institutions are gravely defective: their followers can be freed from error and enter the fullness of truth only in the Catholic Church. Religious pluralism, according to *Dominus Iesus*, exists only "in fact," not "in principle," since there is only one true religion. Because interreligious dialogue easily leads to relativism, the Instruction insists, the ultimate aim of the Catholic participants must be the conversion of their dialogue partners to the full truth.

Catholics engaged in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue were critical of Cardinal Ratzinger's Instruction. They felt that inviting someone to a dialogue with the hidden intention of converting them was unethical. Jewish religious leaders also expressed their anxiety,

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fearing that the Catholic Church would restart its effort to convert Jews to Christianity.

Words in Germany and Turkey

Inspired by a different spirit, John Paul II encouraged interreligious dialogue. On several occasions, he insisted that Catholics and Muslims worship the same God. Cardinal Ratzinger did not accept this. Having become Pope Benedict XVI, he used a lecture given in Regensburg, Germany, in September 2006 to show that the God of Christians was different from the God of Muslims. The Christian God, he argued, acts in the world in accordance with divine reason, while the Muslim God, guided by his will alone, acts in an arbitrary fashion and even, at times, blesses human violence. Benedict was severely criticized by Muslim and Christian scholars: they showed that, in fact, the major thinkers in Islam recognize – as most Catholic theologians do – an affinity between revelation and reason.

In November 2006, Benedict visited Turkey. He used this opportunity to correct his Regensburg remark and articulate the Church's relationship to Islam following the spirit of John Paul II. In fact, Benedict cited the words of John Paul II's *Address to the Catholic Community in Ankara* (28 November 1979):

> I wonder if it is not urgent, precisely today when Christians and Muslims have entered a new period of history, to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us, in order to preserve and promote together, for the benefit of all men, 'peace, liberty, social justice and moral values'.[3]

This sentence is rich in meaning. Like John Paul II, Benedict accepts that the context, the new period of history, affects our understanding of divine revelation, and then he redefines the Church's mission as the faith-guided service promoting the common good of humanity. Is this expression of solidarity a genuine promise or simply a diplomatic formula?

A Doctrinal Note

Since Catholics involved in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue were not convinced by *Dominus Iesus* and preferred the speech Benedict gave in Turkey, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith decided in December 2007 to publish a Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelisation, reaffirming the teaching of *Dominus Iesus* that interreligious dialogue is part of the Church's mission to evangelize the whole of humanity:[4]

> Every activity of the Church has an essential evangelizing dimension and must never be separated from the commitment to help all persons to meet Christ in faith, which is the primary objective of evangelization. … However, a growing confusion exists today which leads many to leave the missionary command of the Lord unheard and ineffective. … [Many say quite wrongly] that it would only be legitimate to present one's own ideas and to invite people to act according to their consciences, without aiming at their conversion to Christ and to the Catholic faith. It is enough, so they say, to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion; it is enough to build communities that strive for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity. (#2–3)

The Doctrinal Note assumes that the Church's evangelizing mission is self-identical throughout its history; it refuses to acknowledge that interpreting this mission depends on the historical context.

Benedict in Jerusalem

On May 11, 2009, addressing various organizations for interreligious dialogue gathered at the Auditorium of the Notre Dame Centre in Jerusalem, Pope Benedict offered his most recent reflection on interreligious dialogue. He did not repeat the message of *Dominus Iesus* and the Doctrinal Note; he did not say that there was only one true religion and that Catholics engage in interreligious dialogue in the hope that their partners will be converted to Christian faith. Instead, he offered theological arguments expanding the message he had delivered to the Muslim community in Turkey.[5]

> Abraham's first step in faith, and our steps to or from the synagogue, church, mosque or temple, tread the path of our single human history, unfolding along the way, we might say, to the eternal Jerusalem (cf. Rev 21:23). Similarly, every culture with its inner capacity to give and receive gives expression to the one human nature. Yet, the individual is never fully expressed through his or her own culture, but transcends it in the constant search for something beyond. From this perspective, dear friends, we see the possibility of a unity which is not dependent upon uniformity.

Addressing Jews, Christians, and Muslims, heirs of the promises made to Abraham, Benedict offers first a theological argument suggesting that these promises af-

fect the whole of humanity, and, second, a philosophical argument suggesting that the different cultures in the world are open to one another, each being a particular expression of the one human nature, and that none of them are complete until they are enriched by all the others.

It follows that the destiny God has assigned to humanity is the reconciliation of these plural traditions. Benedict said:

> While the differences we explore in interreligious dialogue may at times appear as barriers, they need not overshadow the common sense of awe and respect for the universal, for the absolute and for truth, which impel religious peoples to converse with one another in the first place. Indeed it is the shared conviction that these transcendent realities have their source in – and bear traces of – the Almighty that believers uphold before each other, our organizations, our society, our world. … Together we can proclaim that God exists and can be known, that the earth is his creation, that we are his creatures, and that he calls every man and woman to a way of life that respects his design for the world.

Benedict holds that Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe in the same God and share many truths about God's creation. This common faith, Benedict insists, must affect our practice in the world.

> Friends, if we believe we have a criterion of judgment and discernment which is divine in origin and intended for all humanity, then we cannot tire of bringing that knowledge to bear on civic life. Truth should be offered to all; it serves all members of society. It sheds light on the foundation of morality and ethics, and suffuses reason with the strength to reach beyond its own limitations in order to give expression to our deepest common aspirations. Far from threatening the tolerance of differences or cultural plurality, truth makes consensus possible and keeps public debate rational, honest and accountable, and opens the gateway to peace. Fostering the will to be obedient to the truth in fact broadens our concept of reason and its scope of application, and makes possible the genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today.

"Truth" in this paragraph refers to the practical truths professed by the three Abrahamic religions that provide the moral foundation for their communities and, in fact, for all societies in this world.

This revealed truth is universal; it is, moreover, confirmed by human reason awakened to humanity's ethical vocation. That is why Benedict argues that far from threatening the tolerance of differences and cultural plurality, "truth" fosters respect, openness to others, cooperation, and peace.

> Some would have us believe that our differences are necessarily a cause of division and thus at most to be tolerated. A few even maintain that our voices should simply be silenced. But we know that our differences need never be misrepresented as an inevitable source of friction or tension either between ourselves or in society at large. Rather, they provide a wonderful opportunity for people of different religions to live together in profound respect, esteem and appreciation, encouraging one another in the ways of God. … Prompted by the Almighty and enlightened by his truth, may you continue to step forward with courage, respecting all that differentiates us and promoting all that unites us as creatures blessed with the desire to bring hope to our communities and world. May God guide us along this path!

There is no echo in this speech of *Dominus Iesus* and the Doctrinal Note. There is no hint here that religious pluralism exists not "in principle," but merely "in fact" as an imperfection of history destined to be overcome. In this remarkable speech, Benedict offers a contextual reading of the Church's mission, suggesting that in a world torn by life-destroying conflicts, often reinforced by partisan religion, the Church's mission is to promote reconciliation, justice, and peace, and, for this purpose, it engages in dialogue and cooperation with other religions. According to his speech, this mission is not a purely humanistic endeavour prompted by practical reason; it is a mission in obedience to Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, the saviour of the world, in whom God has embraced the whole of humanity.

In earlier statements, Benedict had complained that interreligious dialogue easily fosters relativism because it brackets the truth question: Christian participants do not argue that they have the truth and that their partners are wrong. By contrast, in his speech at Jerusalem in 2009, Benedict offers a different definition of truth: he refers to the practical truth divinely revealed in the Abrahamic religions, the truth supported by enlight-

ened human reason, the truth that allows humanity to transcend its life-destroying divisions and enter into the unity-in-diversity willed by God.

Is this new teaching of Benedict XVI to be taken seriously or is it merely a diplomatic gesture made in a difficult situation? Here is what the Pope said to the two chief rabbis of Jerusalem.

> Trust is undeniably an essential element of effective dialogue. Today I have the opportunity to repeat that the Catholic Church is irrevocably committed to the path chosen at the Second Vatican Council for a genuine and lasting reconciliation between Christians and Jews. As the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* makes clear, the Church continues to value the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews and desires an ever deeper mutual understanding and respect through biblical and theological studies as well as fraternal dialogues.[6]

A New Paradigm

Hans Küng has repeatedly argued that a new paradigm is presently emerging in the self-understanding of the world religions. In response to the globalization of neo-liberal capitalism and the politics of empire that produces massive inequalities and death-dealing conflicts, significant movements have arisen in the world religions that interpret fidelity to their religious principles as a commitment to promote peace and justice in the world. These movements recognize the transcendent call that summons all believers to serve the common good of humanity.

In the Catholic Church, this movement found an official expression at the Second Vatican Council. Yet conservative trends in the Catholic Church, supported by words of Pope Benedict and the teaching of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, have re-emphasized the older teaching that the Church's divine mission is to convert Jews, Muslims, and the followers of other religions to the Catholic faith. While the ecclesiastical magisterium has offered contradictory messages, there is no doubt that in his recent speeches in Jerusalem, Benedict XVI has embraced the new paradigm.

In the old paradigm, we used to argue with followers of other traditions that we were right and they were wrong. Yet if we look at Christian history, we clearly see that the logic of "we are right and you are wrong" has produced contempt for others, exclusion, persecution, and sometimes wars. The history of Christian responses to heresy is covered with blood. Commitment to "truth" has produced endless victims. In the new paradigm, our commitment to "truth" urges us to ask the followers of other traditions whether we can work together to promote the vision of a just society implicit in our different religious faith. As Christians, we hold that the transcendent call to serve humanity's common good is addressed to people in all religious and sapiential traditions. Following this call, we hold, is the pathway to life eternal.

The author of many books, **Gregory Baum** is the founder and editor emeritus of *The Ecumenist.* His latest book is *The Theology of Tariq Ramadan: A Catholic Perspective* (Toronto: Novalis, 2009).

1 See Gregory Baum, "The Cardinal and the Pope I," *The Ecumenist*, 42 (Summer 2005), 1–5; "The Cardinal and the Pope II," *The Ecumenist*, 42 (Fall 2005), 16–19; "Proclamation or Dialogue? Unresolved Questions in Pope Benedict's Teaching," *The Ecumenist*, 44 (Winter 2007), 1–4.

2 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Glaube, Wahrheit, Toleranz* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 87–88.

3 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20061128_pres-religious-affairs_en.html (accessed June 3, 2009).

4 www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_en.html (accessed June 1, 2009).

5 www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090511_dialogo-interreligioso_en.html (accessed June 1, 2009).

6 www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090512_rabbini_en.html (accessed June 1, 2009).

Tariq Ramadan: Muslim Reformer

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As readers of The Ecumenist *know, Gregory Baum has developed an interest in the work of the European Muslim thinker Tariq Ramadan, a reformer with a lively following in Europe as well as in Canada and the United States. Novalis recently released Baum's new book,* The Theology of Tariq Ramadan: A Catholic Perspective. *(It was published in the U.S. by the University of Notre Dame Press.) Baum's work attempts to introduce the reader to the thinking of one of modern Islam's most important figures.* The Ecumenist *is pleased to present an extract from* The Theology of Tariq Ramadan *below.*

After locating Ramadan's thought on the spectrum of Muslim theology, describing Islam's universal aspects, and outlining the importance of Sharia for Muslims, Baum wishes to show how Ramadan would have Muslims interpret and incarnate their universal tradition in the particular context of Western society. For Ramadan, Islam does not "naturally" belong in the Middle East, nor in countries where Muslims form a majority. European Islam, he argues, is just as "authentic" as its Asian and Middle Eastern counterparts. Just as all Muslims before them, European Muslims must attempt to distill the universal elements of the tradition while relativizing those aspects that they judge to be expressions of a particular (Middle Eastern, Asian, African, etc.) culture.

Baum presents Ramadan as a creative conservative, that is, someone who wishes to remain faithful to the Islamic tradition, while interpreting it in the light of modernity. Rereading the great traditions in the light of the current social context, Baum argues, is what all religious thinkers – even so-called literalists and fundamentalists – do. Baum admires Ramadan's commitment to engaging in the essential theological task with compassion, sophistication, and a pastoral concern for the whole of the community.

Below is the beginning of chapter 5 of The Theology of Tariq Ramadan*, "Western Muslims."*

David Seljak, Editor

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After explaining the universal message of Islam and the rules for interpreting *sharia*, Ramadan addresses the situation of Muslims in Western societies and offers them pastoral guidance. He begins by describing the difficulties they are likely to encounter.

Who are these Muslims? They are immigrants who came to Europe and North America in recent decades and who now have children and grandchildren born in their new society. Their entry into the secular democratic culture of the West offered them political freedom and the protection of the law, which they greatly appreciated. At the same time, this culture fosters values through schools, mass media and commercial advertising that are at odds with the Islamic way of life. Muslims react to this situation in a variety of ways. Some of them take advantage of the new circumstances, join the competitive race and become upwardly mobile. In doing so, they bracket their Muslim identity. Others choose to remain faithful to their cultural tradition and willingly live as strangers in their new society. Ramadan observes that Muslims keen on protecting their inherited identity often emphasize the visible signs of their religion, especially the dress code, more than they did when they lived in their country of origin. It would be unfortunate, Ramadan writes, if Muslims come to regard the external practices as the essence of their faith, forgetting the primary summons to worship God, live humbly and do good to one's fellow human beings. Arguing that the future of Muslims in the West is neither assimilation nor self-isolation, Ramadan is glad that a growing number of Muslims have become active citizens of their society, practising their faith and making a contribution to the common good. He observes that the second and third generations of these Muslims are no longer familiar with the culture of their ancestors: they have become Westerners.

Another source of the difficulties Muslims experience in Western societies is the wave of prejudice they encounter – prejudice against foreigners, against people of non-European origin, against exotic religions, against Islam. Over the last decade, and not only as a result of September 11, 2001, the wave of prejudice has become stronger in Western societies. In many countries there are now political parties hostile to immigrants. These parties try to persuade people that the presence of foreigners threatens the nation's cultural identity.

Ramadan reports that many Westerners have the idea that Islam is a religion that demands cultural uniformity, promotes hostility to Western civilization and refuses to honour personal freedom and human rights. The best-known scholarly expression of this opinion is Samuel Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations.[1]

Ramadan has given many lectures, written many articles and published many books to defend Islam against the objections constantly raised against it. Yet in his two major books, in which he addresses Muslims in the West – *To Be a European Muslim* and *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* – his concern is quite different: it is properly theological. In these two books he explores what fidelity to Islam means for Western Muslims. What does the God in whom they believe expect of them? What does *sharia* demand of them, living as they do in Western societies?

The New Context

It will not surprise the reader that Ramadan refuses to answer this question without first examining what the Islamic schools of law say about Muslims living in non-Muslim countries. Only after showing that their teaching no longer addresses the contemporary reality does he make his own proposal.

These schools of law made a clear distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim lands: the Muslim regions were called *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) and the hostile regions *dar al-harb* (abode of war). The *ulama* of the different schools did not agree on the definition of these terms. For some of them, *dar al-Islam* referred to a land where the population was Muslim. For others, it referred to countries ruled by Islamic law. For still others, it designated places where Muslims were safe and protected. *Dar al-harb* referred to regions where Muslims stood alone, were exposed to dangers and unprotected by law. According to these schools of law, Muslims could be visitors in these regions, but they could not settle there. Today, some Muslims brought up on this ancient teaching ask themselves the anguishing question whether integrating into a Western society is permitted by God. The *Salafi* literalists, Ramadan notes, still defend the distinction between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*: they look upon the West as a hostile region and demand that their followers living in the West isolate themselves from mainstream society.

Many *ulama* recognize that referring to the non-Muslim world as *dar al-harb* (abode of war) has become unrealistic. Some have proposed to call it *dar al-ahad* (abode of treaty), since international law and intergovernmental agreements assure the safety of Muslims in non-Muslim lands. Ramadan makes a more radical analysis of the present situation. He argues that the neat division of the world into two distinct spheres no longer makes sense. The so-called Muslim countries are no longer societies ruled by Islamic law. Under the impact of colonization and, subsequently, as willing participants in the capitalist economic system, these societies have adopted many laws based on Western models. Their governments often violate Islamic teaching by refusing to foster the education of the people, turning a deaf ear to their voices and suppressing their movements of reform. At the same time, the non-Muslim world has also undergone great changes. Millions of Muslims now live in Europe and the Americas as loyal citizens, not simply as temporary guests. Because of the widening gap between the wealthy countries of the West and the poorer countries of rest of the world, massive immigration to Western societies will continue, and Muslims will become ever more numerous in them. In the present historical situation, the twofold division of the world offered by traditional Islamic jurisdiction no longer applies.

Because neither the Quran nor the Sunna mention the twofold division of the world, Ramadan feels free to propose his own theological interpretation of the present context. As a *Salafi* reformer, his first step is to reread the Quran for inspiration. He notices that when residing in Mecca at the beginning of his ministry, the Prophet and his followers lived in a pluralistic society where some people were friendly and others hostile. The Prophet called upon believers to give witness (*shahada*) to their faith and manifest it by their good works. To give witness, Ramadan argues, is the primary religious duty of Muslims today, living as they do in a pluralistic situation. Whether they live in the West or in countries where the majority is Muslim, their situation is theologically speaking *dar al-shahada*, the place where they must give witness of their faith.[2] The world is not divided into two spheres, Ramadan argues. The doctrine of the One God, *tahwid*, prompts him to say that the world is one: one in its origin and one in its destiny. He recalls the words of the Prophet: "The whole world is my mosque."[3]

This theology of place, Ramadan argues, delivers Muslims in the West from the question of whether their presence in the West is permitted only as a passing phase, or whether their integration into a Western society is truly God's will. Ramadan refers here to the rule

of permissibility (discussed in the previous chapter) that encourages Muslims to open themselves to the entire created order, to new cultures and distant lands, with very few prohibitions.

Moving further in his inquiry, Ramadan asks whether Muslims living in the West are by this very fact frustrated in their essential being. Should they be dreaming of living elsewhere, or can they fulfill their vocation as committed believers in the West? To reply to this question, Ramadan develops the idea that the blossoming of the Muslim personality requires five areas of freedom. Here is a brief summary of his idea:

i) Because Muslims believe in the One God and have a spiritual life, they want to live in a society where their religious commitment is respected.
ii) Because Muslims worship their God in community, they want to live in a society that protects their religious liberty.
iii) To live in security Muslims need more than mere tolerance; they want their rights to be protected by law.
iv) Because Muslims are held to give testimony to Islam, they want the freedom to announce and explain their faith in public.
v) Because Muslims are urged by their faith to act in social affairs and foster social justice, they want to live in a society where they are able to participate in the political life.[4]

Ramadan continues his argument by demonstrating that these five areas of freedom are guaranteed in Western democratic societies. Despite certain limitations imposed on Muslims in regard to particular practices, and despite the prejudice to which Muslims are often exposed, the law of their society protects their freedom: their faith is respected, they have religious liberty, their rights are guaranteed, they enjoy freedom of expression, and they can participate in political life. Ramadan concludes that Muslims living in Western society are not prevented by this fact from fulfilling their religious vocation. There is no need for them to dream of living elsewhere: they are able to thrive as Muslims where they are.

Responsible Citizenship

Ramadan continues his inquiry into the situation of Muslims in Western society, in light of their faith. He offers a theological argument to demonstrate that *sharia* demands of Muslims obedience to the laws of the country in which they live, except when a particular law violates Muslim moral principles. Contracts, Ramadan argues, are taken very seriously in Islam.[5] The Prophet insisted that persons or groups who have made a contract with a partner must remain faithful to it – under all circumstances, even if this should be gravely inconvenient. The Prophet himself acted upon this belief in his life. Once he was established in Medina, the Prophet made a pact with the hostile tribes of Quraysh in Mecca, agreeing that if someone were to leave Medina for Mecca, he would be allowed to stay there, but if someone were to escape from Mecca, the Prophet would not accept him but send him back to Mecca. Later, when a man who had converted to Islam escaped from Mecca, the Prophet, faithful to the contract, refused to receive him – a decision that amazed his companions. Contracts are binding, even when they demand a sacrifice.

Ramadan continues his argument by claiming that a Muslim who applies for an entry visa into a country, accepts employment in it, or becomes a naturalized citizen is implicitly committing himself or herself to a contract, promising to follow the laws of that country. Since contracts are binding under all circumstances, *sharia* obliges Muslims to obey the laws of their country, unless a particular law violates Islamic teaching, in which case they can invoke the freedom of conscience position – just as other citizens do when a law violates their deep moral convictions. This argument, based on fidelity to contracts, confirms the argument … based on the rule that when the Quran gives no clear instruction, Muslims are to act in a way that serves the common good.

Some Muslims may still worry whether living in non-Muslim societies and associating with non-Muslim men and women is fully acceptable from the point of view of their faith. Ramadan thinks that this worry demands careful attention. What is needed, he says, is to go back to the Islamic sources, the Quran and the Sunna. There we find many texts that approve of Muslims living and associating with non-Muslims. The Prophet attached great importance to the biblical story of Joseph, a believer in the One God, who lived in Egypt among non-believers and even accepted a high position in the government. The Prophet himself lived in Mecca among non-believers, some of whom were his friends, especially his uncle Abu Talib, who never abandoned his old Arab beliefs. When Muslims suffered persecution in Mecca, the Prophet received God's permission to send some members of the community to safety. They went to Abyssinia where an-Najashi, the Christian Negus, welcomed them, and where they lived

among non-Muslims who respected them.[6] Later, when the persecution in Mecca intensified, the Prophet and his companion Abu Bakr decided to save themselves by secretly leaving the city and travelling to Medina. They were guided on this dangerous journey by Ibn Urayqat, a friend and trustworthy polytheist. Ramadan cites other examples of cooperation between the Prophet and non-believers on the basis of trust and competence. These experiences, Ramadan argues, reveal the fundamental principle guiding relations between Muslims and non-Muslims: respect and the willingness to work together doing good.

Faithful Muslims should become good citizens in Western societies. Again and again Ramadan tells Western Muslims to stop thinking of themselves as a minority and instead recognize themselves as citizens. While they may at times be obliged to defend their rights as members of a minority suffering discrimination, they must not forget that as citizens they are to make their contribution to the common good and be co-responsible for justice and peace in society. Ramadan notes that political parties sometimes choose candidates with an Arab name to attract the votes of Muslims. Warning Muslims not to give in to such misguided loyalties, Ramadan repeats that Muslims are committed first of all to justice and the other universal virtues. They will want to vote for the party whose program furthers social justice and the well-being of all citizens. We shall return to Ramadan's understanding of social justice further on.

There can be no doubt that Ramadan advocates the integration of Muslims into the Western society to which they belong. At the same time he is strongly opposed to assimilation. He recognizes that the dominant culture in the West puts enormous pressures on Muslims, especially the secular assumptions that underlie public life. Here religion is honoured if it remains purely private. More than that, Islam seems to frighten many Westerners: not only does it represent a new religious presence in their midst, it is also seen as promoting hostility to Western culture. Exposed to this cultural pressure, many Muslims drift into assimilation, disappear in the crowd and cease to bear witness to the One God. The percentage of Muslims who become unbelievers is considerable.

One reaction against this loss of the Muslim identity is the turn of many young Muslims to the Islam of the Prophet and his Companions, imitating as much as possible their way of life and the clothes they wore. The desire to rescue the Muslim identity explains the success of the *Salafi* literalists in Europe. We have noted several times that Ramadan regards the literalists' interpretation of Islam as inauthentic: it overlooks the universal message of Islam, and it ignores the abiding relevance of Islam in the changing conditions of history. For him, the literalists produce a false image of Islam.

Another reaction to the secularizing pressure of Western society is the tendency among many Muslims to form ethnic communities, such as Algerian or Pakistani, preserve their local customs, and educate their children in the culture they have brought with them. Yet what they hand on to their children, Ramadan observes, is a North African or Asian Islam, an Islam that does not address the experience of living in the West and for that reason is not likely to survive for very long. Ramadan regrets that Muslims in their new society tend to organize themselves on an ethnic basis and fail to realize that they belong to the *umma*, the community of the faithful, blessed by God. Too often, the stress on ethnicity keeps their organizations and even their mosques isolated from one another. For the future flourishing of Islam in the West, Ramadan concludes, solidarity among Muslims and the joint confession of their faith are of utmost importance.

Ramadan rejects both assimilation and isolation. What he advocates is the integration of Muslims into modern society in a manner that protects and enhances their identity as believers. Ramadan looks with admiration to the presence of Jews in modern society, fully integrated and at the same time proudly celebrating their Jewish identity. Should this not also be possible for Muslims? Muslims, he writes, must come to understand who they are and what they stand for. They must define their identity themselves, not take it from the society that misjudges them nor from Muslims who refuse to face up to modernity. "It is only by acting in this way that European Muslims will feel that they are subjects of their own history, accountable before God, responsible before mankind. To be subjects of their own history also means that they will eventually go beyond the pernicious feeling of being foreigners, of being different, of being an obvious manifestation of an insoluble problem."[7]

Collective Identity

Ramadan defines the identity of Western Muslims in religious terms without reference to the cultural elements brought by the immigrants from Africa or Asia. In response to the present situation, Western Muslims should define their identity by four engagements involving their faith:[8]

i) The spiritual dimension: testifying to the One God, practising the pillars of Islam, enjoying membership in the *umma* and exploring the spiritual life.
ii) The intellectual dimension: studying the Islamic tradition, recognizing its contemporary relevance and being ready to keep on learning.
iii) The communicative dimension: handing on the faith to the next generation and explaining the faith to the wider society.
iv) The practical dimension: promoting justice in society and serving the common good in other ways.

Leaving behind their cultural inheritance as Africans or Asians does not mean that Western Muslims strive for assimilation. Their faith in Islam makes them welcome the elements of modern society that enhance human life and warns them against elements that estrange men and women from their human vocation. As Muslims, they will be critical citizens, participating in public debates and resisting the dominant individualism, utilitarianism and secularism. Their faith urges them to be in solidarity with their society and at the same time judge its unjust practices and alienating culture. Rooted in Islam, they have a message for society: they promote the universal virtues and proclaim their faith in God Their integration into society is dialogical: they listen, welcome the truth they hear, stand against error and bring new light.

This is, in fact, how Jews and Christians who take their faith seriously react to modern, secular society. Their integration is dialogical: they are in critical conversation with the society with which they are in solidarity.

To achieve a secure common identity, Western Muslims will have to arrive at a consensus regarding the interpretation of *sharia*. Ramadan suggests that Muslims living in the West should cease to listen to the *umala* from the East, living as they do in different historical contexts. Western Muslims will have to rely on *ulama* who live in the West. Since the *fatwa* pronounced by individual Western *ulama* are not always unanimous, what is needed in the West are councils or associations where *ulama* work together, arrive at agreements and provide solutions to practical questions that will be widely accepted and promote unity among Muslims. A good beginning is the Fiqh Council (Council of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence) in the U.S. and the European Council for Islamic Rulings and Researches founded in London in 1997.[9]

Subculture or Denomination

Reading the writings of Tariq Ramadan with the eye of a sociologist, I recognize that the Muslim community he envisages in the West is not "a subculture," but rather "a denomination." A *subculture* is a collective of people defined by cultural practices that differentiate them from the majority of the population and assign them to the margin of society. This is what Muslim communities in the West often are, but it is not what Ramadan hopes for them. He wants these communities to be participants in mainstream society. A *denomination* is a collectivity defined in the sociology of religion. European sociologists used to distinguish between churches and sects, where churches referred to religious communities that embraced an entire society and were in dialogue with its dominant culture, while sects referred to religious minorities that disapproved of the dominant culture and survived in the margin of society. This distinction lost its meaning in the United States of America, because the establishment of a church was excluded by law. Christians created new institutional forms called "denominations," which, like churches, were in dialogue with the dominant culture and, like sects, did not embrace the entire society and represented only a minority.[10] While there were disagreements among them, the denominations respected one another and worked together on issues that served the common good of society. Since the Catholic Church refused to see itself as a denomination and continued to regard Protestants as heretics, Catholics suffered discrimination in America – and thus formed a religious subculture. When the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) recognized dissident Christians as members of the body of Christ and fostered ecumenical dialogue, the Catholic Church in America became – sociologically speaking – a denomination reconciled to religious pluralism. Jews, Muslims and followers of other religions who came to the U.S. set up organizations that resembled denominations: they respected pluralism and cooperated across denominational lines on civic issues. There have been, and there still are, sects in America that stand apart and live on the margins, but cultural forces operative in society eventually transform them into denominations.

Thanks to the secularization of society and the movements of population, the churches in many European countries have become denominations: they now represent only a minority in society; they are reconciled to religious pluralism; and they address the public not with authority, but with an invitation for dialogue. This is an

historical context in which Ramadan urges Muslims to stop acting like a subculture and become a denomination in critical conversation with society as a whole.

In this context I wish to mention a word that has taken on special meaning in France The word *communitarianism* was invented in the 20th century to refer to a political philosophy that criticizes liberal individualism and emphasizes the role of the community in defining and shaping individuals. Communitarians are social liberals. They are not right-wing thinkers who stress community at the expense of personal freedom, nor are they left-wing thinkers who hold that communities do not enjoy shared values since their members are divided by the class conflict. In a French dictionary of ethics and moral philosophy published in 1996, the article on *le communautarisme* still has the same meaning as the corresponding English expression.[11] But more recently, *le communautarisme* has taken on a different meaning in France: it is now defined as a political philosophy that assigns to a religious, ethnic or cultural community a value more important than the universal values of freedom and equality. This shift in the definition of communitarianism in France reveals the anxiety that the presence of Muslim communities have produced in that country. The affirmation of collective religious identities is quickly perceived as a cultural current that undermines republican values and weakens the cohesion of society. In France, Ramadan's pleading for a strong Muslim community is seen by many as the promotion of a dangerous communitarianism. A more careful sociological analysis distinguishing between *subculture* and *denomination* reveals that Ramadan's pastoral message to the Muslim community is to practise the republican virtues in the name of their faith – that is, to become citizens in the full sense, participate in democratic politics and contribute to the common good of society.

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

2 Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press), 73–77.

3 Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim* (Leicester, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1999), 142.

4 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 132–34.

5 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 161–62.

6 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 168.

7 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 189.

8 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, 190–95.

9 Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, 53.

10 Gregory Baum, "The Church in a North American Perspective," in Gerard Mannion, ed., *The Routledge Companion of the Christian Church* (New York; Routledge 2008), 306–25, 327–30.

11 *Dictionnnaire d'éthique et de philosophie morale*, Monique Canto-Sperber, dir. (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1996), 280–87.

Social Gospel: Then and Now

By Bob McKeon
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At the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Theological Society in Ottawa in May 2009, Dr. Bob McKeon gave a presentation on the social gospel. As editor of The Ecumenist*, I asked Dr. McKeon if he would allow his talk to be reproduced in the pages of our journal. As he points out in his talk, this is a time of dramatic changes for the faith and justice movement (what McKeon calls the social gospel) in the Canadian Christian churches. It is important for senior scholars and activists in the faith and justice movement to record their experiences and impressions in order to create an "institutional memory" for the movement. Dr. McKeon added some of the autobiographical material below as a response to my request.*

David Seljak, Editor

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We can understand the phrase "social gospel" in different ways. We can speak of the social gospel as a specific movement in Canada and the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. We can also use this phrase in a general way to mean the social dimension of the Gospel, which takes on specific manifestations in specific contextual theologies and related historical faith-based social movements that exist in a particular place and time. Social gospel is rooted in "the central conviction that the transformation of unjust social structures is an integral part of Christian mission and ministry."[1] Some might quibble with terms – recent publications use the term "critical theologies."[2] Others speak of contextual theologies. Ben Smillie spoke of "hinterland theologies."[3] Another term that is often used is liberation theology(ies).

My brief presentation will use social gospel in the more general sense. My entry point is the Canadian ecumenical justice and peace movement starting in the mid-1960s. However, it is important to keep in mind the "classic" social gospel of the early 20th century. My purpose for this reflection is to gain insights from reflecting on the social gospel about how to engage theologically our challenging situation today.

Social gospel, as I am using the term, has a beginning and an end. The (classical) social gospel starts in the 1880s and ends sometime after the First World War, in the 1920s. Theologians often write about the demise of such theological movements and offer sharp theological critiques about the inadequacies of the theologies articulated from within these movements (such as an inadequate theology of sin, God, church, etc.). Some theologians argue that we should learn our theological lessons from this case study and never attempt such a (flawed) theological project again. I want to argue the opposite: that it is important that the members of the Christian community, theologians, and particularly faith and justice Christians of every age need to engage in the social gospel project for their own time.

I am well aware of the theological risks of what I propose, but I will argue that this risk is worth taking. After all, the social gospel of the early 20th century, and those subsequently inspired by the social gospel vision and social project, changed the face of the Canadian churches and society.

Let me explain my approach with a brief bit of autobiography. I started my theological studies in 1974 in Alberta. A few years later, I started working in a newly organized diocesan Catholic social justice office. My M.Th. thesis articulated the social justice theology contained in the Canadian Catholic bishops' statements of the time. In the 1980s, I taught courses in social justice theology and Catholic social teaching. It was an exciting time to be engaged both as an activist and as a theologian in this work. There was a sense of connection and common task within my own denomination in partnership with church leadership and with peers in Canada and beyond, and ecumenically with similar folks in other denominations locally, nationally, and internationally.

I left my Alberta work in 1989 and started Ph.D. studies at the Toronto School of Theology. This was a time when the ecumenical faith and justice movement was entering a time of crisis – church leadership became silent, church justice offices closed, key staff were laid off, journals ceased publication, liberation theologians were attacked, and even the flagship national ecumenical justice coalitions were starting their restructuring and downsizing conversations (which continue to this day). I, too, experienced a time of crisis – probably much like an earlier generation of social gospelers did. Was this

faith and justice engagement a misguided youthful fling (and now it was time to get serious and look elsewhere), or was there a deeper theological truth here that was very much worth pursuing more deeply? I chose the second option and found a topic for my doctoral dissertation.

I was faced with a social gospel theology and praxis that had both major continuities and discontinuities with earlier times. This had been a most fruitful time of social gospel engagement and theology that had extended over decades. Yet the situation could change quickly. Through my graduate studies I learned of earlier social gospel theologies and movements that had had similar trajectories. It was exciting and empowering to learn of a dynamic tradition of Canadian faith and justice Christians of an earlier time.

One helpful way I found to understand this situation was by looking at Thomas Kuhn's writing about paradigm change with respect to the history of science. For Kuhn, knowledge is historically situated and exists within a given paradigm or disciplinary matrix, which he defines as "an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community."[4] A particular paradigm influences what are perceived as significant questions and acceptable methodologies for pursuing these questions. For Kuhn, there are two different times for a paradigm. There is a time of relative paradigm stability, which can extend for a considerable period. During this stable time, theoreticians and practitioners can make incremental advances within a community culture and institutional framework of shared assumptions and practices. However, there are also times of crisis, where questions and challenges arise that the dominant paradigm is no longer able to address adequately. The existing paradigm begins to break down and enters into competition with new, contesting paradigms. The new paradigm is not simply an expansion of earlier paradigms; rather, in significant ways, it brings in a new understanding of the world that is incompatible with the earlier paradigm.

Hans Küng has incorporated Kuhn's understanding of paradigm change into a framework for describing the historical development of Christian theology.[5] Küng describes the history of theology as a sequence of theological paradigm changes. Other theologians have built on these insights. One important difference between paradigm change in theology and in science is that while science accepts no ultimate authority that can judge between competing paradigms, Christian theology sees God's revelation in the history of Israel and in the person of Jesus Christ as recorded in Scripture as foundational and authoritative for any theological paradigm.

I found similar language in the writings of my thesis supervisor, Lee Cormie, who saw significant discontinuities (revolutions) in a study of Canadian Catholic social teaching and movements of the 1940s and 1950s and those of the 1960s.[6] He identified a significant shift in these two groups of statements that is "more than a shift in details." He stated that it represents

> a shift in the kind of social teaching, a different experience of God, a different understanding of God, a different understanding of the world, a different conception of the mission of the church in this world, a different starting point and method, and a different kind of authority.[7]

While Cormie spoke of revolutions of theological thought and did not use explicit paradigm language, the scope of shift and discontinuity he described is similar to that addressed by Küng and Kuhn when they speak of paradigm shifts. I would argue that this scope of shift and discontinuity, a paradigm shift, is what is happening in different times of social gospel stability and change.

Cormie named several elements of a social ethic that changed significantly during such a "revolution."[8] I built on these insights in my thesis, which studied and analyzed shifts in what I called Canadian Catholic social justice theological paradigms. I expanded his framework for a social ethic into eight dimensions of what I call a social justice theological paradigm. These dimensions include the organizational infrastructure, the framing of the social question, the social analysis that examines the causes of injustice, the proposed social project, the ethical methodology, operative theology, and ecclesiology. In a time of paradigm stability, there is a coherence and a reciprocal reinforcement among these different dimensions. In times of paradigm crisis, there are likely to be significant disconnections and a lack of coherence among these dimensions.

I want to argue that such a social gospel paradigm existed for a generation at the start of the century. Similarly, such a paradigm existed for a generation starting in the mid 1960s. This concept of social gospel paradigm includes theologians and activists, theological degree programs, models of clergy formation, academic journals, and organizations such as the Canadian Theological Society.

The presence of a relatively stable, coherent paradigm was crucial to the vitality, growth, and continuity of the

faith and justice (social gospel) theologies and movements of my time. This paradigm stability provided a common framework, which included a shared language as well as a societal and theological vision within which a national movement could flourish. Within this shared social gospel paradigm, social justice theologies, movements, and organizations could grow in different parts of the country as well as at a national level. A certain synergy developed so that even in the absence of strong, well-funded, national organizations and a clearly defined leadership structure, effective communications, common actions, and theological reflections became possible with quite different players at local, regional, national, and even international levels. These two social gospel periods I have described were such times of extended paradigm stability, times of significant church social engagement, and productive times for socially engaged theologies.

As Kuhn says, paradigms can enter a period of crisis – opposition from without by competing paradigms, and collapse from within because of inadequacies and the inability to face the challenges of a new time. We see this time of paradigm collapse and paradigm change in the two social gospel periods I have mentioned. Küng points to a significant difference in paradigm change in theology as compared to science. In science, there can be only one surviving paradigm at a time. In theology, multiple theological paradigms can (and do) exist at one time. A new dominant theological paradigm may arise quickly upon the collapse of its preceding paradigm. However, there can also be a time of multiple theological paradigms competing for dominance. This time of paradigm crisis can also be a time of theologies disconnected from the churches' social engagement of the day.

It is important to know what type of time we are in. If we are in a time of paradigm stability, it may make very good sense to commit to incremental change and institutional maintenance (to put significant energies to keep our current theology programs, journals, academic societies, social ministries, and justice coalitions surviving). In a time of paradigm crisis and change, this great effort of survival may become counterproductive. It may be a time to let old programs and theological approaches die. The task becomes one of discerning "signs of the times," discerning how the Spirit may be leading us to what is new in our place and time. It means a time of analyzing the inadequacies of a declining paradigm, and building a new social gospel paradigm with new wisdom and insight.

Times of social gospel paradigm crisis and change are difficult times for many of us. We may find ourselves isolated in the absence of shared continuing organizational frameworks, social change engagements, theological articulations, and communities of discourse. There may be a real challenge to find conversation partners in our work. This may become quite personal, as our jobs are at risk and as our colleges and universities change priorities, restructure, and downsize.

Theology can be of great service to the Church and its involvement in the world at a time like this. A socially engaged theology can give strength, insight, and a focused point of dialogue with the Gospel to those on the front lines of social ministry.

I believe we are in such a time of social gospel paradigm crisis today. Our world is faced with major challenges of interrelated global crises: economic meltdown, food crisis, climate change, peak oil, along with ongoing wars and nuclear proliferation. This comes at a time when the leaders of our Canadian churches are largely silent, and the church justice ministries that have survived to this point are undergoing yet another round of downsizing.

We can learn much about how to live in our time by studying previous times of social gospel paradigm crisis. We can also understand the importance of committing ourselves to discerning the signs of the times, and, for each of us, within our own competence and role, to become part of building a new social gospel in this time of economic and ecological challenge, a time of "kairos" threat and opportunity.

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1 Roger Hutchinson, "Ecumenical Social Action," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Year 2000 Edition, ed. James H. Marsh (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 726.

2 Don Schweitzer and Derek Simon, eds., *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theologies in a Land of Diversity* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004).

3 Ben Smillie, *Beyond the Social Gospel: Church Protest on the Prairies* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991).

4 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 175.

5 Hans Küng, "Paradigm Change in Theology: A Proposal for Discussion," in *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, Hans Küng and David Tracy, eds. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 3–33.

6 Lee Cormie, "Revolutions in Canadian Catholic Social Teaching," in *Church and Canadian Culture*, Robert E. Vandervennen, ed. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 57–85.

7 Cormie, "Revolutions in Canadian Catholic Social Teaching," 58.

8 Lee Cormie, "On the Option for the Poor and Oppressed in Doing Social Ethics," *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 7/1 (1991), 25.

Exploring Boundaries

By Tiffany Puett
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Carol B. Duncan, *This Spot of Ground: Spiritual Baptists in Toronto.*
Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008. xvi + 278 pp.

In *This Spot of Ground: Spiritual Baptists in Toronto,* Carol B. Duncan presents a vivid critical ethnography of a Caribbean diasporic community in Toronto: the Spiritual Baptist Church. Duncan examines the complex relationships among religion, post-colonialism, and experiences of immigration and transnationalism, as well as the realities of multiculturalism in Canada. She also delves into women's religious experiences and the actualization of agency. While Duncan provides a comprehensive overview of the history of the Spiritual Baptist Church both in Toronto and in the Caribbean, the distinguishing contributions of the book lie in the methodological framework and critical themes that she develops.

Duncan explores the boundaries between the researcher and the subject through such means as entries from her personal journal and transcripts of interviews that convey a sense of dialogue by including her own questions and comments, rather than only the responses of the interviewees. This and other methods serve to elevate multiple voices, creating a "talking book." Through giving voice to their stories, community members are witnessing and exercising a sense of agency, a form of testimonial. The significance of the testimonial is undergirded by the reality that many of the community members had never been asked to share their stories or opinions in such a public manner before. The sharing of their stories through interviews presents a powerful platform for making themselves heard.

Duncan introduces *travessao* as both a central notion for the Spiritual Baptist tradition and as a conceptual framework for illumining the dynamic movement that characterizes the Spiritual Baptist tradition. *Travessao*, which can refer to an identity and a consciousness, entails moving across borders, and being able to inhabit with authenticity and integrity multiple spaces at once. As a consciousness, it aids the negotiation of experiences of colonialism, displacement, and transnationalism. As a conceptual framework, *travessao* moves the text beyond the tendency in academic scholarship to rigidly categorize and compartmentalize religious traditions for the sake of analysis and allows for a multiplicity of voices and ways of knowing in the shaping of the narrative and history of the tradition.

The first four chapters of the book explore the significance of journeying, beginning with the physical journeys from Africa to the Americas through the Middle Passage of the transatlantic slave trade and extending to the immigration from the Caribbean to Canada and the U.S. Symbolically, the journey and the voyage take many forms, which can be seen not only in the history of the Spiritual Baptist tradition, but also in the material and visual culture as well as ritual practices of the church. The ship is one such symbol of voyaging in the ritual practices of the church. In fact, an actual ship's wheel located at the centre of the church serves symbolically to steer the congregation along the spiritual journey. This voyage involves drawing together disparate parts from many religious traditions and cultures – African religions, including the Orisha tradition; Buddhism; Hinduism; Christianity; as well as aspects of North American cultures – to create something whole and empowering. Consequently, the identities of community members are often expressed in terms of cultural hybridity. It is within this context of journeying that Duncan also explores the tensions in the experiences of immigration and the realities of multiculturalism in Canada.

In Chapters 5 and 6, Duncan concentrates on the experiences of women in the Spiritual Baptist Church and the African diaspora, with a particular attentiveness to the ways in which the religious tradition facilitates a sense of agency and empowerment outside the norms of traditional feminist consciousness. Though formal church leadership roles are dominated by men, women make up the bulk of the Spiritual Baptist community and "church mothers" play a crucial role in the life of the church. Duncan explores these roles framed by the experience of mothering; she looks at the connections between Spiritual Baptist women's experiences of moth-

ering in a sacred context and the secular mothering work in which many engage as domestic labourers (the former being highly valued and empowering and the latter being largely devalued). Duncan links these mothering experiences to contemporary black feminist consciousness and empowerment.

This book has much to offer students and scholars in several areas. *This Spot of Ground* broadens the field of scholarship on the Black Church in North America, which tends to concentrate on the U.S. Moreover, it will also be useful for those studying religion in Canada, critical ethnography, and feminist studies, as well as those interested in the relationships between religious identity, immigration, and transnationalism.

Interstitial Spaces

By Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd
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Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*.
Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, 164 pp.

Wonhee Anne Joh explores the meaning of the cross from a Korean American perspective, drawing traditional christologies into conversation with feminist, post-colonial theories. She uses post-colonial tools of hybridity, mimicry, and interstitial space to consider the power of the cross through jeong, a Korean concept of a radical form of love that encompasses compassion, affection, solidarity, relationality, vulnerability, and forgiveness. Joh juxtaposes the Korean concepts of jeong, which she summarizes as right-relation, and han, summarized as suffering, with Julia Kristeva's notions of love and the abject, defined as the identity of an individual or collective that is shaped by exclusion or expulsion. Joh suggests that Jesus' han and his abjection on the cross be understood within the power of his jeong/love. She also portrays the cross as mimicry, both representing and challenging patriarchal notions of power and obedience. Through the cross, Joh demonstrates that the concept of jeong can break down the binary opposition of oppressed and oppressor.

Joh draws upon the hybridity of Korean American experiences, including her own, as a starting point for a constructive and political theological reflection. She begins with the tracing of her roots in Korea and explains her sense of displacement both in the United States and in Korea. She feels within herself the tensions between home and elsewhere, roots and routes, Korean and American. She embodies the post-structural understanding of multiple, shifting, and fluid identities and the post-colonial description of hybridity – living in the unsettled, interstitial space between different worlds.

The first chapter explores these post-colonial and post-structural challenges of identity politics and essentialism. Joh examines post-colonial, non-totalizing theories, such as Gayatri Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism" and Chandra Mohanty's theory of relational agency, which allow a political standpoint in the midst of fluid, shifting identity. This examination provides Joh with a feminist appropriation of *jeong*.

The second chapter further defines both *han* and *jeong* through a psychoanalysis of a Korean avant-garde film concerning the Demilitarized Zone and a Korean American documentary of race riots in Los Angeles. Within these definitions, Joh explains the different manifestations of *han. Won-han* is a defensive reaction to overwhelming pain that presents itself as hate and vengefulness, sometimes exploding in *hu-han,* aggressive attacks on the oppressor. In contrast, *jeong-han* seeks collective healing and compassion while fighting societal injustice.

The third chapter explores Korean American experiences of racism. Joh demonstrates how the hybridity of identities offers both resistance to and collaboration with dominating powers through the phenomenon of mimicry. The interstitial third space, which those of hybrid identities inhabit, is the contact zone of oppressor and oppressed – a zone that dilutes these binary oppositions into permeable boundaries.

It is not until the fourth chapter that Joh engages in theological reflection through the use of these post-colonial and post-structural analyses of *jeong* and *han.* Joh engages Jürgen Moltmann's theology of the cross because it resonates with her own *jeong* theology of the cross. However, she faults Moltmann for not going deeply enough into the abjection of *han* on the cross and not engaging the participation of humanity in the work of redemption. She further adds that the *jeong* of the cross would help to radicalize his theology. Joh argues with feminist theologians who suggest that the cross merely perpetuates violence and cannot be redeemed. Rather, Joh suggests that the encompassing of the depth of both *han* and *jeong* within the crucifixion can offer a more transformative, feminist theology.

In the fifth chapter, Joh develops her christology of *jeong* in conversation with a diverse range of feminist theologians. She discusses atonement, sin, salvation, and redemption. She then offers a psychoanalysis of the cross using Kristeva's psychoanalytic categories of abjection and love.

Joh concludes with a critique of *minjung* theologians who try to replace *han* with *dan* (cutting off the oppressor). She contends that a relational theology of *jeong* would be more effective in the transformation, rather than dismantling, of structures of oppression. *Jeong,* as portrayed through the life and death of Jesus, places itself in the interstitial space between oppressor and oppressed, diluting boundaries and binary oppositions.

This book offers an important feminist, post-colonial contribution to the development of contemporary christologies. As evident in this review, it is immersed in the jargon of post-colonial and post-structural theory, which makes it inaccessible to those who are unfamiliar with these theories. It reads as a revised doctoral thesis. This is unfortunate, as Joh offers creative christological corrections and developments that would be helpful not only in theological classrooms, but also in parishes committed to liberative theologies.

The Return of God and American-Style Religion

By Scott Kline
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John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *God Is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith Is Changing the World*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009, 416 pp.

In 1968, Peter Berger, author of the acclaimed *The Sacred Canopy* (1966), predicted in the pages of the *New York Times* that "by the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture." Of course, Berger was not alone in predicting the demise of religion in the modern world. Many of the greatest thinkers in the Western tradition – Voltaire, James Madison, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, Sigmund Freud, and Max Weber, to name just a few – believed that rational, secular thought would eventually displace the irrationality of religion. In the world of politics, democratic reform and the rule of law would undermine ecclesiastical influence in governing bodies at all levels, from municipal councils to parliaments. In the medical field, science would replace miracles and doctors would replace faith healers. And with modern gender roles changing to reflect the growing belief that men and women should be equal, patriarchal structures that supported traditional religious authority would eventually crumble under the weight of a free and equal society.

Yet, "the secular age" envisioned by Berger and others never happened. According to the authors of *God Is Back*, John Micklethwait, editor-in-chief of *The Economist*, and Adrian Wooldridge, its Washington bureau chief, "The very things that were supposed to destroy religion – democracy and markets, technology and reason – are combining to make it stronger." The pressing question, then, is "Was God ever gone?" To almost anyone living outside of Europe, Harvard Square, or Manhattan, the answer would be a resounding "no." Herein lies the point of this book: religion, or, more specifically, Christianity, created the two "sacred texts" of the modern age – Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and the United States Constitution. Moreover, countries around the globe would do well to embrace American-style religion because it is a good investment.

To set the tone for this argument, Micklethwait and Wooldridge dedicate the first four chapters, or one-quarter of this book, to a comparative history of modernity in the United States and Europe. They adopt a rather trite rendering: Enlightenment Europe became godless in spite of the objections from German Romantics and the church, while America found a way to reconcile the fire-and-brimstone message of fundamentalism with democracy and the free market. In Europe, communism, Darwinism, and Comtean sociological positivism eventually supplanted Luther, Herder, and Catholicism. In the U.S., the Great Awakening revivals, Pentecostalism, and televangelism were eventually assimilated into mainstream culture. The result of these two paths to modernity is embodied in the way British leaders, such as Tony Blair, must publicly distance themselves from religion, while in the U.S., leaders such as George W. Bush and Barack Obama, who beat Hillary Clinton by "out-Godding her" (121), must publicly embrace religion. While Micklethwait and Wooldridge are quick to note that Europe will never become as religious as America, they surmise that the "American model seems to have more staying power. The same forces that are reviving religion in America – the quest for community in an increasingly atomized world, the desire to counterbalance choice with a sense of moral certainty – are making headway in Europe. And as people increasingly choose what sort of religion they follow, they are going to make more noise about it" (139).

The remainder of the book is largely an exposé of how "American-style" religion works in conjunction with market capitalism, popular culture, the media, nationalism, immigration policy, and foreign relations. Here the reader will be under no illusions. In spite of the globalist promises of the book's subtitle, *God Is Back* is about the United States. Discussions about Islam and modernity tend to be framed in terms of how globalization is creating tensions among certain Islamic groups and how a model of American-style religion may help leaders calm local and regional fears. Even the chapter entitled "The New Wars of Religion" (chapter 11), which addresses conflicts in Nigeria, India, Saudi Arabia, Palestine-Israel, Iran, and Iraq, resorts to state-

ments by George Weigel and strained references to American fundamentalists, such as James Dobson, to make the case that religious extremists should not define a religion or a religious tradition.

In the book's conclusion, Micklethwait and Wooldridge speculate that their overall message will likely "depress many secularists" (372), presumably because secularists still hold out for a vision of modern society like that depicted by Peter Berger in 1968. While a few secularists may become despondent reading this book, I would suspect that many other readers will grow frustrated by the book's convoluted argument. First, the claim that people want "competition and choice" (i.e., American-style religion) and not "hierarchy and tradition" (i.e., European-style religion) is simply a rhetorical assertion. Even if it were true, Micklethwait and Wooldridge fail to consider *why* this has happened.

Second, the history in *God Is Back* is remarkably clichéd, ideological, and at times wrong. Many readers must surely be ready to move on from the "usual suspects" approach to the history of religion in the U.S.: the Founding Fathers, Jonathan Edwards, Tocqueville, William Jennings Bryan ("Scopes Monkey Trial"), Billy Graham, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Out of this cast of characters, Micklethwait and Wooldridge craft a liberal ideology of choice, individual freedom, and economic competition that, arguably, none of these men would recognize as theirs. Moreover, I can only imagine that readers willing to pick up and buy a 416-page book on this topic will already know a great deal about evangelicals in the United States, the role that religion played in the Bush White House, and the religious affiliations of al-Qaeda terrorists. On topics where readers might glean new information, such as conflicts in Nigeria and India, only a few paragraphs or perhaps a couple of pages are devoted to their complex histories. In general, the whirlwind history yields far too many contradictions and errors. For example, the authors claim that JFK's presidency in 1960 set the stage for a Catholic "nervousness about involvement in the public square" from the 1960s to the 2000s – that is, up until the time when the neoconservative Catholic Fr. Richard John Neuhaus became a noted figure in public life. This conclusion would surely come as a surprise to the American bishops and laity who were publicly involved in issues relating to social justice, Vietnam, and nuclear disarmament during this time. Indeed, had it not been for the vigorous involvement of Catholic bishops, activists, theologians, and social justice groups, neoconservative Catholics such as Neuhaus, Michael Novak, and George Weigel would have had few reasons to enter the public policy fray.

Ultimately, *God Is Back* ends up being a half-baked defense of American-style liberal Protestantism. Instead of asking penetrating questions about the ambivalent relationship between religious traditions and the market, globalization, nationalism, and violence, the authors spin a story of religiously backed democratic capitalism. What would have been a weak argument prior to the global recession that began in 2006–2007 is today, amidst rising unemployment, collapsing American credit markets, and shifting economic power out of the U.S. to China an argument in search of credibility.

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