

Notes on the Development of Andrew Greeley's Sociology of Religion

Three of Greeley's books coalesce to form a statement of his approach to the sociology of religion at one point in his development:

- *Religion in the Year 2000*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969
- *Unsecular Man*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- *The Denominational Society*. Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1972.

In the introduction to R2, G notes that studying the future is a rather new endeavor. One of the interesting things he finds in contemporary 'futurology' is that such writers tend to ignore religion, evidently assuming that it is either insignificant or will not be a factor in the future. Journalists/theologians, however, have written considerably about the future of religion, usually seeing "changes in religious behavior in dramatic trends" (R2 5). A frequent element of this is the hypothesis of **secularization**, for which G finds no empirical evidence and against which this volume is largely directed.

As a sociologist, he finds himself skeptical about "societal generalizations" (8). He notes that both Durkheim and Weber would be skeptical about claims of the disappearance of religion.

As a definition of religion, he relies on Geertz (10); he proceeds to use Otto's notion of the sacred (11), and refers to the "tricky issue" of whether or not the sacred is an essential element in the definition of religion.

Chapter 2 of R2 presents G's understanding the "The Secularization Mode." He begins with D. Martin's 'parable' about a society of declining religion which sounds contemporary but actually refers to Rome, 30 AD.

He then indicates a number of things which are NOT meant by secularization in the present context. He does not simply mean "a concern with the problems and responsibilities and challenges of this world" (16), which concern is characteristic of Judaism and Protestantism. In fact, this is precisely what the Parsonians mean by secularization: "A greater freedom of movement for the individual believer involving almost necessarily a greater concern for this-worldly activity, but not in any sense the exclusion of the value of the otherworldly" (17). G affirms this position.

Huston Smith is close to this position, certainly being pessimistic about the future of religion but less convinced than Berger as to the pervasiveness of present secularization.

To their credit, Berger, Smith, *et al.* give rather precise definitions as to what they mean by "secularization." But the word is used much less precisely in popular discussions, in which G finds at least 6 different meanings (21):

1. Modern science makes belief impossible.
2. Religion does not motivate man in his daily life.
3. There is a drift away from religious faith/commitment.

4. Religion and society are not in close contact with each other and there are vast areas of human behavior on which religion has no direct influence.
5. Religion is more and more relegated to the private sphere.
6. The sacred has little or no role to play in human life, and has little influence on human behavior.

These six meanings are restated in DS (128-130) with slightly more expanded comment.

Thus: "The spirit of the contemporary world is hostile to traditional religion and particularly to the sense of the sacred, and both religion and the sacred are declining in influence both in society as a whole and in the lives of individual members." (22)

In DS (127), G states that the "essential notion" of secularization theory is that "religion is becoming less important to Americans." He "finds himself forced to question this" as a sociologist.

There are various approaches of argument to this position:

- a. Common sense: "Everybody knows that..." (Berger)
- b. Empirical data – e.g., Glock and Stark whose research discovered a relatively high percentage of Protestant respondents who were willing to qualify their assent to doctrinal propositions with "probably." From this they conclude (to their credit, with some tentativeness) that doctrinal orthodoxy is losing its grip.
 But G later comments: "it is naïve to assume that there was not doubt, uncertainty, or hesitation in the past, and it is equally naïve to assume that skepticism, uncertainty, and ambiguity became widespread only in the middle of the twentieth century – or for that matter, only in the middle of the nineteenth century." (R2 65)
- c. Contention that while religious participation/commitment seems to remain rather high in the U.S., this is not true in any other Western nation. (G has found this the most persuasive argument, though D. Martin's research on England adds important qualifications.)
- d. Many social institutions formerly influenced by religion are no longer; thus church doctrine/membership seems to have little impact on what occurs outside church boundaries.
- e. A priori assertions that the rational, empirical, pragmatic implications of urban industrialism or scientific technology leave no room for the mythical, sacral, and otherworldly concerns of traditional religions. Berger develops this in social psychological form by contending that there are diminishing "plausibility structures" for religion in our progressively scientific world, resultant from the plurality of the marketplace of ideas.
 To this, G responds that it seems to be precisely in countries with religious pluralism that religion seems presently to be the strongest. Thus, it seems that "one can create a psychological world in which one's plausibility structure is quite intact." (28) This is true in U.S. and Holland where "religion and membership in religious denominations become highly important means of social location and self-definition." (28-29)

To this point, all such arguments seem to G to be "rooted in the **assumption** that scientific, rational, technological man cannot really accept the mythological and the sacred."

In UM, G offers quotations from numerous thinkers (Eugene Fontinell, Martin Marty, John Cogley, Ramon Echarren, and Peter Berger) which represent the “conventional wisdom” which asserts that religion is in a state of collapse. (2-5)

In responding to these authors, G makes several pertinent comments. He indicates that he has seen no empirical date to warrant such a conclusion. Further, he remarks that “the religious crises of the intellectual community by no means reflect the religious situation of the mass of the people.” (3) He notes that liberalism, evolutionism, socialism, and historicism may have been persistent rivals of religion – but they have “also been extremely unsuccessful rivals.” (3) And if it is argued that there is enormous emotional strain experienced trying to harmonize religion and modern life, G argues “that vastly more persons are able to harmonize religion and modernity without feeling any notable personality strain in the process.” (4) A first reference to Nisbet (5) insists that “fixity is far more characteristic of the human condition than change,” thus leading one to be skeptical of claims that mankind is changing profoundly. Finally – against Berger – G expresses doubt as to whether the supernatural is any more absent from the human horizon today than it was 6,000 years ago.

Some have reacted to G’s assertions as to the persistence of religion by labeling him an ‘optimist.’ G responds: “By temperament I am a morose and melancholy Celt.” (6)

The sociological effort of this book begins with two empirical observations: (1) statistical data do not indicate declining religiousness; (2) resurgence of bizarre forms of the sacred (especially on secular campuses) have persisted long enough that it cannot be simply written off as passing fashion. (7)

A key assumption in this work will be that “one does not analyze contemporary religiousness by limiting oneself to the university campus.” (7) “It is the sheerest sort of snobbery to reject the religion of the majority of the population as irrelevant to the analysis of contemporary religion.” (8)

In DS (130-131), G acknowledges that “there are changing patterns in American religion.” But he also asserts that these “swings” are not particularly new in American society and that they seem to affect a relatively small minority of the population. Further, “we must be careful not to view these changes as necessarily indicating a long-run trend.” (131)

“For reasons we do not fully understand, there are cyclical patterns in religious behavior with upswings and downswings following each other at intervals of perhaps from five to ten years.” (131)

In R2, G turns to the ‘date’ before ‘theory,’ remarking: “A great deal is probably revealed about my own sociological biases by the fact that I present a chapter on date before a chapter on theory” (31); in DS, the order is reversed.

DATA

In R2 (31-34) and UM (8-10) G cites parallels given by Swanson (1968) comparing American religious practice to political practice. The assumption is that political behavior is recognized as active; the parallels show that religious behavior is equally active if not more so. E.g., more Americans attend religious services than vote; about the same “good/excellent” rating is given to job performance of church and government; far more discuss religion than politics; high percentage having read Bible; 40% contribute to church, 5% to political party; amply supply of Protestant ministers; more are “indifferent” to politics than to religion; half the people knew first book of Bible, 95% know the name of Jesus’ mother.

Swanson concludes (R2 35): “The religious data require our being cautious indeed concerning assertions of the present irrelevance of religion for the personal lives and the institutional commitments of most Americans.”

G cites a 13-year (1952-1965) **longitudinal study** done for the *Catholic Digest* (R2 35-39, DS 137-141, UM 11-12). Central conclusion is that “there is almost no change either in basic doctrinal commitments or toward membership and church attendance for American Gentiles” (R2 36). There is a slight downward trend in orthodoxy among Protestant young people, but Catholics are, if anything, “more orthodox than their predecessors” (R2 39). Thus, G notes “the basic continuity among gentiles in the thirteen year period in belief in God, in Christ, in the Trinity, in prayer, in life after death and heaven” (DS 137-138). To be noted, however, is that among Jewish respondents there was striking change. Active ‘church’ membership went up considerably, but agreement with doctrinal propositions went down considerably. G sees this as supporting his contention that “religion in American society provides belonging as well as meaning and that the belonging function underpins and supports the meaning function.” (DS 138)

Another study is the NORC study of 1961 college graduates in the top twelve graduate schools in the mid-1960s (R2 40-46, UM 12-13, DS 145-149). This study found “some erosion of church affiliation among the arts and science graduate students in these top twelve universities but that the erosion is something less than a massive apostasy.” (R2 40) There is some decline of church attendance for Protestants, but not for Catholics and Jews. In this study, it appears that “the churchgoing Catholics are not very different from other graduate students in their values and career plans. They are more likely to consider themselves intellectuals than the nonreligious of all faiths, more likely to describe themselves as politically liberal, just as likely to plan academic careers, just as likely to value originality and creativity, and less likely to value working in the world of ideas.” (R2 46). A rather astonishing finding is that “the Catholic graduate student at the top twelve universities is considerably more likely to go to Mass every week than would be the typical Catholic in the general population.” (DS 146)

Some CONCLUSIONS about the Data:

- “I am merely arguing from the data that religions has managed to persist in the modern world, in some fashion or the other, despite forces of secularization and change which are alleged to be working with great vigor.” (UM 13)

- “The persistence of religious attitudes and behavior would suggest that there may be strong **countervailing forces** at work which if they do not negate, at least weaken somewhat, trends toward secularization and change.” (UM 14)
- “It is also possible that considerable numbers of young people do go through agonies over their religious faith but somehow or other they manage to survive the agony without changing very much their basic orientation concerning religious doctrine and practice.” (Ds 150)
- “While the problem of growing up religiously may be more acute in contemporary American society, or it may be simply more explicit, its ultimate resolution seems not to differ very much from that arrived at by the generations over twenty-five.” (DS 150)
- “The secularization hypotheses is simply not substantiated by any of the empirical data available to us; neither is the hypothesis of grave crisis.” (DS 150)
- “The evidence available to us gives little or no sign of secularization taking place at a rapid pace in American society.” (R2 49-50)
- “If one is to project into the future on the basis of the only empirical indicators available to the sociologist, then one would be very hard put to project a decline in religion.” (R2 54)
- “An observer who has been trained in the social sciences will maintain a professional skepticism about accounts of massive social change which are not backed up by empirical data.” (DS 141)
- “A crisis, of course, there is; doubt and confusion over religion there is; but it tends to be limited to a very small group of the population.” (DS 141)

Other DATA:

David Martin’s research concludes that Church membership/affiliation is less striking than in the U.S., but that “basic religious convictions still seem to persist in great masses of the population.” (R2 51) He contends that social class differences have a good deal to do with lower levels of church attendance (especially for working class persons) because in England (somewhat as in France) the church is seen as related to the higher social classes.

Further, historians make it clear that “the overwhelming majority of the population did not belong to or attend church” in the U.S. prior to the Wesleyan revival. Seventeenth century London is characterized as “a hotbed of religious indifference and nonobservance.” (R2 52)

“It is naïve to assume that there was not doubt, uncertainty, or hesitation in the past, and it is equally naïve to assume that skepticism, uncertainty, and ambiguity became widespread only in the middle of the twentieth century – or for that matter, only in the middle of the nineteenth century.” (R2 65)

Turning from religious affiliation to “the **sacred**” there are also observations which can be made.

Huston Smith makes three observations:

1. More of the sacred persists than meets the eye;
2. What remains of the sacred is durable;
3. The sacred is likely to make a comeback. (R2 55)

G sees “the **psychedelic** revolution” as another indication of the persistence of the sacred.

“At the root of the emergence of the psychedelic is the end of scientific, democratic, secular rationalism and a return to the primordial, instinctual, ecstatic irrationalism that was permitted and even encouraged in most preindustrial societies.” (R2 55-56)

“I’m not suggesting that the society of bourgeois economic rationalism is about to collapse, but I am suggesting that it is in serious trouble; an increasing number of its more sensitive younger members want to have no part of it, and see the madcap irrationalities of psychedelia as a highly desirable alternative.” (R2 55-56)

G quotes Jencks/Riesman: “It is a rebellion against the new hyper-rationalist world, where the capacity for abstract reasoning is considered the gauge of human worth and the precondition for human happiness. . . The new generation does not wish men to become mindless; they wish them to become something more than minds.” (R2 57)

He also cites Huston Smith’s account of a course he taught in which he was amazed at his students’ interests in all sorts of mystical occult phenomena. Smith remarks: “What I learned was that the human mind stands ready to believe anything – absolutely anything – as long as it provides an alternative to the totally desacralized mechanomorphic outlook of objective science.” (R2 59)

Turning to Rock music, G cites commentators who, e.g., see The Doors as ‘shamans’ and the Beatles as ‘gurus.’ Benjamin DeMott remarks that this music meets needs that the rest of life fails to: “Although I know the problems, and even perhaps the ‘correct’ solutions, I also know that this knowledge of mine lacks potency.” (R2 62)

“So psychedelia takes man away from the ordinary into the **really real** which, as any reader of Mircea Eliade knows, is precisely what religions have always attempted to do – to transcend the finite, ordinary, and confused of their everyday life and bring man into touch with the basic realities of the universe. Whatever else it may be, psychedelia is a religious movement.” (R2 63)

“There still is in psychedelia something profoundly religious, and it is, in its own way, a judgment on the failures of the Christian religions of Western society.” (R2 63)

Even Berger acknowledges that “the supernatural, banished from cognitive respectability by the intellectual authorities, may survive in hidden nooks and crannies of the culture.” (R2 63) And: “Sizable numbers of the specimen ‘modern man’ have not lost a propensity for awe, for the uncanny, for all those possibilities that are legislated against by the canons of secularized rationality.” (R2 64)

“The religious aura and the religious terminology utilized in many of the movements that are in revolt against the scientific, rational, optimistic society would at least give pause to those who are predicting the demise of man’s religious inclinations.” (R2 64).

G does acknowledge that REAL **CHANGES** have occurred:

It may be granted that social institutions are not as overtly and obviously religious as they used to be. But he also notes Bellah's contention that there remains influence because of the Christian-influenced social atmosphere and the indirect influence of individual believers (R2 66-67). But it can be stated that "religion has no direct influence over the large corporate structures." (UM 14)

A considerable number of phenomena which once received a directly religious interpretation now can be explained by rational science (UM 14). But "the scientific, rationalistic world view has by no means permeated the general population." (R2 66)

Man's development of his capacities for abstract thought and expression means that myths are no longer self-sufficient and must be interpreted (UM 14).

Religion is a more explicit and individual matter now (UM 15) and related to this, religious commitment is, at least to some extent, a matter of free choice (UM 15). But there is a sense in which this **increases** the importance of religion: "with the possibility of option there comes the immense burden of decision, but the need to **decide** about religion makes religion a more central and explicit question than it has even been before." (UM 15)

"I do not for a moment deny social and technological change, nor do I deny that these changes have implications – powerful and pervasive implications – for man's religious behavior, but what I am stressing. . . is that however much the context has changed, the basic functions religion plays in human life are essentially the same:

1. Religion provides man with a 'faith' or, to use the sociological terminology, a **meaning system**, which enables him to cope with the question of the Ultimate.
2. Religion provides man with some feeling of **belonging** with the communal group whose members share ultimate commitments and through that sharing provide strong basic support for one another.
3. Religion strives to **integrate** with the rest of human life the profound and disturbing forces of human **sexuality**.
4. Religion offers man a channel for coming into intimate **contact with the Powers** that are real, a contact which is frequently mystical and even ecstatic.
5. Religion provides man with certain **leaders** whose role is to provide both **comfort and challenge** when man attempts to wrestle with the Ultimate." (UM 15-16)

"These needs are inherent in the human condition and there is no reason to believe that they are any less widespread or less powerful today." (UM 16)

G also notes that the survey data indicates some notable changes among American Catholics. "There have been considerable changes also among American Catholics, but not so much in their doctrinal orthodoxy or their organization affiliation as in their attitudes toward the sexual morality of the church and toward their clergy. A very notable decline in American Catholics' willingness to accept the traditional teaching of their Church on birth control. . . . the restructuring of the relationship between clergy and laity in the Church." (DS 141)

“However, the changing attitudes toward the clergy and changing sexual morality have not affected either the basic doctrinal loyalty of Catholics or their organizational involvement.” (DS 141)

THEORIES related to the “Secularization Hypothesis:”

G posits two basic “streams in contemporary sociology,” each of them emphasizing a somewhat different social function of religion: one stream follows Durkheim, and the other follows Weber. (In DS, he adds a third strain, “Comfort theories: - e.g., Freud).

Emile **DURKHEIM**’s interest was in the “function” of religion; he held it to be the “cement that held society together. . . it was man’s consciousness of the social forces which society brought to bear on his life; it was especially communal awareness of the “effervescence” which societal religious rituals produced. Religion was society’s consciousness of itself.” (R2 76-77)

For Durkheim, “religion has its source in man’s perception of a power outside himself, both exercising constraint on him and providing him with reinforcement and support. This ‘power’ is in fact the power of society. Religion, then, is society’s consciousness of itself, a consciousness which is particularly manifest in what Durkheim calls the *representations collectifs*: that is to say, those ritual actions in which the whole of a human community assembles to ratify, celebrate, and reinforce their unity.” (UM 127)

Durkheim himself wrote: “The individuals which compose it feel themselves united to each other by the simple fact that they think in the same way in regard to the sacred and its relations with the profane world, and by the fact that they translate these common ideas into common practices in what is called Church.” (UM 127)

G holds that Durkheim “thoroughly and devastatingly refuted the evolutionists;” accordingly, social scientists have generally assumed that religion is virtually everywhere and is likely to survive for a long time to come.” (DS 32)

Durkheim held that “society is that sacred object to which man turns and devotes himself through religion” (DS 32). Religion is “a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members.” (DS 32) Thus, “the experience of the sacred is man’s experience of the pressures which society brings upon him, and also of the support which society provides for him, and particularly of that support which man perceives in the ‘effervescence of collective representations.’” (DS 33)

“Religion, then, is society worshipping itself in order that it may focus its energies toward the idealization of itself.” (DS 34)

Durkheim: “A society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal For a society is not made up merely of the mass of individuals who compose it, the ground which they occupy, the things which they use and the movements which they perform, but above all of the idea which it forms of itself.” (DS 34)

In the Durkheim school, Bronislaw **MALINOWSKI** argued that “religion was a set of common convictions, commitments, and rituals around which a society could organize itself and without which societal unity was not possible.” Religions served to integrate society, especially protecting it from “disintegration” when faced with death. (R2 77; cf. UM 128-129)

In analyzing the Trobrianders’ dealing with death, he judged that the rituals were both directed against the “overwhelming fear, the corroding doubt” of the dying individual, and also against the disintegration of the society which survived the individual’s death.

Malinowski: “... torn between fear and piety, reverence and horror, love and disgust, they are in a state of mind which might lead to mental disintegration. Out of this, religion lifts the individual by what could be called spiritual co-operation in the sacred mortuary rites. . . The bond of union between the recently dead and the survivors is maintained, a fact of immense importance for the continuity of culture and for the safe keeping of tradition. . . . what the survivor goes through on such an occasion prepares him for his own death.” (DS 35-36)

Religion maintains the unity of society: “Its function is to hold society together in face of the stress and strains brought to it by disasters and threats that are both internal and external.” (DS 36)

Malinowski also distinguished between magic and religion. “Magic was an attempt to allay the anxiety that man faces when confronted with the unknown” (as when the islanders went fishing on the high seas outside the familiar lagoon); “Religion, on the other hand, produces emotions such as reverence for tradition, harmony with environment, courage and confidence in sorrow, accommodation with the prospect of death. . . . Magic is immediately practical and utilitarian, religion looks to more remote goals and indirectly and unintentionally to the preservation of society.” (DS 37)

In research after Durkheim and Malinowski it became clear that this emphasis needed qualification, as “it became more and more clear that religion wasn’t always an effective and integrating agent. Some elements of religion can contribute to social integration while other elements can contribute to social disintegration.” (DS 37-38) Merton was involved in considering this phenomenon. It remains clear, though, that “one of religion’s essential functions is to provide a value system which, held in common by many men, can serve as the cement for social relationships.” (DS 38) Geertz suggests that at least one of the times when religion is disintegrative is when there is a lag between culture and social structure. (DS 38)

Will HERBERG is also in the Durkheim stream. He saw two kinds of religion in the U.S. The “overarching religion of Americanism” provides the values and rituals that cement together American society; secondly, denominational religion operates within the context of the religion of Americanism. It is this denominationalism which gives a person the means of both self-definition and social location. Religion is essentially a society-building apparatus, with one form providing social integration and the other providing personal integration within the larger society. (R2 78-79)

“Herberg points out with considerable persuasiveness how the overarching religion of ‘Americanism’ – with its Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish components – provides a social consensus which is at the root of

American unity, while at the same time the various components that make up this consensus provide for the members of the society a 'self-definition,' a 'social location,' in contrast with other groups within the larger society. (UM 129)

Herberg: "It is the American Way of Life that supplies American society with an 'overarching sense of unity' amid conflict." (UM 130)

Herberg judged this phenomenon in a rather negative light, as is evident in the following quotation: Religion in American seems to possess little capacity for rising above the relativities and ambiguities of the national consciousness and bringing to bear the judgment of God upon the nation and its ways. The identification of religions with the national purpose is almost inevitable in a situation in which religion is so frequently felt to be a way of American 'belonging'." (UM 131)

G, of course, does not share the depth of Herberg's negative judgment. His central point is to argue that religion is necessarily a social activity and always has been; that it provides a man with a community to belong to and always has." (UM 132)

Within this Durkheimian tradition, "it is difficult to argue against the continuation of religion." (R2 78)
[On this tradition, cf. also UM 126-131.]

"Obviously, the **meaning and belonging functions of religion cannot be separated**. We learn a particular system of religious meaning from the society to which we belong, and the set of convictions which enables us to interpret the general order of existence also facilitates our participation in the society with others who hold the same broad conceptions." (UM 79-80)

Max **WEBER** stressed the importance of religion as a **meaning** phenomenon. He was engaged in a continual interaction with the thought of Marx, being convinced (contra Marx) "that economics wasn't everything and that the other structures, including 'meaning' structures, influenced society." (UM 79) Weber rejected the notion that the direction of causality ran entirely in one direction; that the economy shaped the rest of society without being shaped in return; and that a belief system was structured by society without society in its turn being structured by a belief system." (DS 39) Thus, Weber was "a believer in **pluralistic interaction**;" i.e., religion and society influence each other.

This was the conviction which lie behind Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He wanted "to ascertain whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the qualitative and the quantitative expansion of that spirit over the world." The question was this: "What was the background of ideas which would account for the sort of activity apparently directed toward profit alone as a calling to which the individual feels himself to have an ethical obligation?" (DS 40)

Thus, Weber "stubbornly held to a liberal conviction that ideas did have consequences." (DS 40)

Weber begins his analysis of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by noting the fact that German Protestant areas were more industrialized than were Catholic areas. He wondered what kind of historical processes could be responsible for this, and suggested that "there may be something in Protestant belief which would incline Protestants to the kinds of activity which are essential for

capitalistic cusses.” To do this, he needed first to establish what the heart of capitalism was and suggested that it had to do with the fact that “economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for satisfaction of his material needs.” Rather, earning money becomes the “expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling;” making money becomes a vocation. The spirit of capitalism, thus, is the “rationalization of economic life in terms of one’s God-given vocation.” He maintained that “the Calvinist notion of an absolute predestination, which is manifested by the performance of good works, is at the heart of the justification of capitalist activity.” The Calvinist is expected to prove his worth by “an innerworldly asceticism which demands a meticulous attention to the affairs of everyday life as a proof of one’s predestination.” This was developed still further by the Baptists; because of their emphasis on invisible church and reception of salvation, active church participation was removed as the manifestation of salvation and this enabled the capitalist to identify his worldly vocation almost completely with his conviction of salvation. With this there came the Puritan relinquishment of all forms of pleasure and amusement in favor of hard, continuous labor. Weber finally held, however, that capitalism had developed to the point where it operated on a purely mechanical basis, thus defeating the very asceticism which had supported its foundation. In such a situation, “the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions which often actually give it the character of sport.” In its specifically American setting, however, Weber had noted that the development of sects was related to the fact that church membership tended to serve as a guarantee that one can be expected to observe the ethical norms required for business operation. (DS 41-44)

At no time did Weber contend that Protestantism “caused” capitalism. He holds a very nuanced theory of complex interrelationship among social forces. He “displays subtle virtuosity in describing the interrelations between religion and material culture, with religion now active as a cause and now as an effect.” Later in life, he put both capitalistic rationalism and its puritan ethic in perspective against the rationalizing tendency which had gone on in occidental civilization long before the reformation. Thus, capitalism represents an economic manifestation of a factor which has been at work in occidental society for a long time. . . . capitalism and Protestantism both are manifestations of the same factor and hence related through a common antecedent cause.” (DS 48)

(On a note concerning Weber’s “Method,” Reinhard Bendix insists that Weber’s methodology involves holding that only concrete social facts exist, and that history must therefore be concerned with investigating the cause of unique events. What the sociologist looks for are “**regularities**” that can be found in comparative study of meaningful human behavior in various societies. These regularities could be formulated in a system of “**ideal types**” which would encompass the historical range of these regularities. Such ideal-types are not concepts, but constructions which simplify the complexity of historical data by exaggerating uniformities. They are, thus, abstract models against which reality can be judged.)

Talcott PARSONS develops a useful perspective on the sociology of religion through use of his more generalized theory of action. He contends that when societies were more simply, elements of belief and behavior that were directly religious and others that were not were fused together in undifferentiated structures; but as society became more complex these simple structures became differentiated into a

complex of related but independent structures. "As society becomes more and more complex, and as religion itself also becomes more complex and diversified, the religious components both of society and of the individual personality became more and more differentiated from the rest of society." A key point in this development was reached with Luther who "broke through to make the individual a religiously autonomous entity" who is responsible for his own religious concerns. There is a real sense in which this differentiation makes religion more important rather than less insofar as it has now become a matter of choice. Religion has been stripped of 'accidental functions' (as has the family), but "it is not able to concentrate directly on its essential function of providing a value system of ultimate answers and basic moral postures." Parsons further contends that since modern social institutions have evolved from the process of differentiation in the society where the Christian ethic was strong, they have assumed into their structure many Christian ethical values; further, the individual actors within those institutions still, to a very considerable extent, operate with a world-view, a system of meaning and of moral value which was shaped by the Christian and Jewish religions. (R2 80-84)

The influence of Weber on Parsons is evident in his insistence that "ideas do have consequence for action, and social action in its turn has a reciprocal impact on the formation of idea systems." Parsons maintains a major emphasis, accordingly, on the meaning-providing function of religions. He contends that religion is designed to cope with man's frustrations. In his words: From the psychological point of view, religion has its greatest relevance to the points of maximum strain and tension in human life as well as to positive affirmations of faith in life, often in the face of these strains." Human experience (especially of suffering) must be "endowed with meaning." (DS 50-51).

In terms of the previously considered matter of differentiation, responsibility takes on a twofold aspect for the individual: "responsibility **of** the individual in that he cannot rely on a dependent relation to others, or to some authority, to absolve him of responsibility. . . the other aspect is the responsibility **for** and **to**, responsibility for results and to other persons and collectivities." So, modern religion has endowed man with both independence and responsibility, while at the same time modern culture has provided him with a host of new and terrifying moral problems. Religion does not impose ready-made solutions to these problems through the forms of institutional social control it exercised in the past but rather through a heightened consciousness of both personal responsibility and moral reality. (DS 53)

G sees three central contributions in Parsons' thought:

1. He affirms the importance of the system of religious ideas for human action;
2. He points out that religion's function is essentially a providing of meaning for the extraordinary events of life (which then 'filters down' to provide meaning for the ordinary); and
3. He suggests quite powerfully that because modern religion has provided man with greater moral initiative and responsibility and thus operates on society only indirectly, the meaning-providing role of religion is no less important than it was in the past. (DS 54)

In broad strokes, Parson's notion of development can be stated thus: 'the world religions liberated man's religious decisions from the forces of nature and of the tribe; Christianity freed his religious conviction (in theory) from the dominance of the civil society; and Protestantism liberated him from the control of the church – at least, as far as his religious decisions are concerned.' (UM 72) G notes: The individual in

contemporary society not only enjoys more religious options but is much freer of communal constraint in exercising his options than were his ancestors." (UM 73)

Thomas **LUCKMANN** holds a position general similar to Parsons. He sees the separation of religion from other social institutions as the "result of the inability of religious institutions to generate value schemes which were meaningful or relevant to those other institutions; hence, organized religion is now merely one of the competing value schemes that are operative in modern society." Man still needs ultimate explanation, but "only in the familial and other interstitial areas of society which are not co-opted by the large corporate structures." (R2 84-85)

Luckmann begins his theory with a phenomenology of the human religious dimension of relationship. "Man becomes conscious of himself as himself through the experience of interacting with his fellow men, and the sense of one's own distinction over against others forces man to construct interpretative schemes, the top layer of which – the ultimate interpretation – is religion." Thus, the organism in isolation is nothing but a separate pole of "meaningless subjective processes" until becoming a Self by constructing an "objective universe of meaning" through interaction with others. Modern religion tends to operate in the private sphere: "the residual areas which do not fall under the domain of the self-providing meaning of the large corporate structures." In significant distinction to Parsons, Luckmann does not see secularist institutions operating with residual religious values, but out of purely rationalist values, determined by the functional requirements of the institution. What occurs is that there is an assortment of meaning-systems – the official religious one and the others produced by social institutions. The individual is "a consumer of religious schemes put together by himself." The resultant meaning-schemes tend to include these themes: individual autonomy, self-expression, self-realization, mobility ethos, sexuality, and familism. Given this, there results a progressive isolation of the individual from society. As the individual's meaning system becomes more and more privatized, there is less and less impact on the institutions which continue to become more autonomous; there then results "a process of dehumanization of the basic structural components of the social order." Luckmann expresses his ambivalence about this situation thus: While the new social form of religion supports dehumanization of the social structure, it also 'sacralizes' the (relative) relation of human consciousness from the constraint of the latter. This liberation represents a historically unprecedented opportunity for the autonomy of personal life for 'everybody.' It also contains a serious danger – of motivating mass withdrawal into the private sphere' while 'Rome burns'." (DS 58-63)

Luckmann also states the relationships of these meaning-systems to the cultural situations, asserting that we tend to inherit our culture systems as part of a society through the socialization experience. "Human organisms normally transcend their biological nature by internalizing a historically given universe of meaning. . . the human organism becomes a Self in concrete processes of socialization. . . , which is actualized in the internalization of the configuration of meaning underlying a historical social order. We shall call this configuration of meaning a world view." (UM 134-135)

G notes five agreements between Parsons and Luckmann:

1. Religion has no, or very little, direct influence on the nonreligious corporate structures of contemporary society;
2. Religion does have considerable direct influence on man's more intimate relationships, because there is a close link between the primordial ties of family and man's ultimate interpretive scheme;
3. Organized religion does continue to be important to man, though it must compete with other ideologies;
4. Man makes his own choice in his interpretive schemes, at least within the constraints imposed by his culture and his personality; and
5. Despite this fact, organized religion does make a major contribution to the formation of the interpretive schemes of a good many, if not most, people. (R2 89-90)

From Parsons' work, one would be inclined to argue that the sacred will continue to be a meaningful category of human existence, from Luckmann's perspective, one would see other non-sacral interpretive schemes not exactly replacing the sacred entirely, but at least winning some believers away from sacral interpretations.

Clifford **GEERTZ** defines religion as **"a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."** (DS 54; R2 10; UM 61)

Geertz insists that man must be able to **interpret** disorganized and chaotic phenomena that impinge on his consciousness. He must have a system of meaning which can serve as a road map through his life. There are three points where chaos threatens to deprive man not merely of interpretations but of interpretability. Meaning is required in times of **bafflement, pain, and moral paradox** – when man's analytic capacities of his powers of endurance of his moral insights are pushed to their limits. The strange, the painful, the unjust, all have to be explained or the world stops being interpretable. There are other systems of meaning (e.g., common sense, science, ideology, aesthetics), but what distinguished religion are the following characteristics: its defining concern is acceptance of realities, not action upon them; it concerns nonhypothetical truths; rather than detachment and analysis, its concern is commitment and encounter; and it is deeply concerned with fact. The religions system most powerfully acts in ritual which embodies it. "In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world." Thus, Geertz sees religion as man's attempt to idealize an ultimate meaning system to which he can turn through ritual in episodes of crisis. (DS 54-55)

As mentioned above, Geertz identifies five meaning systems:

1. "Common sense" involves a simple acceptance of the world, its objects and its processes, as being just what they seem to be.
2. "Science" involves deliberate doubt and systematic inquiry, suspending the pragmatic mode in favor of disinterested observation.

3. The “artistic” perspective attempts to dwell purely on appearances; it is “an engrossment in surfaces.”
4. “Ideology” is an attempt to interpret political reality, especially when common sense and science fail to do so; it names the structures of situations in such a way that the attitude contained toward them is one of commitment, and it seeks to motivate action. (UM 58-59)
5. “Religion” moves beyond the realities of everyday life to wider ones which correct and complete them. It is characterized by acceptance, commitment, encounter, nonhypothetical truth, factuality. (UM 60-61)

Man’s dependence on symbols is so great that if interpretability is threatened, chaos is perceived as lurking just around the corner. As stated above, Geertz sees chaos threatening man in three sets of circumstances:

1. At the limits of his analytic capacities;
2. At the limits of his powers of endurance; and
3. At the limits of his moral insight.

Religion must somehow cope with these challenges, the most important of which is “**bafflement**.” “To explain those things which cry out for explanation, man has an explanatory apparatus – to complex of received culture patterns (common sense, science, philosophical speculation, myth) that one has for mapping the empirical world. Any chronic failure of one’s explanatory apparatus tends to lead to a deep disquiet.” (UM 60-62) Geertz narrates the story of a large **toadstool** whose growth was perceived by the Javanese as “odd, strange, and uncanny” and needing explanation; indeed, until it was explained it “threatened their most general ability to understand the world.” Such a state lurks just in the background of life: “What lies beyond a relatively fixed frontier of accredited knowledge looms as a constant background to the daily round of practical life. This unknown sets ordinary human experience in a permanent context of metaphysical concern and raised the dim, back-of-the-mind suspicion that one may be adrift in an absurd world” (UM 62-83)

The problems of moral evil and human suffering are closely related to that of bafflement. “The strange opacity of certain empirical events, the dumb senselessness of intense or inexorable pain, and the enigmatic unaccountability of gross iniquity all raise the uncomfortable suspicion that perhaps the world, and hence man’s life in the world, has no genuine order at all. . . . And the religious response to this suspicion is in each case the same: the formulation, by means of symbols, of an image of such a genuine order of the world which will account for, and even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles, and paradoxes in human experience.” But beyond describing the nature of ultimate reality religion also attempts to tell man how he must live in order that he might be at harmony with it. Thus, “The demonstration of a meaningful relation between the values a people holds and the general order of existence within which it finds itself is an essential element in all religions.” (UM 63-64)

Common sense is not enough to explain life, for the events through which we live are forever outrunning the power of our ordinary, everyday, moral, emotional, and intellectual concepts to construe them – leaving us, as a Javanese image has it, “like a water buffalo listening to an orchestra!” Therefore, by

answering the most basic questions that a man can ask, it provides him with an interpretation which will shape even the perspectives in which he views his daily life. (UM 64)

Geertz insists that even in primitive societies religious belief coexists with skepticism. He also affirms that the religious perspective persists in the most modern societies. (UM 65)

The force of a religion in supporting social values rests on the ability of its symbols to formulate a world-view in which those values as well as the forces opposing their realization are fundamental ingredients. Ritual is the enactment in ceremony of those symbols which provide one with an ultimate explanation. "It is in ritual that somehow this conviction is generated that religious conceptions are veridical and that religious directives are sound." Such ritual does not merely allow man to understand "the really real," it brings him into contact with it. Belief is the "pale, remembered reflection of an experience in the midst of everyday life." (UM 66)

Geertz studies two societies (Moroccan and Javanese) under the impact of Westernization. In both societies, he found that the core of the populations still cling to the classical symbols and find the compelling. Even though science reduces the need for religious interpretation in particular areas, still vast areas of bafflement remain. (UM 67-69)

Related to this experience of Westernization/modernization, G finds three closely related issues which are at the core of contemporary religious consciousness (UM 69-72):

1. Religious symbols must now be **interpreted**. Since science has reduced the area of bafflement, symbols must be translated in abstract and rational concepts, if only so that the border between religion and science can be more clearly defined – allowing one to have some notion of where religion is on its own ground. For example, Nisbet posits three areas where religious interpretations (over science) will always be needed: (1) the uncertainties of life; (2) the alienation of the human mind; and (3) the sense of dependence that is found in all human beings as an inevitable consequence of being a social animal.
2. One must now **choose**. There are competing alternative systems of meaning confronting one. The response to this usually involves selecting elements from various schemes; thus, new normative systems not directly religious in origin are co-opted into one's personal religious system and take on a sacral or quasi-sacral character.
3. To a large extent this choosing must be done **by oneself**. Contemporary man is, of course, not totally free from social, ethnic and other influences, but he is relatively more free than any of his predecessors have been. But the other side of this is that he is also 'free' of communal support. One's responsibility is increased; the search for meaning – while exciting and challenging – is not easy.

"In contemporary religion, then, religious symbol systems must be interpreted. The religious agent is free to choose among a wide variety of possible meaning systems, and he exercises this terrible freedom to some considerable extent by himself." (UM 73)

And “if we argue that a meaning system which must be the object of relatively conscious and explicit choice is more important than one that is simply inherited, we would conclude that modern man is **more** religious than his predecessors precisely because not he must interpret and choose and his predecessors did not have to do either.” (UM 74)

Robert **BELLAH** defines religion as “a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence,” which relates him closely to Parsons and Geertz. He contends that in the process of religious evolution, religion both (a) differentiates itself from the rest of the environment and (b) enables man to differentiate himself more clearly from the world around him. He postulates **five phases of religious evolution**:

1. Primitive, characterized by participation/identification;
2. Archaic, in which mythical beings are objectified and man interacts with them as role opposites;
3. Historic religious symbolization leads for the first time to a clearly structured conception of the self, and promises man that he can understand the fundamental structure of reality and participate salvifically in it;
4. Early modern religion (Reformation) which declared salvation potentially available to any man;
5. Modern religious which is beginning to understand the laws of the self’s own existence and so help man take responsibility for his own fate. In such a situation, it becomes increasingly possible/important for each individual to work out his own ultimate solutions, with the church providing a favorable environment for this.

Throughout the development, there is an increasingly autonomous man, and for this development and the incredibly complex relationship to reality, a highly complex religious system is required. (DS 55-57)

Bellah’s contribution to the notion of “civil religion” will be considered below.

There are also **COMFORT** theorists who see religion as essentially providing comfort, serenity, and reassurance to those who are troubled or disturbed. **Freud**, of course, held that religion is wish-fulfillment born of the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man; and man’s relationship to God is merely a reassertion of the infantile relationship with his parents. **Glock** is not that radical, but does assert that religious value systems characteristically sanction prevailing institutions, being essentially a conservative response to suffering and deprivation. It bids the deprived to accept their lot and to see it as the just outcome of rules that are the best possible. (DS 64)

G has difficulties with Glock’s analysis. While agreeing that religious commitment will perhaps more often contribute to political conservatism, he nonetheless insists that religious commitment and political radicalism can (and do) coexist. This leads him to consider the work of Gordon **ALLPORT**, who distinguishes between “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” religion; this enables him to lay out more specifically the correlation between prejudice and religion (which have historically often gone hand in hand). It does seem that “religion seems peculiarly suited to the needs of the fanatical personality. This is especially true in the world (Bellah: “historical”) religions; since it is not the individual who is assumed to be responsible for accepting/rejecting salvation, the individual ‘infidel’ was presumed to have bad will and

thus be a legitimate object of fanatical hatred. Yet Allport notes that the relationship between religion and prejudice seems to be paradoxical, for some religious people seem to be remarkably unprejudiced while some saints have become fanatics; some fervent church members violently oppose racial integration, some strongly support it. Among Allport's most interesting findings is that the relationship between religiousness (church attendance) and bigotry is "curvilinear" – i.e., the least prejudiced respondents are the most devout and the least devout; the most prejudiced are those with middle levels of religious devotion.

It was out of these findings that Allport hypothesized the two kinds of religion. "Extrinsic religion" refers to the situation in which religion has become "a dull habit;" it is "something to use, but not to live." It is used for personal comfort or convenience. "Intrinsic religion" involves a fundamentally motivated commitment. It is integral, covering everything in and beyond experience. It is a hunger for, and a commitment to, an ideal unification of one's life, but always under a unifying conception of the nature of all existence. In testing, a third type ("indiscriminately proreligious") was found who agreed with both extrinsic and intrinsic responses ("religious muddleheaded-ness"). The research indicated that "the extrinsic type is more prejudices than the intrinsic type and that the indiscriminate type is more prejudiced than either of the two consistent types."

| Target of Prejudice | <u>Mean Prejudice Score</u> | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Intrinsic | Extrinsic | Inconsistent |
| Anti-Negro | 28.7 | 33.0 | 36.0 |
| Anti-Jewish | 22.6 | 24.6 | 28.9 |
| Anti-Other | 20.4 | 23.3 | 26.1 |
| Jungle¹ | 7.9 | 8.7 | 9.6 |
| CMI² | 10.2 | 11.8 | 13.4 |

¹Generalized suspiciousness and distrust

²Custodial Mental Illness scale

Allport hypothesizes that someone who needs to be propped up by religion is also likely to need the support of prejudice. But one who is able to make an overarching religious commitment is not likely to have the need for prejudice as a support for an insecure personality. Concerning the indiscriminate/inconsistent type: people with undifferentiated styles of thinking/feeling are not entirely secure in a world that for the most part demands fine and accurate distinctions. The resulting diffuse anxiety may well dispose them to grapple onto religion and to distrust strange ethnic groups. Thus, prejudice (like tolerance) is deeply embedded in the personality structure and reflects a consistent cognitive style. In research on religion, then, to know that person is in some sense 'religious' is not as important as to know the role religion plays in the economy of his life.

The relationship between religion and prejudice is complex. The prejudiced personality does not result from religious teaching, though it may find reinforcement for its prejudice in some dimensions of religious teaching. In social science, it is something less than responsible to suggest that religion causes

prejudice, particularly when those who make the kind of authentic religious commitment that their faith demands of them are the least prejudiced.

Unfortunately, at the present stage of our understanding of the human personality, it does not seem possible for the religious denominations to do very much about changing that cognitive style inherited from his parents rather than from his religion. (DS 205-213)

In countering the “conventional wisdom” concerning secularization, G makes considerable use of the work of Robert **NISBET**. G contends that secularization theory depends on two assumptions: (1) organic evolution; (2) *Gesellschaft* replacing *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies). These lead theorists to posit the development of “secular man” and “technological man” who have “come of age” and no longer need a sense of mystery and the sacred. G counters that “the man who can do without the sacred, without the primordial, and without roots exists, if he exists at all, I the great secular universities.

Nisbet argues to the strength of “persistence” in history of modes of behavior. “Habit” enables us to suspend conscious thought so that thought can be transferred to other spheres not yet reduced to habit. The consequence is that few of us welcome change, especially in those areas where we feel most deeply identified: family, work, religion. As an example, he notes how the structure of universities remains remarkably similar across centuries. Also, monogamy goes on century after century. He also notes Thomas Kuhn’s work on the resistance to change in science. The bottom line: basic changes in structures occur rarely, and the persistence and fixity of structures is one of the givens of the human condition. This lead him to reject the notion of “organic evolution:” “Change cannot be deduced or empirically derived from the elements of social structure.” The body-metaphor for social reality, Nisbet argues, has nothing to do with the facts of social reality. “Change is not continuous, and the successive changes which are manifest in the record do *not* emerge genetically one from the other.” G continues: “Events – discrete, sometimes random, generally unpredictable – create the warp and woof of human history, not organic evolution.” Change is neither constant, genetically induced, continuous, not directional. When historians reconstruct the past in terms of cycles and trajectories, therefore, the trajectory is the construction of the historian, not history. Nisbet: “In any concrete, empirical, substantive sense, ‘civilization’ of ‘mankind’ can only be taken to mean the vast, nearly incommensurable totality of ways of living of all the peoples who have ever existed on earth. How does one make an entity out of this far-flung and diversified conglomerate of peoples and acts? The answer is, we cannot.” (UM 18-28)

Whereas the “conventional wisdom” presumes dramatic, continuous, directional change, the empirical data can be much more easily accounted for in an explanatory model which accepts Nisbet’s dictum that fixity and persistence are more typical than change.

Further, G does not accept the assumption that society is evolving from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* is characterized (by Nisbet) as relationships encompassing human beings as full personalities; the key type is kinship; the claims of the social unity upon the individual tend to be nearly total; essential is the quality of strong cohesiveness of persons to one another and the quality of rooted, persisting collective identity; there is a profound ethic of solidarity – a sense of ‘we’ – and a vivid sense

of commitment of the whole self to the community. *Gesellschaft* engages the individual in only one of the aspects of his total being; it is more tenuous, loose, and less deeply rooted in terms of allegiance/commitment; individuals are linked more or less casually or contractually, in terms of some specific interests; such groups cannot command depths of loyalty or become the focus of motivation. (UM 29-30)

G acknowledges that there are more relationships which involve only a part of one's personality at the present time than they were previously; but this does not mean that *Gemeinschaft* relationships are disappearing. None of the "sociological giants" contended this, even though it is easy to misinterpret them in this way. No, man's primordial ties persist vigorously. The fallacy of assuming that they are on the wane is based on the rather quaint notion that there are only a limited number of relationships possible for a human being. In fact, there are simply more relationships. A vast network of *Gesellschaft* relationships has become a superstructure based on an infrastructure of persisting *Gemeinschaft* relationships. There have been additions to the pool of human relationships, not substitutions for old relationships. The critical question for social analysis ought to be how these two kinds of relationships affect one another in a society which has truly grown far more complex than it was centuries ago. (UM 30-31)

G contends that there are implicit value judgments in contemporary social science which presume the waning of *Gemeinschaft*. The implicit basic premise of such social analysis is that the "public world" is the real world, that what goes on in the corporate structures is that which holds society together and that the primordial or the tribal are limited to certain reactionary segments within the society and will even be eradicated by a generation or two of college education. The implicit value premise is that the rationalized society is not only the way things are but the way things should be. The primordial/pre-rational ties are seen as "unenlightened" and "reactionary." The evolution from the non-rational to the rational, the sacred to the profane, the primordial to the contractual, the folk to the urban is seen not merely as a useful analytic model, but as a profoundly righteous moral imperative. G accepts the usefulness of the *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* model; but the trouble he sees in it is the strong temptation either to ignore or to treat as residual phenomena whatever can't be made to fit the model. (UM 33-35)

G thus suggests another model to be used in conjunction with the 'official one' or as the component of a more elaborate model which will integrate the two. According to this model, the basic ties of friendship, primary relationship, land, faith, common origin and consciousness of kind persist much as they did in the Ice Age. They are the very stuff out of which society is made, and in their absence the corporate structures would collapse. These primordial, pre-rational bonds which hold men and women together have been transmuted by the changing context, but that does not mean that they have been eliminated. It simply means that they operative in a **different context** and perhaps in a different way. They remain every bit as decisive for human relationships as they were in the past, because the ties of interpersonal affection are now required more rather than less by marriage partners; and while they may appear structurally tenuous, such ties of affection can be far more demanding on the total personality than were the structural ties of the past. (UM 35-36)

What this model sees having happened is a tremendous **complexification** of society, with vast pyramids of corporate structures being erected on a substratum of primordial relationships. Collectivities grouped around primordial bonds not only offer desirable cultural richness and variety, but they are also basic pillars of support for the urban social structure. (UM 36)

G's contention is that much more research data can be fitted into the second model than into the 'conventional' model. He mentions Mayo's research which demonstrated how decisive informal friendship groups were in the supposedly rationalized/formalized factory; Kennedy demonstrated in the 1940s that there had been no change in patterns of religious intermarriage for a half century. Stouffer showed how decisive personality was in holding together the combat squad; Lazarsfeld proved that voting decisions were not made by isolated individuals but rather by members of intimate primary groups; Kars showed how marketing decisions and the use of drugs involved decisions strongly influenced by informal personal relationships; Herberg suggested a model explaining that religion is important in the U.S. precisely because it provided self-definition and social location; Wilson discovered that police sergeants of different ethnic groups have different administrative styles; Levine made clear that the Irish have a highly distinctive political style; NORL research indicates that ethnicity is a moderately strong predictor of career choice; studies of hospital behavior show that different ethnic groups respond differently to pain; other NORC research shows a moderately strong correlation between ethnicity and a number of behavioral and attitudinal measures, even when social class has been held constant; professional practice in large cities tends to be organized along religious or ethnic lines. (UM 37-38)

Such data indicates need for a complement to the 'conventional' model, which must be freed from any evolutionary interpretation and divested of moralistic overtones. (UM 39)

Social change there has been; some of it has enriched human living and some of it has polluted the human environment. We are far better off than our ancestors, but that is not to say that we are all that much different from them; and because we know more than they did, it does not necessarily follow that we are either morally or intellectually superior to them. (UM 40)

One of the basic themes of Friedrich **HEER**'s intellectual history is "the persistence of the archaic tradition in the face of the modernizing tendencies of Western society." He sees the history of the Western world as a gigantic dialogue between archaic civilization and modernizing civilization, with the archaic managing not only to survive but to influence "the high culture, every bit as much as it was influenced by it." (UM 41-42)

Heer sees the struggle between the two cultures as having generally assumed three forms:

1. An open battle on the part of the higher culture and its governmental order against the folk-culture, which could never be entirely vanquished;
2. A manifold process of assimilation and accommodation took place;
3. Within the great creative personalities a constant psychological dialogue went on between the two worlds. (UM 43-44)

Heer, however, judges that the archaic may have finally been routed; G, of course, differs, and offers present interest in astrology as one indication of the persistence of the archaic.

G insists that the 'religious crisis' and 'religious decline' posited by many social theorists are matters of dogma rooted in their doctrinaire assumptions about the nature of history and social change. Neither the crisis nor its assumptions can be substantiated by empirical fact. (UM 45)

Two other 'mythical assumptions' are contested. According to the **literary myth**, one may write of a society in terms of the ideas generated by its intellectuals and philosophers, and having done so, one can then be presumed to have adequately described the social processes of the society. G counters that although intellectuals are not unimportant, neither are they the whole human society, however much they may seem to themselves to be the most forward and progressive elements within the society. There is also the "intolerable" **myth that the present generation is the hinge of history**, and that modern man is the only man who has ever thought rationally or operated scientifically. G refers to Levi-Strauss' *Savage Mind* which posited a long scientific tradition already in the period of Neolithic man. (UM 49-50)

G acknowledges that significant changes have occurred in the human condition, which have transformed both the physical conditions of human life and also the social structure, though he argues that the social structure has been transformed not by destroying old relationships but by expanding the number and variety of possible relationships. He lists the following changes (UM 50-52):

1. The discovery of writing and mathematics and the utilization of both has improved man's capacity for abstract thought.
2. The process of 'rationalization,' i.e., the attempt to organize human social structures and human thought according to values drawn directly from human reason; this is not unique to our time, but the cumulative effects of rationalization have been great.
3. Man's technology has become dramatically more sophisticated and more powerful
4. There has been a complexification of human relationships, largely related to the emergence of large corporate structures; man takes on a whole new set of relationships, with his life becoming richer, more complicated, and, quite possibly, more confusing.
5. The process of "individuation" (Nisbet), i.e., the release of the individual from the ties and constraints of community – release being spoken of in relative terms, insofar as man must make more decisions and must exercise more choices than he ever had to before.

None of these changes, however, is necessary, continuous, genetically induced, or directional; and they by no means indicate a crisis-for or decline-in religion. However dramatic the changes may be, they do not mean that contemporary man's religious needs are totally different from the needs of his predecessors. If anything, the changes aggravate the need for faith, community, meaningful sexuality, the sacred, and religious leadership, because they make the need more explicit, more conscious, and more subject to choice. (UM 53)

Seymour LIPSET contends that the American value system has always been a mixture of the secular and the sacred and so has American religion. He notes that European observers of America (e.g., de

Tocqueville) remarked on the intense religious interests of Americans. He also suggests that from the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, approximately three fifths of the American people have been affiliated with churches. He also notes that American religion tends to be practical/ethical rather than dogmatic/theoretical. And he finally contends that secularity may result from the separation of church and state in American society, which has given religion *per se* a specific rather than a diffuse role in American society. The influence of religion on “weekdays” must be in terms of generally agreed upon morality which cannot be identified with the teachings of any given denomination. But American religion has persevered through two centuries precisely because it has been flexible enough to adjust to the changes in American society and stable enough to maintain a constant relationship with the stable traits of the American value system. In other words, religion as an interpretive scheme has survived precisely because religion as a social organization has been plastic enough to provide fellowship and belonging for Americans. (DS 151-153)

One might argue that, given this relationship between religion and culture, there has not been a sufficiently **prophetic dimension** to American religion. G counters that the very fact that American religion has been flexible enough to incorporate the secular within itself and to reinforce the broad value system of American society has enabled the prophetic elements within it to stay alive and to find a large audience to which to preach. Only when the meaning components of religion are taken with at least some seriousness by major elements of the population is prophecy likely to get a hearing. (DS 154)

Peter **BERGER** calls attention to certain “signs of the transcendent” (or “**rumors of angels**”) present in common human experience. He refers to the following: order, play, hope, moral outrage, and the comic. G finds in this analysis an indication that even though scientific bafflement may have declined, bafflement over the human condition continues as strong as ever – and stronger, because now it is more explicit.

Langdon **GILKEY**, in comparable analysis, analyzes “secular experience” to show that at its very core there is a “context of **ultimacy**” which is at least a negative hierophany from the beginnings of a positive one. Gilkey concludes that “the fundamental traits of man’s religious existence are as characteristic of modern secular life as they were of any life in the past; again it is the sacred that established and makes possible³ and of value the profane, and it is the sacred dimension that continually threatens all that man has built.” It is the sense of our own mortality/finitude which makes us desperately search for something that will protect us from the Void and give some permanency to our efforts. Gilkey: “A ‘hierophany’ and so an experience of an unconditioned dimension of existence is not at all absent from ordinary life, as the philosophies of secularism maintain. This dimension or framework of Ultimacy appears **directly** in the awareness of an unconditioned Void, and a dim but powerful awareness of this negative context of Ultimacy is the source of our common traits of fanaticism, frantic striving, meaninglessness and boredom, and terror at death and the future. . . . It is experienced **indirectly** in the joyful wonder, the creative meanings, and the resolute courage of life despite its obvious contingency, relativity and temporary character. . . . It appears as a Void that raises but may not answer all our ultimate questions about life, and produces in dim awareness the anxiety our ordinary life reveals; or it may appear as that ultimate mystery whose present produces our existence and shapes its meaning, the

'Holy Nothingness' which is the beginning from which we come, the inscrutable fate that rules over our meanings, and the dark end to which we go." (UM 79-82)

G: "When man experiences guilt, reconciliation, moral judgment, the inevitability of death, and the joyous, constructive response of his personality to the challenge of the Void, he is moving in an area which Geertz would describe as one of 'bafflement'." The citations of Berger and Gilkey have been intended to point out the persistence of bafflement even in a supposedly scientific and rational world. The core of the argument is that without meaning we are incomplete and unfinished animals. Life has no direction at all unless it has some ultimate direction. Approximate direction in the midst of an ultimate existential drift produces an overriding sense of 'bafflement,' which some men may be able to tolerate but which most men reject. Man will no longer need a 'faith' only when he has evolved beyond the experience of bafflement. (UM 82-83)

Dialectics of **RELIGIOUS "STYLE"** can be distinguished.

A first distinction is between **folk** and **elite** styles. Gustav Mensching contends that in the millennium before the birth of Christ, a number of things happened to human religion. Basically the old nature and folk religions based on local community and profoundly integrated in the food-producing processes were replaced by the world religions. He points to four elements in this change:

1. It is the individual, not the group that is the focus of the new religion;
2. Man no longer felt himself born into a divine relationship, but found himself in a 'condition of nonsalvation';
3. Religion was denationalized as man became the object of salvation; and
4. A universal religion required spreading the word of salvation to others.

The world religions evolve a complicated theology, moral system, and cultic practice. This "high religion" is not always satisfactory to the masses, who are moved more by the subconscious than by the conscious, more by the unusual/fantastic than by the logical/rational, more by the traditional than by the intellectual, more by the magical than the mystical, and more by the demigod than by the saint. Therefore they select certain propositions, imperatives, and practices from the high religion, rearrange them to suit their own needs, and combine them with the fold traditions of more primitive religions to produce their own particular synthesis of the world religion and the nature religion which it succeeded. Such fold religion is remarkable durable. But just as the tendency for the folk to evolve their own versions of the elite religious traditions is powerful, so too is the tendency for the elite to denounce the folk for doing this strong.

Another important distinction is Gordon Allport's differentiation between **extrinsic**/instrumental and **intrinsic** religion, considered above. Allport notes that whereas the extrinsic orientation provides soil for all sorts of prejudice, with intrinsic religion "dogma is tempered with humility" and "religion is no longer limited to the single sentiments of self-interest."

A further key distinction is between the **demonic** in religion and the **non-demonic** (for lack of a better word). The demonic is that in which man has to some greater or lesser extent lost control of himself.

The non-demonic is that in which man is generally in control of what he is doing. The demonic relates to the possibility of religion becoming the occasion of "collective behavior" (cf., e.g., millenarianism). Since religion by definition deals with experiences that take man outside himself, it seems to have certain built-in strains toward the demonic and the destructive.

DIMENSIONS of RELIGION:

Man's religious behavior encompasses immense variety/diversity. G dialectically analyzes eight continua which constitute useful models for viewing and interpreting religious change.

ONE: In **theology**, there is a strain between (a) **orthodoxy**: the desire to maintain religious revelation/doctrine in its original pristine state, and (b) **liberalism**: a desire to present the doctrine in such a way that it is meaningful for this world in which the theologian and his contemporaries live. (DS 22) G contends that this dialectic has been accelerated in the last century and a half because of the perceived threat to religion and theology in modern times. In Protestantism this is evident in Barth's orthodox reaction to liberalism, and the subsequent existential efforts of Tillich, followed by "the rapid shift in fashions in the 1960s." Although Catholicism managed to avoid this dialectic for some time by "freezing theology in the state it was in at the time of John of St. Thomas," this theological freeze came to an end with Vatican II and presumably Catholicism will not be subject to the dialectic once again. This seems inevitable, since "the nature of the theological enterprise seems to be that one tries simultaneously to honor and respect the traditions of the past and reinterpret these traditions in response to the demands of one's own situation." G suggests that a fruitful development in this ongoing dialectic will be dialogue between theology and social science (which he suspects will be possible before the polarizations between religion and the hard sciences is resolved). There can well be considerable interchange between theology and the social sciences since the 'unit ideas' with which many modern theologians are wrestling – person, community, relationship – are also ideas with which, if they were not introduced into contemporary consciousness by social science, the social scientists are at least quite familiar. Yet this dialogue has just begun. Theologians do not seem to have yet listened very seriously to what existentialist psychologists and other clinicians have said about the dynamics of personality growth and about the need for trust, openness, and affection in the growth process. Nor do the traditional religions seem to have coped very adequately with the tremendous breakthrough in understanding of human sexuality that Sigmund Freud made possible – which is surprising given the pervasive sexual symbolism in Scripture and liturgy. Thus, G feels quite safe in projecting into the future a dramatic increase in theological concern with personality and sexuality. A more comprehensive element of intellectual concern (which would embrace personality and sexuality) is "anthropology." The social scientists have provided us with an immense amount of information about human life and human relationships. Related to this would be Berger's notion of "signals of transcendence." Also, closely connected to anthropology would be concern for a "theology of Christian community." These two overlap since man's personality develops in communities, and communities emerge out of the interaction of persons. Theologians will need to face the social scientific understanding of such dynamics. Also related to these concerns, it seems inevitable that theologians will need to focus on "death." And contemporary interest in the non-rational may lead to a renewal of theologizing about the mystical and contemplative. There will also be a need to continue trying to cope with the problem of

evil. And given the interests of contemporary philosophy, theologians will continue to be concerned about language questions. Finally, there will need to be serious scholarly examination of traditions as traditions; dialogue with historians of religion will also need to continue. In all of this, the conservative-liberal dialectic will continue. (R2 105-118)

TWO and THREE: In liturgy/ritual, there are two continua useful for reviewing: **Simple Church vs. High Church**, and **Dionysian vs. Apollonian**. (DS 23) This dialectic is between desire for elaborate and serious ceremonial and the equally powerful desire for simple, intelligible, and 'ordinary' ritual. I.e., since liturgy deals with the sacred, it must be a very sacred event; but since it also deals with man, it must be a very human event. (R2 125)

It first helps to have a notion of what ritual is. Edward Shils offers a definition: "Ritual is a stereotyped, symbolically concentrated expression of beliefs and sentiments regarding ultimate things. It is a way of renewing contact with ultimate things, of bringing more vividly to the mind through symbolic performances certain centrally important processes and norms." He considers man's need for contact with sacred values, for order and meaning in order, to be too fundamental for the human race to allow itself to be bereft of the rich and elaborate scheme of interpretation of existence which is made available by the great world religions. One specific location of such need is for ritual ways to mark life transitions, marking its seriousness with some sort of consecration. (R2 121-123)

The first aspect of the dialectic is Simple/High Church. Simple Church liturgy is simple, informal, casual. It usually involves a small group, and represents a belief that God should be worshipped plainly. High Church ritual is based on the concept that whatever is being done for the Deity should be done with a maximum of human effort. It usually takes place in elaborate churches, with highly stylized patterns of action. (DS 23)

Apollonian liturgy stems from viewing man as basically rational; thus it is basically rational – sober, moderate, with a bare hint of emotion. Dionysian liturgy emphasizes the nonrational, the ecstatic, the emotional in man's prayer, arguing that man can only come in contact with the Deity if he transcends the sedate rationality of his everyday life. (DS 23)

G delineates four possibilities from this:

1. Simple Church and Dionysian;
2. Simple Church and Apollonian
3. High Church and Dionysian; and
4. High Church and Apollonian

G contends that in both Protestant and Catholic churches the present tendencies are toward nonrational and emotive. (DAS 23-24)

In his early work (R2) he had found hints as to the future of liturgy by looking to the world of **psychedelia**. He notes that psychedelia is an "attempt at the *ecstatic*," quoting Goldman on rock music: "the effect of rock is to spotlight (things) in a field of high concentration and merge them with the spectator in a union that is almost mystical." G senses that psychedelia enables rational man to pull out

of themselves, to back away from and stand over against ordinary experience and judge it in the quality of new insight or from the perspective of new unity. Psychedelia is also *primordial* ("prerational"); it seeks to put aside the hang-ups of organized society and its conventions in order to get in touch with the profound underlying natural forces in which we are all immerse. Rock music (as a combination of R&B and Gospel) provides the hungup hyper-rationalized white man with two qualities of behavior – sensuality and enthusiasm – which are dysfunctional in his bureaucratized, formalized, computerized life. G also sees the romantic return to nature of the hippie communities as an effective judgment on realistic secular society. Psychedelia also attempts to be *contemplative*, in that it tries to break through appearances and see "truth 'like it is'." They perceive truth as not merely on the cognitive level but in the deepest level of their personality. Psychedelia is also *ceremonial*, in that it is given to the use of exotic and esoteric symbols. It is also *ritualistic*, in that it achieves its effects through the stylized repetition of sound and action which simultaneously released the individual from old unions and immerses him in new unities. In primitive ritualistic religions, ritual is for the sake of producing psychological states in which the religious initiate was able to free himself from the controls and rigidities of ordinary life and 'break through' (as the Doors put it) 'to the other side.' Psychedelia is *communitarian*, i.e., it attempts to connect the relationships of everyday living with some kind of concrete and practical application of the insights of mystic union which it has perceived during its shamanistic experience. It is repulsed by the phoniness of industrial secular society and tries to create communities of its own motivated by common faith and common love, in which true believers may relate to one another as authentic human beings. Also, psychedelia is profoundly *sexual*. Sex and religion are the two most powerful nonrational forces of the human personality. That they should be linked, and even allied, in their battle to overthrow the tyranny of reason is surprising only to the highly Jansenized Christian who has lost sight of the sexual imagery in his own faith. One aspect of this is that psychedelia is dissatisfied with what it takes to be the narrowness, frustration, and joylessness of "upper-middle-class marriage." G insists that within the Christian tradition it is necessary to assert that sex must be joyous and playful and that all human relationships are profoundly sexual in origin. Sex and faith, sex and mystical union, sex and the primordial forces of the world, sex and ritual – these relationships have been part of the implicit wisdom of most human religions. The failure of contemporary Western religions to remember this wisdom is one of the reasons for the reappearance of the wisdom in the world of psychedelics. (R2 126-133)

G projects a number of trends. There will be a dramatic resurgence of the Dionysian in liturgy, to promote the release of nonrational and ecstatic forces in man, and to enrich and reinforce community ties in which a man finds himself. Liturgy will thus turn to those forms of popular art which seem most ecstatic. There will be increased emphasis on liturgy's role in building community, and liturgical emphasis on self-fulfillment, self-development and self-expression. He also suspects that there will be ritualizing of sexuality. If both sexuality and liturgy become freed from the restraints the past has imposed on them, it will be recognized that they have much in common. (R2 134-136)

He concludes: ritual is a datum of the human condition. The ecstatic, the nonrational, the Dionysian are almost certain to increase dramatically in post-industrial society, if only because prosperity and technology make more time available for such behavior.

FOUR: In **organization**, there is a dialectic between **church and sect**. The *church* responds to man's instinct to make his religion as universal and as comprehensive as possible. To do this, the church must be elaborate and have a complicated structure and an established hierarchy. The *sect* represents the human tendency to keep one's religion as authentic as possible; to do this it must necessarily be small in numbers. Church and sect are not separate entities, but rather separate tendencies that exist within almost any major religious denomination, some of whose members stress the organizational and the institutional, while others stress the interpersonal and the communal. A contemporary trend toward sects in church organization responds to man's new quest for meaningful relationships in small groups. (DS 24-25)

Those believers who prefer the sect polarity within religions will generally justify themselves in terms of trying to recapture the simplicity, the intimacy, the spontaneity, and the informality of the founder and his group of followers, whereas those whose thrust is toward the hierarchic and the organizational will argue that they are trying to obey the founder's injunction to spread the religious faith to the ends of the earth, and that any religion that attempts to be universal will necessarily have to have some kind of formal hierarchic structure. Institutionalization surely presents problems, but it is also inevitable in the human condition because it is the only way man knows to cope with large numbers of people and with a complex division of labor. And with the present state of our knowledge of social organizations, it need no longer be said that institutionalization inevitably leads to a decline of spontaneity and intimacy among the members of the institution. Large institutions can sustain small intimate groups within their boundaries; in fact, the maintenance of these groups is positively conducive to == indeed, imperative for – the health of the large organization. And the ability of an ecclesiastical structure to tolerate within its boundaries large numbers of diverse communitarian groups is a strong guarantee against schisms. G argues that the church must facilitate healthy growth of the sects and the sects must promote the healthy development of the church. In the present, it seems that the sect phenomenon is undergoing a powerful revival, with the theological concern over personalism, Low Church liturgy, and expressive clergy creating a climate in which informal and intimate religious movements will flourish. What such groups are doing is trying to establish within the ecclesiastical structures new religious groupings that correspond to what they perceive to be their own religious needs and interests. (R2 154-159)

Also in this area, it seems certain that denominationalism – intertwined as it is with region, social class, and ethnicity – will continue to be the significant form of American religion. Ecumenism, thus, will continue to be a denominational ecumenism. It seems probable that all the churches will continue to be suspicious of their mushrooming bureaucracies; yet the bureaucracies will continue to increase and hopefully will grow somewhat more efficient. With this, there will be demands for increased autonomy for local congregations. It seems probable that the elites within the churches will continue to be critical of the social and religious conservatism of the masses, while the masses in their turn will be critical of the religious and political radicalism of the elites. (R2 159-162)

The strains/dilemmas facing organizational structures are likely to grow more intense. Thus, religious institutions will need to become more sophisticated and more flexible. Given instantaneous communication and much better-educated membership, institutional bonds must be loosened somewhat if the churches are not going to be completely disrupted. They will need to provide a context

for the many dialogues, debates, controversies, and confrontations that will continue to rage. That is, the only real alternative to organizational tolerance for diversity is civil war. G projects with this that there will be more emphasis on the individual agent making his own moral decisions; and morality will stress more of the whole orientation of a person's life than individual actions. "By the end of this century, most religious denominations will have begun to recognize that in a large, complex society pluralism, individual decision-making, collegial governance, tolerance for diversity, protection of fundamental rights with due process provisions, and tolerance for controversy are absolutely essential for any large corporate organization that is to survive with some degree of health." (R2 162-165)

FIVE: Concerning the religious **minister**, there is a dialectic between emphasis on expecting him to be "a man of GOD" and expecting him to be "a MAN of God." From one point of view he should be separate and apart from others, holier than they, living what could be called a '**monastic**' life. On the other hand, there is emphasis on his **humanity**. He should be close to others, involved in the human condition. The tendency at present is to emphasize very strongly the secular dimensions of the clerical role, though there are indications that the monastic may be returning. (DS 25-26)

G notes that the religious functionary has always been necessary, and yet that man typically has been quite ambivalent about his clergy. The religious functionary represents the sacred, and man is as disconcerted by the functionary as he is by that which the functionary represents. In the same regard, the holy man has certain ambivalences with regard to his own role. In addition to the above comments on the dialectic, G here notes that the Roman Catholic clergy were isolated from their people for a long time by the invisible but highly effective barriers of "clerical culture." It seems probable, in reaction to this, that the opposite tendency will exercise strong influence in the years to come. G also suspects that there will be some development in seeing the clerical function as limited (part-time and limited-term); he also presumes that there will be a much greater plurality of ministries. The number of women who are considered to be clergy will increase, although there will be great resistance to accepting them as equally clerical with men; over the very long run the pressure for equality for women in the clergy is likely to overcome even the most unassailable of theological arguments. Despite any changes, however, a full-time local clergyman will continue to be the most common and typical manifestation of the clerical role. However, the relationship between the local clergyman and his congregation may change substantially. It is likely that he will have more specialized training and he may be more independent vis-à-vis his congregation. Nonetheless, the local clergyman will still primarily be concerned with being a minister of the sacred to his people in a fashion not essentially different from all his predecessors in the role of holy man. A key development is that the priest will be expected to play a reassuring, affective, and loving role. There is much healing to be done in ordinary human relationships, and people will expect their clergy to be at the heart of that healing. But in a highly rationalized, formalized, technological society, expressive personalities are at a premium. There may, therefore, be increased emphasis on the recruitment and training of clergymen who are skilled in the expressive and affective modality of behavior. It seems possible that the clerical life has lost its appeal for young people because it is perceived as so rigid, so bogged down with unimportant minutiae, so trivial in its impact on society, and so underpaid. If the ministry can be presented as an occupation which in fact is merely an

institutionalized niche for expressive and affectionate behavior, then one suspects that in an age of hyper-personalism the ministry will not want for new recruits. (R2 139-150)

SIX: In **piety**, the dialectic is between **the Incarnational and the eschatological**. The *Incarnational* approach stresses the fact that man works out his salvation by being in and of the world. He is to redeem/transform the world, and his ordinary, everyday activities have a redemptive/transformational value. The *eschatological* approach stresses that man's home is not in this world. His mission is to be as independent of this world as possible and to detach himself whenever he can from its compelling obligations so that he may reflect on the glories that are to come. The major emphasis at present is on the Incarnational, but there are signs that modern man is beginning to believe that "the world might be too much with us." (DS 26-27)

SEVEN: In **ethics**, the dialectic is between **the systematic and the situational**. *Systematic* ethics emphasize that there are certain fixed principles of good/evil to which every religious man must be committed and from which religion cannot condone any exceptions; further, the requirements of the ethical life can be deduced generally from a priori and theoretical systems. The *situational* approach stresses that moral decisions are in the final analysis made by individuals in highly concrete situation; ethical systems may provide guidelines, but not specific and concrete solutions. Systematic ethics are in bad repute in all the churches except the Catholic, where moral theologians are becoming sympathetic to the general approach of the situationists. (DS 27)

EIGHT: In **world-view**, the dialectic is between **pessimism and optimism**. The *pessimist* religionist can see nothing but sin, persecution, suffering, evil, and hardship. The *optimist* is willing to stress that God does draw straight with crooked lines and that out of evil can come good. These attitudes seem to be more related to personality than to sociological variables. (DS 27-28).

RELIGION and COMMUNITY:

G uses Nisbet's definition of community which uses the term to extend far beyond 'local' community. It is used to encompass **all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time**; it is founded on man conceived in his wholeness rather than in one or another of the roles. It draws its psychological strength from levels of motivation deeper than those of mere volition of interest, and it achieves its fulfillment in a submergence of individual will that is not possible in unions of mere convenience or rational assent. It is a fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, of membership and volition. Its archetype, both historically and symbolically, is the family. (UM 132)

G argues that religion is learned and exercised within a community and is also a 'natural' locus for man around which he organizes his communities. We are most likely to join in intimate relationships with those who share the same interpretive schemes, culture systems, and mythologies that we do. As Luckmann contends (cf. above) man transcends his biological nature and becomes fully human when he interprets. He interprets only when involvement with others requires interpretation. It is precisely the experience of others as his partners in interaction that demands for man that he begin to evolve a meaning system. But such a system is not developed *ex nihilo*: rather, we tend to inherit our culture

systems as part of a society (nation, social class, ethnic group, etc.) through the socialization experience. Luckmann: "Human organisms normally transcend their biological nature by internalizing a historically given universe of meaning. . . the human organism becomes a Self in concrete processes of socialization. . . (this process) is fundamentally religious. . . . it is actualized in the internalization of the configuration of meaning underlying a historical social order. We shall call this configuration of meaning a world view." Thus, our interpretive scheme is integrated into our personalities in the most intimate maturational processes. Religious fixity, therefore, is rooted in the socialization process, particularly insofar as this process provides ultimate meaning for others and for Self. We absorb our world view the way we absorb language; and while there are disadvantages to this, the advantages are that we do not 'start from scratch' but are able to draw upon a reservoir of significance. (UM 133-135)

G relates the story of being on a panel with a college student who insisted that he could not accept anything from the past, since "yellow men were being murdered in Vietnam and black men were being oppressed in our cities." G responded that the principles on which the young student was taking his stand (against aggressive warfare on weaker peoples, and against racial oppression) were not self-evident principles. This young man was able to hold them only because he stood on the shoulders of predecessors who had developed such ethical principles over several thousand years, a development which was arduous and which may not be irreversible. (UM 136)

Acquisition of interpretive schemes is social in a twofold sense:

1. it is required by the fact that we become conscious of interacting with others; and
2. it is provided by the others with whom we interact. But further, such schemes also serve as the basis for continued social process. (UM 137)

There is considerable **data on the persistence of community**. The tendency to maintain "denominational homogeneity" within marriage is strong. NORC data indicates that 75% of both Protestant and Catholic respondents report that their three best friends are of the same religion as they. The practice of law, medicine, and dentistry in large cities still tends to be organized along denominational lines. Neighborhoods tend to have heavy proportions of members of one religious group; voting patterns differ greatly among the three principal religious groups. One study of a well-to-do suburban community even indicated that at the local country club, Catholics chose other Catholics as golf partners by a ratio of seven to one. (UM 140-141)

Society is not structured by everyone being like everyone else, but rather by people finding community in the midst of diversity, by being able to integrate commonality and diversity. Men choose to identify with their religion because they must identify with something and religion is one of the most intimate and personal things they have. A religious collectivity is a 'natural' for human solidarity. (UM 141-142)

The number of *Gemeinschaft* relationships probably has not declined since our peasant grandparents left their villages in Europe. It is altogether possible that the quality of these relationships has improved. There is more intimacy between husband and wife; and there seems to be a good deal more room for creativity, spontaneity, privacy, and individuality in the *Gemeinschaft* relationships of family and friendship. It seems that amid the severe personal and social dislocations of the immigration process,

our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents strove mightily to keep alive as best they could the *Gemeinschaft* relationships of their villages. The achievement-oriented *Gesellschaft* society does not replace *Gemeinschaft* relationships for most of us but simply adds a new level of relationships which did not previously exist. (UM 142)

It seems that even in the world of achievement and production:

1. we seek to break down formal, impersonal, official organizational charts to establish informal, casual friendship groups; and
2. we also seek out our own kind. We tend to associate with our own kind, even in the world of business, profession, and finance, whenever it is feasible to do so. (UM 143-144)

G refers to the manic “**quest for community**” which is manifested in so many different ways in contemporary society. He contends that there are basic causes for this, and the most powerful is the fact that there are inevitable stress and strain between *Gemeinschaft* relationships and *Gesellschaft* relationships. He further notes that the “quest for community” can mean a number of different but related things:

1. Man is seeking more intimacy in the midst of the *Gesellschaft* society;
2. Man is seeking for some way to harmonize the demands of his *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* life;
3. Man is seeking some sort of relief from the incredible strain and tension the public sphere imposes upon him;
4. Man is attempting to escape entirely from the *Gesellschaft* life and limit his relationships to *Gemeinschaft* ones;
5. Man is seeking intimacy in community simply because he has become aware that it is something to be sought and because he has been equipped with a set of intellectual categories and a vocabulary which enable him to facilitate such a search. (UM 144-145)

Concerning the “commune phenomenon,” he contends that the commune attempts to combine the intimacy of community with the freedom of personal, contracted commitment. It is an admirable effort. How successful it will be, particularly in these initial experimental manifestations, remains to be seen. (UM 145).

He also notes that almost any intimate community man has even known has been structured around a set of convictions about the nature of reality. (UM 146) Religious association continues to be strong in the U.S.; and against those who criticize culture-related religion of Inauthenticity, G remarks: “It is simply not true to say that religion which is associated with and reinforced by social pressures is not authentic religion. It is the only kind of religion that man has even known.” (UM 148)

He also defends against charges of racism those neighborhood dwellers who fear the destruction of their neighborhoods. “There are many men and women in American society who view their homes as an extension of their own personality, and the neighborhood in both its geographic and social dimensions as an extension of home and family.” He recommends: “Those religious leaders, young or old, who are willing to try to understand the religious postures of their parishioners sympathetically and from the

inside are the only ones who are likely to be able to lead the members of the religious community to perform effectively beyond the community limits.” (UM 149-150)

“Man seeks community with his own kind, with those who share his own values and his own interpretation of the ultimate meaning of life. With this ‘band of brothers’ he can organize space and time. Like the inhabitants of Eliade’s peasant village, together they can strive to keep the forces of chaos outside the village, and occasionally even push them further back into the wilderness.” (UM 50).

RELIGION as an **ORGANIZATION**:

With reference to the previous discussion of church and sect, G insists that the **denomination** is not some halfway house between the two, but is rather “a unique and new social form of religion.” He notes that American religion is engaged in doing many things that can only remotely be connected to meaning, integration, or comfort; thus it is necessary to go beyond these three functions in order to cope with the rich, varied, and complicated religious phenomena that are to be observed in the U.S.

The beginning assertion is that religion in America is organized, and this very fact has a pervasive effect on the whole style and atmosphere of American religious behavior, particularly because the fact of religious organization makes it possible for the churches to play a **quasi-ethnic** role in our denominational society.

From the historian’s viewpoint, religious organizations are relatively recent developments; the church as a distinct institution separated from and over against the other institutions of society (state, economic enterprise, family) is, to a very large extent, a phenomenon of the Christian era.

The “church-sect” distinction was first used by Weber and Ernst Troeltsch. Weber, as a sociologist, distinguished a sect from a church on the grounds that the former was an elective association of adults, exclusive in terms of some selective principle, belief, or practice, while the church was inclusive; for Troeltsch, a theologian primarily concerned with Christian ethics, the central characteristic of the church was its acceptance of the secular order. Richard Niebuhr added the notion of ‘denomination’ to the typology, characterizing it as a middle ground between church and sect; and Howard Becker added the ‘cult,’ i.e., a religious movement that has yet to develop a clearly defined social organizational structure. Yinger and Wilson add further distinctions, as “the jungle of types and definitions grows more complex.” G suspects that not much good was coming from this typology. He argues that the evolution of religious organizations does not necessarily proceed from cult to sect to denomination to church. An American society any but the smallest religious groups very quickly develop an organizational structure of their own and therefore almost at once occupy a place somewhere between the sect and the denomination; the only predictor of how elaborate and bureaucratic the structure will become seems to be the size of the organization. Thus, enthusiasm, world rejection, and organizational simplicity in American society are largely functions of such a simple variable as **size**. G wants to analyze religious organization in American society without the conventional typology. He begins with the simple recognition that like all human organizations,, religious ones have problems of growth, adaptation, innovation, efficiency and effectiveness. He suggests the use of organizational theory or social movement theory to deal with the basic question of how religious organizations cope with their problems. He does this with specific

reference to the denomination, which he describes simply as a religious organization which emerges in a society which has no established church (official or unofficial) but permits and encourages the practice of religion by the various organized religious communities. (DS 71-79)

Weber spoke of **charisma** becoming **routinized in institutions**. G comments: "Complexity and differentiation inevitably occur and some sort of structure must be evolved to revive order, stability, and continuity. Roles and statuses must be defined, goals and means of achieving them must be indicated, and legitimating formulae must be devised." Weber had been convinced that when charisma was routinized, it lost its fire and vigor; he saw this as representation in miniature of what was going on in the whole of Western society – the gradual rationalization, formalization, and bureaucratization of human life. Such pessimism must be seen within the context of the dramatic change from the feudal to the modern world they saw going on around them. G does not intend to defend either institutionalization or the modern world. But he does insist that there is a strong trend in contemporary research to suggest two things: (1) Gemeinschaft has managed to survive in the midst of a Gesellschaft society; and (2) bureaucratic organizations may well be dehumanizing, and, indeed, bureaucracy may ultimately dehumanize man's life, but this is not a necessary development. He insists that a bureaucracy can be not only efficient but also human and humane. The problem is not that modern life is being institutionalized but that, to the extent that institutions are depriving humans of freedom, dignity, and control of their own destinies, modern society is being unintelligently and inefficiently institutionalized. Those who lament the institutionalization of the church on the grounds that it deprives religion of its fervor, are actually lamenting the fact that the church has been unintelligently and poorly institutionalized, and that an intelligent, human religious institution may produce far more dedicated religionists than any time sect. (DS 79-81)

G admits that there has been a strong tendency for sacred behavior to move from the ritual to the ritualistic, but he also insists that there also seems to be built into human religious organizations the possibility for a reverse journey. In fact, the history of Christianity can well be considered as a long series of confrontations between the religious enthusiast and the bureaucrat: just as surely as a set of rules is evolved which encompasses the message in a formula, a group of enthusiasts will rise up to denounce the formula, even at some considerable risk that their own denunciation will itself become a formula (DS 81-82)

That institutions can destroy vitality and spontaneity is true, but to argue that they necessarily do so is to take a very naïve view of human institutions. Given the importance of religion in man's life and the depth of commitment that religion calls forth from some of its members, one is tempted to say that countervailing powers working against the harmful effects of institutionalization may be stronger in religious groups than elsewhere. (DS 82)

PRESENT **CONDITION** of AMERICAN RELIGION:

G acknowledges that the present stage of development of survey research stands "halfway between art and science;" also acknowledges that concerning religion "the statistical data are not always of the highest quality." Nonetheless, it is a careful, systematic, and relatively economic way to measure certain

rather broad aspects of behavior or attitudinal reality, and is “infinitely superior to personal impression or personal opinion.” It is essential, however, to avoid thinking that the neat, orderly, statistical tables are any indication that human behavior has been precisely measured. He acknowledges two further limitations: (1) survey research tools seem to be frequently ill-suited for coping with the subtle nature of religious beliefs; and (2) there are particular problems in measuring the religious behavior of American Jews. The appropriate attitude, therefore, is neither to reject survey research completely nor to accept it unreservedly. (DS 86-89)

Table One:

| Percent | <u>C</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>L</u> | <u>P</u> | <u>E</u> | <u>J</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| % of population | 25 | 21 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| % of college educated | 17 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 34 | 45 | 44 |
| % of white | 95 | 76 | 91 | 99 | 98 | 94 | 99 |
| % professional and business | 23 | 15 | 24 | 24 | 31 | 37 | 51 |
| % living in East and Midwest | 78 | 33 | 53 | 76 | 56 | 50 | 90 |
| % earning over \$7,000 | 47 | 26 | 42 | 49 | 60 | 64 | 69 |
| % living in cities over 500,000 | 51 | 19 | 21 | 28 | 30 | 41 | 80 |
| % weekly church attendance | 68 | 37 | 34 | 43 | 36 | 31 | 22 |
| % Democratic | 56 | 55 | 40 | 34 | 28 | 27 | 64 |

Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Jewish

Data based on U.S. census sample of 1957. (DS 89)

Among the things notable in Table One are the considerable economic and geographic differences among the denominations. These seven groups represent the overwhelming majority of Americans, and religion as it is practiced within these seven communities can be said in sum to constitute more of American religion. (DS 91-93)

In the U.S., it is true that the more education and the higher the socioeconomic status of a person, the more likely he is to be religious. But what is surprising in the U.S. is the relatively very high levels of religious practice among working-class groups. The reason for relationship between religious behavior and social class in Western society is not fully understood. It seems sufficient to say that it is those who have gained most from society that are most likely to be committed to religion. (DS 93-94)

Table Two:

| <u>Continuities</u> | <u>Prot</u> | <u>Cath</u> | <u>Jew</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Believing in God | 99 | 100 | 75 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Believing Christ is God | 73 | 88 | -- |
| Believing in Trinity | 86 | 96 | 2 |
| Believing in prayer | 94 | 99 | 70 |
| Praying three times a day or more | 23 | 25 | 5 |
| Believing in life after death | 78 | 83 | 17 |
| Believing in heaven | 71 | 80 | 6 |
| Active church member | 75 | 90 | 62 |

Number of Respondents: Prot = 3088 / Cath = 1162 / Jew = 128

Year = 1965 (DS 95)

Among gentile Americans in the religious mainstream, a general acceptance of the central doctrinal tenets of traditional religion is noted. Considering the beleaguered condition of Christianity for the last several centuries, these percentages seem remarkably high.

Glock and Stark present data (tables 3, 4, & 5; DS 98-101) which show the percentages of respondents who subscribe to various doctrinal beliefs with some admixture of "doubt." They draw too much from this, contends G, but nonetheless offer a useful typology:

1. the liberals comprise the Congregationalists, Methodists, and Episcopalians, and are characterized by relatively higher levels of doubt;
2. the moderates are comprised of the Disciples of Christ and the Presbyterians;
3. the conservatives are made up of the American Lutherans and the American Baptists;
4. the fundamentalists – Missouri Synod Lutherans, Southern Baptists, and small sects who refuse to admit the possibility of doubt in all their doctrinal affirmations; and
5. Catholics, who are linked with the conservatives. (DS 96-97)

In an 'overview of the denominational society,' G offers a "highly personal perspective."

1. American religion is activist and not contemplative, but there is a contemplative strain. It is not that we condemn the contemplative virtues; it is rather that we simply have not had time for them yet.
2. American religion has been rather more pragmatic than theoretical, yet it has not been without its scholars and dreamers.
3. Most American religious groups have accepted the existing social order and served as integrators of American society; and yet at the same time one is forced to say that American religion has constantly been reformist and prophetic in its behavior, and it has been highly critical of both society and itself.
4. From the beginning, American religion has been pluralistic, not monolithic. The U.S. was a denominational society before it became a nation! Perhaps no other single factor has been as important in shaping the denominational society and the whole history of American religion as the fact that there never has been one single official church; and if no one church is official, then no one school of thought can claim a monopoly on the orthodoxy within the various denominations. Further, there has been a strong strain toward cooperation among American religious groups, especially in civic problems at the grass-roots level.

5. There is a strong strain toward religious fundamentalism in American society and periodic demands that religion and its ministers return to the doctrinal and political foundations on which the society was built. Yet despite this, there is a considerable amount of flexibility and willingness to adjust.
6. American religion has strongly insisted on the need for congregational independence and for democratic administration of church affairs. The conviction that a maximum amount of participation of laymen in decision making in the Church is an historic one in American religions. And yet, like most other American institutions, organized religion is powerfully inclined to the construction of bureaucracies. Thus, tension between the supposedly independent congregation and the higher levels of the organization of bureaucracy has been constant but does not seem to have seriously impaired either the existence of the local congregation or the continued expansion of the bureaucracy.
7. Folk religion (the mixture of superstition and paganism with orthodoxy) has been rampant in American society. And yet at the same time, American religion has apparently succeeded in working out some sort of satisfactory coexistence with science.
8. American religion is "a religion of plenty." There is a conviction that variety, diversity, plurality, paradox, and, if necessary, contradiction, are not particularly unhealthy. Almost anything can happen in American religion and probably already has! (DS 102-107)

RELIGION as ETHNIC PHENOMENON:

"Ethnic:" a phenomenon by which the members of a religious denomination are able to obtain from their religion means of defining who they are and where they stand in a large and complex society.

The question is: what is the relationship between religion as an ethnic phenomenon and religion as faith.

Weber pointed out that "consciousness of kind" and a sense of a common origin may "become the bearer of communal social relationship." In the modern world, such ethnic groups have emerged precisely insofar as the old communal relationships of the peasant village have declined (E.K. Francis). Man became an ethnic as part of his campaign to preserve some aspects of the peasant village in the metropolis. In fact, in the U.S., ethnic consciousness emerged among immigrants in many instances before it did among their families who stayed behind in the old country (Nathan Glazer). Herberg: "The new conditions of American life confronted the immigrant with a problem he had practically never had to face before, the problem of self-identification and self-location, the problem expressed in the question, 'What am I?'" In order to belong, one must be able to locate oneself in the larger social whole, to identify oneself to oneself and to others. The way in which I do identify myself is closely related to how I am identified and located in the larger community. The question 'Who am I?' is closely related to the prior question 'Who is he?' which is largely answered in a hidden social process of which the individual is little aware. What occurred was that immigrants found themselves drawn together by a larger affiliation the basis of which was the language that permitted them to communicate with each other; in fact they named themselves by their language. This new form of identification and self-identification was the produce of American reality/experience. The "ethnic group," because it was for so

many millions of Americans the primary context of identification and social location, entered as a major factor into the economic, social, and political life of the total community, and into the most intimate personal and social relations of the 'ethnics' themselves. (DS 108-112).

The essential point is that the emergence of the ethnic group was in response to the losses man experienced in leaving behind *Gemeinschaft* society. The ethnic group is another manifestation of man's attempt to sustain communal relationships in a contractual society. G uses "ethnicity" to describe the tendency of urban man to create pools of preferred role opposites when faced with the impersonality of the industrial metropolis. Even today in some large cities, nationality continues to be an extremely important factor in the social structure. G argues that the denominations in American society, even those which may not have any very clear nationality background, also play an 'ethnic' role; it is their ability to provide a pool of preferred role opposites, and indeed, initiate interaction among members of the pool that is the basic secret of the strength of organized religion in the United States. Denominational membership makes available to Americans a fellowship which is highly important in compensating for those intimate relationships of life which seem to have been lost when the peasant village was left behind. (DS 112-114)

Herberg addresses the question as to why religious denominations were able to play this role. In America, the variety and multiplicity of church was almost the original condition; thus, Americans believe that the plurality of religious groups is a propel/legitimate condition. So without the old world church/sect arrangement, the denomination came into existence as a new form of religious structure: a stable, steeled church, enjoying a legitimate and recognized place in a larger aggregate of churches, each recognizing the proper status of the others. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews tend to think of their church as a denomination existing side by side with other denominations in a pluralistic harmony that is felt to be somehow of the texture of American life. (DS 115-116).

G argues that political pluralism became necessary because the nation was already religiously pluralistic even before it became a nation. By pluralism, he means a situation in which society must balance not merely different social class groups but also different, geographic, racial, religious and nationality groups. In the U.S. there has been from the very beginning, a strong interaction process going on between political and religious pluralism; competition within the framework of cooperation which marks both our political and religious society dates from the very origins of the thirteen colonies as denominational states. In such a situation religion will come to play a quasi-ethnic role under two sets of circumstances: (1) a **deprivation of intimate community** as a result of the collapse of the *Gemeinschaft* village; and (2) the **absence of an** (officially or unofficially) **established church**. When these two conditions emerge, religion will provide self-definition, social location, and a pool of preferred role opposites and will flourish in its organizational forms. (DS 116-117)

G also notes that such religion-ethnic groups may provide "mobility pyramids that may turn into mobility traps." It is, i.e., possible for an upwardly mobile professional/businessman to build his career almost entirely within its confines. And whereas this belonging may facilitate such mobility, it may also 'trap' him within the group, closing doors for higher mobility outside the system. (DS 116-117)

Americans may believe because they belong, but the fact that belief follows belonging to some extent weakens and limits the prophetic and challenging dimensions of belief; it is possible to be part of the fellowship without necessarily penetrating or taking seriously all the dimensions of the belief. However, **the very fact that American religion is organizationally strong precisely because of its belonging or fellowship dimension may make possible more prophecy than would be possible if American organized religion were organizationally weak.** (DS 188)

In the U.S., large urban Catholic dioceses are often divided into ethnic enclaves, each of which has considerable power of its own in fact if not in canonical theory. The dominant Catholic ethnic group has been the Irish – largely because of their linguistic advantage, familiarity with Anglo-Saxon political structures, and fierce religious loyalty. They have consistently controlled the American ecclesiastical structure. The Irish have flocked to the clergy and religious life, and they have proved themselves particularly able at organization and administration and at adjusting to the demands of American society. And though there have been some elements of liberalism, the Irish ecclesiastical mentality has tended to be narrow, digressive, puritanical, and suspicious. The German Catholics were the first to resist Irish dominations. This tradition has tended to be somewhat more intellectual, particularly because of contact with the monasteries and theological faculties in Germany (note, e.g., St. John's, Collegeville). Much of the theological and liturgical progressivism in American Catholicism has come through these contacts. But two world wars (especially WWI) spelled the end of the Germans as a distinct ethnic group in American society. The Poles were less at home in American society and had very little power; they remain quite different from the earlier immigrant groups. The religious style of the Italians involves much less in the way of loyalty to the organizational church. They did/do not have the network of religious and fraternal associations characteristic of the Germans earlier and now of the Poles. They became more quickly assimilated into the American Catholic (*viz.*, Irish) structure. Tables six and seven (DS 120 & 124) elucidate characteristics of the various Catholic ethnic groups.

CIVIL RELIGION:

A number of writers have suggested that religion exists in the U.S. on two levels: (1) the level of the individual denominations; and (2) the level of some super religion in which all denominations participate in some fashion. In many cases, this involved a response to Robert Merton who asked (1949) how religion could serve to integrate society in a situation in which there were many religions. (DS 156)

The contention of these writers is that in American society there is an official religion even if there is no official church. This can be seen in solemn ceremonials, feast days, national motto, oaths, military chaplaincy, tax-free status of churches, etc. The sociologist is not terribly surprised by these sacral underpinnings of the American consensus, which has come to be termed the "civil religion." (DS 157)

Herberg wrote of the "American Way of Life" as supplying American society with an overarching sense of unity. He saw this as an organic structure of ideas, values, and beliefs that constitutes a faith common to Americans and is genuinely operative in their lives, a faith that markedly influences, and is influenced by, the 'official' religions. It is individualistic, dynamic, pragmatic; it stresses incessant activity; it defines an ethic of self-reliance, merit, and character, and judges by achievement; it is humanitarian, 'forward

looking,' and optimistic; the American believes in progress, in self-improvement, and quite fanatically in education; above all, the American is idealistic – which can lead to being moralistic. The American 'Way of Life' is anchored in the American's vision of America as a new 'Promised Land,' reflecting the perennial American conviction that in the New World a new beginning has been made, a new order of things established, vastly different from and superior to the decadent institutions of the Old World. According to Herberg, the American Way of Life religion is designed to provide faith in the society in which the believer is a part and also to strengthen the society in confrontation with his enemies. There is, accordingly, a strong temptation to identify the American cause with the cause of God; this weakens the prophetic office of religion to raise a word of warning against inordinate national pride. Indeed, in Herberg's view, the contemporary religious mood is very far indeed from such prophetic transcendence. He judges that the fusion of religion with national purpose passes over into the direct exploitation of religion for economic and political ends. Civic religion tends to eliminate the ambiguous, the transcendental, and the self-critical elements of religion. (DS 158-163)

Roy Eckhardt analyzes similar phenomena in the religious revival of the 1950s. G contends that the so-called religious revivals and religious declines are merely cyclic changes in fashion which affect a relatively small proportion of the population, though perhaps a relatively somewhat larger proportion of space in the mass media. He also contends that it ought not to be particularly surprising that religious denominations, accepting as they do in American society the obligation to provide the function of belonging (*Gemeinschaft*, "fellowship") for Americans, can very easily settle down to play a role similar to that which magic plays for Malinowski's Trobriand Islanders, that is, to assure that no harm will come when one ventures out on the high seas. He argues that, given the absence of an established church or a national racial consciousness around which historic myths could assemble, it was practically inevitable that a society like the U.S. would evolve its own civic religion and that that religion by its very definition would tend to reinforce the values on which the republic was supposedly founded. These values can easily be simplified, distorted, abused and corrupted. But the civil religion also includes within its creed at least one stubborn dogma which decades of pressure have not struck down – the right to dissent, to criticize, and to protest. This right, and indeed obligation, to dissent and criticize has produced **countervailing forces** which have refused to permit the aberrations of folk religion or of official piety to go unchallenged. (DS 166-167)

Be notes Bellah's analysis of inaugural addresses. He calls attention to Kennedy's statement that "the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God." This is an insistence that the rights of man are more basic than any political structure and provide a point of revolutionary leverage from which any state structure may be radically altered; thus, the religious dimension of political life also provides a transcendent goal for the political process. It must be admitted, G argues, that the twin concepts of the inalienable rights of man, which no power can take from him, and the obligation to struggle against tyranny, poverty, disease and war are noble political ideals; a political process dedicated to these ideals can be rightfully criticized for failing to live up to them but hardly for the ideals themselves. A people which feels itself sent of a 'mission' to eliminate tyranny, poverty, disease, and war may quite properly be condemned for not honoring their vocation or for twisting and

distorting it beyond recognition, but they surely cannot be criticized for having taken on themselves an easy, insignificant task. (DS 168-169)

Bellah refers to “two times of trial” in American mythology: the revolution and the Civil War. He also insists that the content of the civil religion is extremely challenging; it is not, however, a substitute for Christianity. G observes that the civil religion emerged precisely because the denominational society needed some basic underpinning which committed it to the goals that all denominations shared and, in support of which, the members of the denominations had established the new republic. Finally, Bellah notes that when a crucial issue faces the republic, such as the civil rights controversy, the leadership of American society falls back on the dogmas of the civil religion. (DS 170-173)

DIVERSITY within UNITY:

Protestant denominations were established churches in the colonies. But by the end of the nineteenth century, established Protestantism was ‘in trouble,’ insofar as people were not particularly religious. Then, in 1740, there began what was perhaps the most decisive event in the history of American Protestantism: The Great Awakening. It inserted a mixture of enthusiasm, fundamentalism, and pietism into the bloodstream of American Protestantism. Little: “The work which had begun in an effort to enliven a stagnant Christendom was now carried forward as an offensive to reclaim the people for the church on a voluntary basis.” Out of this there emerged ‘the revival churches’ – the Disciples of Christ, the Methodists, and the Baptists – which replaced ecclesiastical establishment with voluntarism. Little, again: “The church accustomed themselves but slowly and reluctantly to the prospect of voluntary support of religious education and church life. . . It was the revivals that made voluntarism a possibility. They brought the laity alive and produced a sympathetic co-operation of clergy and laity.” In addition to revivalism, the late eighteenth century also saw the emergence of Unitarianism. Weakened on the left by Unitarianism and on the right by the enthusiasts of the Great Awakenings, the New England establishment was finished. Willard Sperry: “Unitarianism. . . was a revolt against the whole grim doctrine of human nature and the mechanical means for man’s salvation which had become the contention in American Calvinism by the middle of the eighteenth century.” Unitarianism was highly optimistic, representing an effort to establish a “continuum of Christ and culture” (little). Nonetheless, the Protestant establishment has survived in scattered areas into this century. (DS 175-181)

This represents two thrusts in American Protestantism:

1. toward missionary evangelism, based on voluntarism and internal discipline; and
2. toward involvement in political life and the use of government/law to enforce church judgments/positions.

Abolitionism in the nineteenth century, prohibitionism in the early twentieth century, and even the present deep involvement of Protestant churches in the peace and racial issues can be traced to the New England tradition. On the other hand, the revivalism movement guaranteed periodic resurgences of enthusiasm. G notes that enthusiasm seems to be particularly effective among the lower classes, and that the real heirs to the enthusiasts of the late eighteenth century are not the churches which they founded, but the fundamentalist and Pentecostal sects. It was in this way that the basic shape of

American Protestantism was formed; and the framework that was developed was relatively stable, though there would be constant instability within it as dissensions and revivals spawned new denominations and new divisions within old denominations. G notes that the Civil War was a severe blow to Protestantism because many of its denominations split into northern and southern branches. But even outside of this, divisions came to be taken for granted; middle-class Protestant churches found themselves constantly threatened by liberal temptation on the left and the fundamentalist revivalism on the right. American Protestantism covers a vast variety of beliefs and practices. (DS 181-183)

G sees Protestantism approaching the end of the twentieth century with a host of new/old problems:

- It must wrestle with the principle of congregational independence versus the need for denominational organization. As modern society grows more complex and requires an even more sophisticated denominational bureaucracy, tension between congregation and bureaucracy can grow more acute.
- It is faced with ambivalence toward scholarly activity. Many of the individual denominations are caught between the poles of revivalistic fundamentalism and advanced liberal theologizing.
- There is the conflict between political involvement on the one hand and skepticism about human effort on the other.
- Protestantism continues to wrestle with the problem of unity and diversity: the centrifugal and centripetal forces in American Protestantism have generally cancelled each other out. Protestant principles of individual choice and the voluntarism dating in the U.S. from the Great Awakening is a strong and inevitable counterforce working against ecumenical tendencies. (DS 183-184)

But whatever tensions these issues introduce are merely part of the price one has to pay for the openness and freedom that the Protestant principle makes possible. These tensions complicate for Protestants the relationship between the meaning and the belonging functions of religion. The emphasis which a given individual or congregation or denomination may choose to take on the various continua of these tensions will shape the relationship between the meaning and belonging functions. (DS 184)

A real danger for Protestantism is that it is possible for the "majority religion" to become a residual category and include within its bonds a fair number of people whose ties with the Protestant religious tradition are, at best, tenuous. For many Protestants formal religion provides little in the way of either meaning or belonging and is almost indistinguishable from the American civil religion. But it must also be emphasized that there are some Protestant groupings, particularly of the fundamentalist variety, whose interpretive schemes and sense of community are much more powerful than one could find among all but a handful of Roman Catholics. (DS 185)

Catholicism can only be understood in the U.S. when two essential points are comprehended: Roman Catholicism came to the U.S. as a religion of immigrants; and (2) the immigrant era is over and its aftereffects are rapidly vanishing.

In the very beginning, the Carroll clan (Baltimore) was part of the colonial establishment and as such their religion was considered the religion of native Americans. But if this was easy for the Protestant majority to concede when there were but a handful of Catholics, it was not to remain such. Their day of this goodwill and Catholic acceptance into the establishment was overpowered by 1820, when the immigrant waves swept up on the American shore. By 1830 nativist bigotry had hit its stride and would continue to be a major factor in American society until well into the twentieth century. (DS 186-187)

There were two basic styles available to the leadership to the immigrant church:

1. to view the U.S. as a Protestant nation hostile to the faith of the immigrants; or
2. to argue that American freedom and democracy offered a climate in which Catholicism could flourish, and it was therefore necessary for the Catholic Church to become as American as it possibly could.

While John England of Charleston (following Carroll) represented a happy combination of Irish liberalism and American democracy, most of his fellow bishops (especially John Hughes of New York) were not willing to take the risks involved in this. Hughes: "I had to stand up among them as their bishop and chief; to warn them against the dangers that surrounded them." In fact, the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries can be viewed as a struggle between the Americanizers and the anti-Americanizers within Catholicism. And while Americanizing theoreticians may have had the better of the discussion, in practice fears for the faith of the immigrant combined with the defensive attitude which characterized nineteenth-century Catholicism and in most parts of the world produced a practical polity that was designed to protect the Catholic immigrants from losing their faith in a largely Protestant society. There emerged a compromise which would permit Catholic church leaders to be fervent supporters of American political democracy and American foreign policy while at the same time remaining paternalistic autocrats within the Church. At the end of the nineteenth century a new generation of leaders emerged (Gibbons, Ireland, Keane, Spalding) who argued that American religious freedom and the American religious virtues should provide a model which the rest of the Catholic world could profitably imitate. These reformers encountered bitter opposition (from other bishops!) however, and "Americanism" was condemned by Robe. The sending of an apostolic delegate to supervise the Church in the U.S. effectively terminated the Americanists' enthusiasms by the first decade of the twentieth century. (DS 187-189)

From 1820+, the internal organization and structure of American Catholicism has been based on the premise that the Catholic Church in the U.S. must defend itself in a hostile society; it was seen to be necessary to present a 'united front' to the nativist world outside. The immigrants themselves cheerfully accepted the Church's demand for fierce loyalty. Religio-ethnicity had become crucial for their own personal identity: to be a loyal and devout Catholic had become a means of self-definition and self-location. The nativists resented and condemned the immigrants because they were Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, Polish Catholics, or German Catholics, but in the act of so doing they also defined the immigrants as Catholics in such a way that religious loyalty became an important part of the immigrants' self-concept. Part of the reaction to this involved the immigrants' intention to remain Catholic and to prove that they could do so and be as good an American as anyone else: superpatriotism. The adoption

by the immigrants of religious denominationalism as a means of self-definition explains perhaps more adequately than any other single factor why the working class did not leave the Catholic Church in the U.S. as it did in Europe. (DS 189-190)

From 1820-1945 the shape of American Catholicism emerged from an interaction between a clergy fearful for the faith of its people and a people proudly loyal to a Church which, even though it made them unwelcome, at least gave them something to cling to during acculturation. The inauguration of Kennedy, coinciding with the dramatic change brought about by Pope John and the Vatican Council, marked the end of the immigrant era. By 1960, the occupational, educational, and financial achievements of Catholics under forty were not different from those of white American Protestants living in the same areas of the country. Catholicism had become a middle-class church and was well on its way to becoming an upper middle-class church. This development was bound to have significant impact; thus, the crisis which the Catholic Church faces in this country presently would have occurred in any event, but the dramatic events of the Vatican Council accelerated the pace of change and created a dynamic and fluid situation almost overnight. In the space of a very few years Roman Catholicism in the U.S. has passed from a situation where the individual would not dream even of thinking of his personal religious activity being at variance with the prescribed activity of the official Church to a situation where a substantial number of Roman Catholics seem to be taking religious matters into their own hands. Recent surveys indicate, e.g., that on matters related to sexual morality and to ecclesiastical leadership, there is real dissatisfaction among a large majority of the Catholic populations. Younger Catholics are apparently just as devout and just as doctrinally orthodox as their parents, but they are more critical of the clergy and more skeptical of the Church's teachings on birth control; yet the basic loyalty to the Church of the grandchildren of immigrants does not yet seem to have been affected. (DS 190-193)

As the bonds of loyalty to their Church grow more selective, and American Catholics can engage in individual religious activity quite independently of the Church without experiencing any guilt feelings, it does follow that the organizational structure of the Church is substantially weakened, but it is not necessary to assume that Catholicism in the U.S. is faced with imminent collapse. More likely is that American Catholicism will become more "Americanized:" more popular participation in decision-making; more independence for the clergy; emergence of a scholarly clerical elite; evolution of a social service concept of ministry; more room for personal decision making; a more relaxed attitude toward authority; collapse of case barriers between clergy and laity; greater freedom for discussion and criticism; more openness toward non-Catholic religions. Most all of these changes are highly desirable from the point of view of the church reform undertaken at the Vatican Council. And almost all of them have been advocated in the past by the folk heroes of the American Catholic Church. Thus, it seems likely that a new balance between individual and community will be established in which there will be a great deal more room than there is at present for personal religious choice and decision. (DS 193-194)

Jews in America have been the most successful of all the immigrant groups; the rapidity of their acculturation and economic success surely must be viewed as one of the most astonishing social phenomena in American history. Social/cultural variables are involved in this. Jewish commitment to learning, particularly the practical learning, and the study of their own religious books predispose them to make the most of the education that was available in American society. And they came to the U.S. as

an alert and intelligent people whose survival in the past had frequently depended on diligence, wit, and the ability to take risks. But in studying American Judaism it must be recognized that it is not a denomination like the other denominations. Jewish belief and belonging involve extremely complex factors. (DS 194-202)

Despite the overarching unity of the three denominational traditions through the “civil religion,” there remains real **tension**. Anti-Catholic bigotry flourished through successive nativist waves throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Jewish-Catholic animosity has been strong at times, and there are indications that it is becoming more serious. In smaller towns and rural areas fundamentalist Protestantism frequently combined antiurbanism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-Semitism with distrust of Wall Street, intellectuals, and Communists; the result being a powerful radical right-wing fundamentalism which is still an important element of American culture and not without influence in both political parties. (DS 213-214)

James **Coleman** summarizes five attributes peculiar to religion which make it a potential source of social conflict:

1. the private, personal nature of religion;
2. the status/power rewards available to a leader by successfully establishing a new cult/sect;
3. the religious function of providing an alternative set of values creates a potential for conflict between religion and secular society; the in-group associations of religion determine lines of social interaction to a degree surpassed only by a few other groupings;
4. the generational transmission of religious values and of the personality derivative from these values.

G comments: The religious groups in the U.S. are to a considerable extent identity-providing institutions. They constitute within the larger society several in-group associations which in turn generate distrust, fear, and hostility toward members of the out-group, a hostility which is particularly powerful because the felt differences are the result of very early socialization. . . The fact that American religious groups are also ethnic groups and rooted in the ethnic origins of the various nationalities within the republic intensifies the potential for religious conflict. (DS 215-216)

G outlines six principal foci for **interreligious conflicts** in the U.S.:

1. The separate Catholic school system has been opposed as divisive of the social fabric. He suggests that a national consensus seems to be emerging, however, in which certain kinds of support will be made available to Catholic (and other) parochial schools under certain sets of circumstances, in return for which Catholics will abandon their claim for more general support. But the subject of the separate Catholic school system continues to touch deep roots of resentment in many Americans. Religious instruction in the public schools is also a matter of conflict.
2. Sex is a very sensitive area of religious conflict – especially concerning the Catholic position on birth control, abortion, and divorce. The general tendency seems to have been for American Catholics to become increasingly moderate in their positions relative to the imposition of

standards. It seems, though, that in the U.S. the Catholic teachings on divorce and birth control have acquired an important symbolic value that it may not elsewhere have.

3. Separation of church and state is a highly controversial issue. Many individual issues (such as 'Christmas crib' controversies) seem to have far more important symbolic content than substantive content.
4. There are questions of religion and public morality. Protestants have traditionally accused Catholic (urban) office holders of being corrupt; they have also resented failure of Catholics to support legislation banning alcohol, gambling, etc. (5) Many non-Catholics are suspicious of the influence of the Catholic Church on political leaders who are Catholic.
5. The state of Israel is a source of tension. (DS 216-222)

G has argued that many interreligious controversies are important in their utility as symbols around which the members of a religious group can rally in their loyalties to one another and their animosities to those who are different from them. He suggests that it will not be possible to eliminate controversy, so what is needed is to supplement the controversy with dialogue which seeks to understand the other and to enable the other to understand oneself. He recognizes, however, that "the paranoid style of much American political discussion and the rigid personalities of many American citizens make dialogue difficult." He also notes that anti-Catholicism among Jews appears to be increasing, especially among younger, more religious and college educated Jews; he acknowledges, however, that the data in this area can only lead to very tentative conclusion. But the data presented in Table 21 (DS 225) indicate that a very notable problem in Catholic-Jewish relationships may be facing us in years to come.

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP:

G's contention here is twofold: (1) the primary role of religious leadership is "interpretive;" and (2) in contemporary society the need for interpretation is such that most important leadership positions take on a sacral or quasi-sacral dimension. The most primordial religious leader is the **shaman**, a man with a high degree of 'nervous excitability' whose psychological/physiological oddity is taken to be an intrusion of the sacred such that he is seen as an organ/mouthpiece of the divine. It is probable that the nomadic hunter and good-gatherer of Paleolithic times looked, e.g., to a shaman-like member of his tribe for special contact with reality. Religious leadership traditionally has had **charisma**, the special power which gives them the right to exercise authority over others; to some extent all charisma is 'religious' in that it represents a power that is "uncanny" or "out of the ordinary." Joachim Wach: "Charisma of personal character appeals more to the motions; official charisma is more 'rational.' Whereas the former claims complete loyalty, even personal surrender, the latter usually demands a circumscribed or 'tempered' obedience." (UM 214-216)

Wach also distinguishes nine other forms of religious leadership:

1. The **founder** begins a religious tradition; his primary concerns are to convey to others the message of salvation and perfection and to lead them to the acceptance of the truth revealed to him in his basic experience. His actions (healing, feeding, etc.) are meant to illustrate his specific personal charisma. The awareness of his mission comes to the chosen one upon the occasion of

his 'call;' characteristic of this is a close association of the message with the personality of its promulgator.

2. The **reformer** introduces tremendous new energies and quite possibly a new direction into old religious traditions.
3. The **prophet** experiences intense and immediate community with the deity, and is preeminently a man who speaks/interprets. The consciousness of being the organ/instrument/mouthpiece of the divine will is characteristic of the self-interpretation of the prophet, who is usually distinguished by an unusual sensitiveness and intense emotional life.
4. The **seer's** interpretation is likely to be delivered to a group of men who surround him. Vis-à-vis the prophet, he is a more passive type, with charisma derived from a genuine but less creative religious experience. He interprets by intuition, and is less concerned than the prophet with developing norms of judgment and rules of action; he usually deals with individual situations. Both the seer and the prophet, however, *interpret* for their followers.
5. The **magician** is one who can 'get results for you from the spirits.' Implied is the command of power due to communion with the unseen or the spirits.
6. The **diviner** relies on objects which he uses as mediums for the interpretation of the will of the gods. He bases his interpretation on a general scheme-theory of the cosmos, which claims a correspondence between the human and divine realms. This scheme is not so much an individual creation as the tradition of a normative discipline.
7. The **saint** interprets the ultimate for people not so much by what he knows as by *who he is*. The saint's influence depends upon his personal nature/character and is exerted quietly but constantly and intensively; he influences others more by the indirect effect of example than by precept.
8. The **priest** is preeminently the cultic man; but the cultic function is merely the core of an extremely elaborate role, much of which involves interpretation. Wach: "Worship, as the very expression of religious experience, however primitive or rudimentary its form may be, is the main concern of the priest. . . (he) is the guardian of traditions and the keeper of the sacred knowledge and of the techniques of meditation and prayer. . . (and) custodian of the holy law. . . As interpreter of this law, (he) may function as judge, administrator, teacher, and scholar. . . Contemplation and action are intimately interwoven in his life. . . As a theologian he becomes the primary factor in the formulation of theology as the theoretical expression of religious experience.
9. The **religiosus** derives (unofficial) religious authority from his/her commitment to a special life of communion with God. They order their lives according to special religious rules, and a certain 'prestige' results from the charisma of such an existence; this has a stimulating and integrating influence on religion in society. The interpretive function here is that by the very example of a 'good life,' the religiosus shows others how they ought to be living if they are to honor the ultimate interpretive scheme. (UM 216-221)

All nine of these categories involve **interpretive** functions. The religious leader is the man who understands the meaning system better than others, and such leadership is every bit as important today as it ever was. Real religious leaders are men who speak of "the nature of things" and who attract vigorous, enthusiastic followers precisely because they are able to tap the deep roots of the ultimate

convictions of their people. All such persons have claimed to offer a system of meaning, a basic interpretation, an explanation of what is going on and why. (UM 222-225)

Weber points that this kind of charismatic/quasi-sacral authority tends to be eventually replaced, first with traditional authority and then with rational authority. Thus in our rational, desecralized world it is supposedly the man of competency, not charisma, who is the appropriate leader for human organizations. Modern authority is in severe crisis precisely because the vast and bureaucratized authority which Weber saw evolving is not able to cope with the human problems in the modern world. Rationality, efficiency, and technology as the basis for the legitimacy of authority are no longer persuasive for an increasingly large number of human beings, in part because pure rationality and pure efficiency seem to end up with monstrous irrationality and demonic inefficiency. John Schaar: "Modern man is haunted by the vision of a system grown so complex and so huge that it baffles human control. . . . The system works not because recognizable human authority is in charge, but because its basic ends and its procedural assumptions are taken for granted and programmed into men and machines. Given the basic assumptions of growth as the main goal and efficiency as the criterion of performance, human intervention is largely limited to making incremental adjustments, fundamentally of an equilibrating kind. The system is glacially resistant to genuine innovation, for it proceeds by its own momentum, imposes its own demands, and systematically screens out information of all kinds but one. The basic law of the whole is: because we already have machines and processes and things of certain kinds, we shall get more machines and processes and things of closely related kinds, that is by the most efficient means." (UM 225-227)

Our complex society faces social and ecological problems which it may be incapable of solving because no one has caused these problems and no one has the power to modify the situation that has created them. The basic problem is rooted in the scientific/technological concept of reality. When thought is restricted to this definition, the roles once filled by human leaders wither. Schaar: "What is missing is **humanly meaningful authority** and leadership. For this the age shows a total incapacity. . . . Both (establishment and hippies) conceive of authority almost exclusively in terms of repression and denial and cannot imagine obedience based on mutual respect and affection. . . . In the earlier ages of man, leaders were made to art to appear as more than human: divine or semi-divine personages. Today the ones who stand at the command posts and switching points are made by art to appear as more than mechanical." (UM 228-229)

Scharr proposes a fundamentally new kind of leadership based on the fact that "each man is born, lives among others and dies." Each of these three fundamental mysteries – (1) the problem/mystery of becoming a unique self; but still (2) a self living among and sharing much with others in family and society; and finally (3) a unique self among some significant others, but still sharing with all humanity the condition of being human and mortal – call out for humanly significant authorities who help men answer these questions in terms that men themselves implicitly understand. "When leaders and followers interact on levels of mutual, subjective comprehension and sharing of meaning, then we have humanly significant leadership. The relationship is one of identification of co-performance. . . . To the degree that the administrative leader achieves the objectivity and expertise which are the badges of his competence, he loses the ability to enter a relationship of mutual understanding with those who rely on him for

counsel and direction. . . Humanly significant leadership bases its claim to authority on a kind of knowledge which includes intuition, insight, and vision. . . The leader strives to grasp and to communicate the essence of the situation in one organic and comprehensive conception.” (UM 229-230)

G comments that this description of authority sounds remarkably “priestly.” Exercising such authority involves using language profuse in illustration, anecdote, and metaphor – suggestive and alluring, pregnant, evocative. It often expresses itself in parables and visions, teaching by story, example, and metaphor. (UM 231)

G insists that such leadership is functionally necessary if large corporate structures are not going to become monstrous machines running out of control. He outlines four characteristics of this needed leadership:

1. **Symbolic** leadership: The human need for leaders who *incarnate* the goals, values, and *elan* of an organization is powerful and probably permanent. Such a leader’s commitment to the values/goals of the organization must be such that the members can see in him the personification of what the organization is striving for; required is a clear, enthusiastic, and articulate commitment to goals. He must have courage, wit, hope, and the willingness to take risks; he must be able to channel energies and enthusiasms instead of trying to restrain them. Such a leader plays both a prophetic and therapeutic role – challenging and comforting. He stirs his followers out of their lethargy, complacency, and self-satisfaction. He is also able to comfort, to reassure, to strengthen, to support.
2. **Ideological** leadership: He must be aware of both the overall needs of his organization and of the values and traditions which constitute the ideology of the organization. It is his role to prevent his associates’ turning in on themselves and their own immediate problems and preoccupations. He must ask the right questions, point out the relationships between the group’s values and the big picture, which will force the other members of the group to think through their beliefs and their obligations. He poses problems, not solutions. L He also rejects incomplete answers, which do not take into account either the ideology of the organization or the reality of the problems it faces. E.g., the leader would ask the question, “What does our insight into the meaning of sexuality imply for our religious beliefs and behavior?” and let his colleagues attempt to arrive at an answer instead of imposing one on his own initiative.
3. **Interpersonal** leadership: The leader must create an atmosphere in which there is the greatest possibility for his individual colleagues to develop their talents to the maximum, which means creating an atmosphere of harmony and social support. It is his obligation both to protect the rights of members of the group, but also to see that the conflicts and the strains which exist among his various colleagues are honestly and openly worked out. The skills required for this kind of leadership can be compared to the socio-emotional role traditionally attributed to the mother of the family.

4. **Organizational** leadership: The leader must either be an administrator or see that administration gets done.
- a. He must first of all obtain the consent of his colleagues for the major decisions that the group makes; in essence, effective authority is the ability to obtain consent. A leader who is not able to obtain the consent of a very large majority of his colleagues on a given policy matter has failed as a leader. To do this he must both pose the right questions and preside over the dialogue which will lead to a response to the questions. He realizes that everyone whose cooperation is necessary for the implementation of the decision ought to have some kind of participation in the making of the decision.
 - b. He must preside over the implementation of the decision, directing and coordinating the activities of his colleagues in such a way that the maximum result is obtained in the minimum of effort.
 - c. He must see that the organization is arranged in such a way as to maximize pluraformity among the various subgroups within it, for the contribution of such subgroups will be most effective when they enjoy the greatest among possible of initiative, responsibility, and structural flexibility. Pluraformity is messy, inconvenient, and fits poorly on the organizational chart, but in its absence vitality and variety, ingenuity and creativity vanish. And given the strain toward routinization and uniformity in the modern world, the leader preserves pluraformity only if he is willing to take positive action to promote, facilitate, and guarantee variety and flexibility. (UM 232-236)

Concerning social justice ministry, G insists that one persuades people by **obtaining their consent**. Churches with a prophetic religious tradition must be in the forefront of any quest for social justice, and the clergy of these churches must take the lead in reminding their congregations of their obligations in justice and in charity. The issue is not whether this is an obligation for the churches, but rather how best and how most effectively this obligation may be carried out. G argues that a religious leader who really wishes to obtain the consent of his congregation will investigate the possibility that there might be something authentic and inevitable in the congregation's quest for religious meaning, and that he ought to try to sympathetically understand their possible fear of social change. The minister/priest who can relate the quest for social justice explicitly and concretely to the fundamental myths of his own religious tradition and to the fundamental needs of his congregation might just possibly find that he has more enthusiasts than he knows what to do with. (UM 238)

MYTH:

Myth is the most common kind of symbol used to convey religious meaning, yet it is difficult for those of us educated in what is reported to be a science-permeated educational system to cope with this concept. What a myth is is simply a **symbolic story**, one that is frequently told by being enacted in a ritual. Alan **Watts** sees its purpose as demonstrating the inner meaning of the universe and of human life; its language is integrative/organic. Myth integrates man's total life experience and interprets it for him. Charles Long: "There are human experiences on the personal and cultural levels which can only be expressed in symbolic forms. These meanings are in many cases the most profound meanings in our

personal and cultural lives. They are profound because they symbolize the specificity of our human situation – they make clear to us how the world exists for us and point up the resources and tensions which are present in our situation.” The presence of scientific thought does not mean that myth has been (or can be) eliminated; rather, this situation presents us ‘the problem of dealing with the fundamental relatedness of the mythic and the scientific. One mode cannot replace the other; the generalizing method of scientific thought cannot do justice to the life of man as he experiences it, and the mythic mode of apprehension cannot remain so specific and concrete that it becomes esoteric or subjective. (UM 84-86)

Mircea **Eliade** sees the myth as integrating man not only with the rest of the universe but also with himself and he argues that such integration makes possible a “wholeness” in life: “he finds himself and comes to understand himself, because those myths and rituals express cosmic realities which ultimately he is aware of as realities in his own being. . . Thanks chiefly to his symbols, the **real existence** of primitive man was not the broken and alienated existence lived by civilized man today.” Eliade argues that the myth is a paradigm, a primordial event which took place in “**real**” time, when the gods ordered the universe; man’s reenactment of the myth is his participation in and reflection of that act of ordering. “Once told, that is revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth; it establishes a truth that is absolute. . . for this reason myth is bound up with ontology; it speaks only of **realities**, of what **really** happened, of what was fully manifested.” Myth brings mankind into contact with the **real**. It enables him to transcend the phenomenal world of confusion and threatening chaos in which he lives and break through to the ordering way which chaos was first defeated and continues to be restrained. By faithfully repeating the divine models, man remains in the sacred and by reactualizing the paradigmatic divine gestures the world is sanctified. (UM 87-88)

Henri **Frankfort** insists that myth is a carefully chosen cloak for abstract thought. The imagery is inseparable from the thought. It represents the form in which the experience has become conscious. That is, truth is told **concretely**; the myth-maker grapples with reality with a story. It is an ultimately serious endeavor, for in telling myths the ancients were recounting events in which they were involved to the extent of their very existence. True myth presents its images and its imaginary actors, not with the playfulness of fantasy, but with a compelling authority. It perpetuates the revelation of a ‘Thou.’” It involved becoming emotionally and poetically **involved** in the truth. (UM 89-90)

According to Paul **Ricoeur**, myth tries to come to grips with the greatest mystery of all (one which science finds insoluble): the problem of human existence. The myth tries to get at the enigma of human existence; it has an ontological bearing; it points to the relation – that is to say, both the leap and the passage, the cut and the suture – between the essential being of man and his historical existence. (UM 91)

Levi-Strauss sees a compatibility between mythological and scientific thought that in our time may lead to a convergence/combination. Whereas myth is supremely concrete (proceeding from the angle of sensible qualities), science is supremely abstract (proceeding from the angle of formal properties). The myth is a comprehensive view of reality; it explains it, interprets it, provides the ritual by which man may maintain his contact with it, and even conveys certain very concrete notions about how reality is to be

used to facilitate mankind's life and comfort. Levi-Strauss contends that mythopoesis as thought and expression is indispensable in any comprehensive and adequate system of human knowledge. For all myths in the final analysis attempt to cope with the same problems: the mystery of man in the world. (UM 92-94)

Ricoeur sees the myth-maker struggling with the question of **good and evil** in the world and trying to explain it through various theories of creation. He distinguishes four typical solutions:

1. Evil and good are located in the very act of creation itself. The god (e.g., Marduk) established some order out of chaos, but the conflict between the two endures.
2. 'Tragic' myth sees reality and the gods who dominated it as at least capricious if not evil. The gods are jealous of man and will punish him for any greatness achieved. The only human alternatives are Apollonian resignation or Dionysian ecstasy.
3. In the Adamic myth creation is basically good. Evil comes into the world through man's fault, but God, somehow or other, triumphs over evil with his own power of goodness. G cites a beautiful myth of Taaroa (UM 95) as a parallel to this.
4. In the Gnostic myth, the soul is exiled and saved only through knowledge; evil is conquered by the triumph of the soul over the body through knowledge.

In each of these four types, there is some room for "salvation:"

1. One is saved through ritual which keeps one in contact with the ordering power against the forces of chaos.
2. One comes to terms with tragedy either stoically or ecstatically.
3. God intervenes in history and man is saved by allying himself with God's intervening power.
4. Knowledge triumphs over the imprisoning forces of the body.

All the creation myths, in one way or another, are attempts to explain the human condition – both its factuality and its strange blend of good and evil. (UM 94-96)

From a different perspective, Watts sees myths as attempts to transcend **duality** in a search for **unity**: "the light and the dark are transcended through being seen in terms of a dramatic unity." Duality arises when the abstract is confused with the concrete; the poetic or mythic image is closer than abstract linguistic categories to events themselves – to 'natural patterning.' Thus, in mythology we recognize 'the two-sidedness of the one.' Man retains in the back of his mind an apprehension of the figure/ground of all his perceptions. This apprehension expresses itself in mythic/poetic images. He finds four different mythological attempts to cope with the problem of duality:

1. In Chinese/Indian myths, the principle of polarity and of the inner unity of opposites is explicitly recognized (e.g., Ying/Yang).
2. In some Middle Eastern myths, there is conflict between two equal brothers, one good and the other evil, who are separated and yet basically united.
3. In the Christian myth, the inner unity between good and evil disappears.
4. In "dismemberment remembered" myths, the separation of polar opposites – accomplished in the creation of the world by the cutting up of some primordial being – leads to the duality of the

world (heaven/earth, male/female, etc.) and then is seen slowly being transcended by the human ideal – the “androgynous” sage, whose consciousness transcends the opposites and who, therefore, knows himself to be one with the cosmos. (UM 97-98)

In whatever typology one adopts for analysis, it can be seen that the myth-maker makes up ‘stories’ based in part on the physical and social realities around him and in part on the operations of his own unconscious in order that through these ‘stories’ he may achieve some ‘understanding,’ both cognitive and affective, of what reality is all about. (UM 98-99).

Joseph **Campbell** views myth from the perspective of their attempt to answer questions about the human struggle. Many myths are organized to tell the story of the “adventure of the **hero**” which follows a clearly described pattern: “**A separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and the life-enhancing return.**” This patterned story is an attempt on the part of the myth-maker to wrestle with the problem of death and life and the paradoxical unity between the two. Rituals (especially that of initiation into the sacred mysteries) are paradigmatic reenactments of the journey of the hero. (UM 99)

Life and death, good and evil, unity and diversity, these are the existential characteristics of the human situation to which the myth-maker addresses himself. They are issues which cannot be answered merely on the rational plane because they so permeate the whole of man’s experience and so challenge and threaten the whole of his being, that he must respond to them with a totality of selfhood. (UM 100-101)

In the various mythologies, ultimate reality appears in many different fashions. The most primordial is apparently the “Sky God,” then the multitudinous gods of the fertility religions, and then the creator-god of the world religions. It can be said that man’s image of God is conditioned by the circumstances in which he finds himself; also, the perception of God’s attitude toward man will vary in the myths. The Jewish/Christian image is of God as a jealous lover seen as intervening in history in pursuit of man with whom he has for some reason become emotionally involved (cf., e.g., Hosea, and Francis Thompson’s “Hound of Heaven”). But despite the extraordinary diversity, there are also striking **patterns of similarity**. Basically, two explanations have been proposed for this similarity: (Following Jung, it has been maintained that there is either a **psychological** (collective unconscious) or biological unity to the human race; (2) Eliade sees the patterns of similarity resulting from a similarity in the “**existential situations**” in which man finds himself: social relationships (male/female, parent/child); physical environment (storms, sun, moon, water); similarities of human experience (birth, growth, death). Thus,

Although archaic peoples lived in very diverse places and societies, there were patterns – probably a combination of physical, psychological, and sociological. G comments: “as human beings living in some kind of society and somewhere on the planet earth, wrestling with the same kinds of problems of goodness and evil, life and death, unity and diversity, they, not at all surprisingly, came up with mythologies that have a great deal in common.” (UM 102-106)

Eliade contends that ‘nonreligious man’ is a relatively rare phenomenon and that even those who claim to have dispensed with mythologies are, in fact, deeply involved in mythological attitudes and behaviors that betray not only their pasts but their present existential religious situation: “A whole volume could

well be written on the myths of modern man!" He further comments: "Do what he will, he is an inheritor. He cannot utterly abolish his past, since he is himself the product of his past. He forms himself by a series of denials and refusals, but he continues to be haunted by the realities that he has refused and denied. To acquire a world of his own, he has desacralized the world in which his ancestors lived; but to do so he has been obliged to adopt the opposite of an earlier type of behavior, and that behavior is still emotionally present to him, in one form or another, ready to be reactualized in his deepest being." He views the modern man who claims to be free from myth as a tragic and incomplete human being. (UM 108-110.

Ricoeur takes a somewhat more positive approach; he contends that now the sacred can be understood as never before insofar as the content of myths and symbols can become more **explicit**: "The same epoch holds in reserve both the possibility of emptying language by radically formalizing it and the possibility of filling it anew by reminding itself of the fullest meanings, the most pregnant ones, the ones which are most bound by the presence of the sacred to man." Thus, man can still find meaning in the myths, though now, unlike previously, he is conscious of the search for meaning and must **interpret** the myths. This is Ricoeur's notion of a **second naivete**, at which we arrive through criticism: "It is by **interpreting** that we can **hear** again." The myth must be investigated as a primordial sign of the sacred. "Criticism cannot help being a 'demythologization;' that is an irreversible gain of truthfulness. Of intellectual honesty, and therefore of objectivity. But it is precisely because it accelerates the movement of the symbol, as a primordial sign of the sacred; it is thus that it participates in the revivification of philosophy through contact with symbols. . . a recharging of thought with the aid of symbols." (UM 111-112)

Lawrence **Kubie** draws attention to the **preconscious**, the world of symbols where myth is born. "Preconscious processes make free use of analogy and allegory, superimposing dissimilar ingredients into new perceptual and conceptual patterns. . . In the preconscious use of imagery and allegory many experiences are condensed into a single hieroglyph, which expresses in one symbol far more than one can say slowly and precisely, word by word, on the fully conscious level. This is why preconscious mentation is the Seven-league Boot of **intuitive creative functions**." He argues that a healthy, functioning preconscious can be inhibited either by the tumultuous anxieties in the unconscious or by the rigid repressions of the conscious. (UM 113-114)

A minimal conclusion is that there is strong reason to doubt that man is capable or ever will be capable of dispensing with myths. There are, e.g., great religious myths around which the American republic is organized: (1) the myth of liberation and freedom with its strong Exodus coloration and George Washington as its Moses figure; (2) the myth of the Civil War with its Good Friday-Easter Sunday dimension of suffering, dying, and resurrection, with Abraham Lincoln as the Christ figure. Such myths function as a symbolic interpretation of the meaning of American society. Further, Bellah's analysis of inaugural addresses shows that they tend to rely on a description of America as "the new Canaan" and "the new Rome" These are intended to be interpretations which would symbolize in a quasi-poetic fashion the golden visions of American society. (UM 114-117)

Langdon **Gilkey** addresses himself to the question of the relationship between science and myth, and shows that in actual practice science is based on creative leaps of imaginative vision and that “knowing is through and through a human act, an act of daring, commitment, and risk, a reaching for what can never be incontrovertibly demonstrated, but which the rational consciousness finds itself compelled on its own self-accredited grounds to acknowledge and then to assert. Ironically, because it is a rational act and so autonomous, dependent on no external, necessitating authority but only on the self-validation of the rational consciousness, cognition is also an intensely existential or willed act, dependent on a self-affirmation of the self as knower, and of the truth so known as true – an affirmation that nothing else but the rational consciousness itself can finally establish.” Thus, our culture has wrongly separated passion and commitment from objectivity. Science itself involves passionate commitment and thus raises the question of ultimacy. Science also involves myths, which “signify a certain perennial mode of language, whose elements are multivalent symbols, whose referent is in some strange way the transcendent or the sacred, and whose meanings concern the ultimate or existential issues of actual life and the questions of human and historical destiny.” In this sense, ‘scientism’ is a myth – perhaps the most successful myth in the Western intellectual world. Gilkey comments: “Each form of the modern anthropocentric myth – asserting that man becomes man and can control his life and destiny as he is educated, liberal, analyzed, scientific, and ‘expert,’ etc. – assumes that for man at last to understand, to know about, or to be aware of something – for him to have a sacred gnosis – is for him to be able in a quite new way to control that object of knowledge, to direct it, and to use it teleologically; that knowledge and awareness can turn whatever has been a blindly determining force on man and in man. . . . Modern anthropocentric myths are dualistic accounts of destiny in which ‘evil’ is a result of the chaos of the unorganized and so unintelligible given; but it is a ‘given’ which the intelligence and good will of the trained, the self-aware, or the critically intelligent man may, like Indra or Zeus of old, subdue into order through a sacral gnosis and autonomous freedom.” Scientism is a myth – with a future-oriented scenario – which purports to describe ultimate reality, to establish norms for human behavior and to reassure man about his life and his prospects, and, like all myths, it is in no sense verifiable by empirical evidence. (UM 118-121)

Finally, Herbert **Richardson** observes: “Sociological studies of different modern societies together with historical studies of many different past civilizations show that myth persists and plays the same social function even in cultures that are radically different. This constitutes a legitimate basis for predicting that a future society will also be integrated by myths and religion. (UM 122)

G suspects that in most situations, man has used interpretive stories to convey his view of what the universe is all about. Nor is there any reason to believe, that when all is said and done, contemporary man is very much different, even though he may have less intuitive understanding of both the nature and the message of myth – for only someone who has the capacity for enjoying, and perhaps even producing, poetry can grasp the reality of myths. (UM 124)

The SACRED:

As previously G had contended that the ‘conventional wisdom’ is inadequate for dealing with the persistence of community, here he posits its inadequacy for dealing with the persistence of the sacred.

He insists that “if industrialized society attempts to ignore the sacred in substantial segments of men’s lives, and if the churches listen to those divinity school professors who believe that contemporary man no longer needs or wants the sacred, then it is going to spring up in all sorts of odd and unexpected places.” He narrates incidents of revived interest in witchcraft. (UM 153)

The “sacred,” G notes, is the intrusion of the transcendent in our ordinary life. He accepts **Otto**’s notion of the “wholly other” – *tremendum* and *fascinans*: faced with a reality whose majesty emanates an overwhelming superiority of power and at the same time reveals a perfect fullness of being, man finds himself simultaneously frightened and attracted. (UM 153)

He also notes **Eliade**’s work on hierophanies, i.e., acts by which “something sacred shows itself to us.” In such events we are confronted by “the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural ‘profane’ world.” There is experienced an intrusion from beyond the realm of our ordinary experience which gives order to the everyday. “The hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center.” This involves the notion of “sacred space.” (UM 153-154)

Eliade notes that in the history of religions it becomes apparent that there are certain key manifestations of the sacred: the sky, the sun, the moon, water, stones, earth, fertility, and trees. There are obvious differences; but at a minimum, it can be said that man’s behavior in relationship to the sacred is a form of being impressed with the extraordinary. (DS 15)

He also cites William James on religious experience, and then moves to Happold’s anthology in which the point is made that in religious experience one obtains “a conception of the **whole**.” Thus, in such experience, one is fascinated/terrified, but in it one discovers the center of reality, which forms an ordering point around which the rest of life can be organized. There are many phenomena that can occur in a person’s life that will be the occasion of experiencing release from the bonds of matter/mortality and of being in touch with the **real**. Shils uses the category of the “serious,” arguing that the sense of the serious is man’s religious impulse. Ritual expresses an intended commitment to this ‘serious element of existence,’ to the powers/norms which it is thought should guide the understanding and conduct of life. The need for order, and for meaning in order, are too fundamental in man for the human race as a whole to allow itself to be bereft of the rich and elaborate scheme of metaphorical interpretation of existence which is made available by the great world religions. (UM 155-158)

G notes that “caveman” painted and molded ‘**fertility** goddesses’ in order to “maintain contact with the basic forces that underpinned his own existence and the survival of his tribe in the life processes of the universe.” And later religious activities are activities intended to bring men into contact with the really real, the awe-inspiring, the fascinating, the ordering. Thus, “as long as man has retained his capacity to be surprised by the strange and unexpected, to be frightened by the destructive, to be awed by the beautiful, and to be puzzled by the ultimate, he will experience a strong urge to establish and maintain contact with the really real.” (UM 159)

Further, such contact with Reality and the ordering principle provided in such contact provides a basis around which a community can be constructed. G insists, e.g., that some contemporary cult/communes are an attempt to reassert meaningful community in ecstasy in a rationalistic hyperorganized world which had assumed that man could dispense with ecstatic elements. In other words, "both the suburban Sunday congregation and the college witchcraft coven are looking for the same thing – some kind of contact with the 'totally other'." (UM 160-162)

Sam Keen goes so far as to insist that if man loses his capacity for wonder – i.e., for contact with the numinous – he ceases to be human. What is essential is that "we retain the sense of wonder which keeps us aware that ours is a holy place." Needed is "the ability to nurture those attitudes which are essential authentic life: openness, availability, epistemological humility in the face of the mystery of being, and the ability to admire and be grateful." This means that "all symbols, concepts, theories, and myths are inadequate and crude efforts to domesticate a reality that eludes explanation." (UM 163)

G expresses his problems with thinkers such as Cox and Berger who, after insisting on society's secularization, later tended to speak of "resacralization." G argues that what they have named 'resacralization' is the sacred that has always existed but which their ideology had blinded them to: "the quest for religious or mystical or ecstatic experience has been part of the human condition for a long time." G argues that we need to forsake the 'conventional wisdom' and to "rediscover truths which were perfectly obvious to those who built the Gothic cathedrals or wrote the Reformation hymns." (UM 165-166)

Eliade and Geertz point out that the sacred is intimately linked with "**world view**." Experience of the sacred provides a participation in the order of the universe. Thus a world view, an interpretive scheme underpins involvement in the sacred. So, "man's experience of the sacred is the response of his total personality to the really real, insofar as that really real is perceived as underpinning his meaning system." In fact, the meaning system itself can intermittently generate an experience of the sacred – an experience which tends to be both awe-inspiring and reassuring in critical occasions in their lives. G argues that there is a strain in one's interpretive scheme toward an experience of the numinous; a strain which can be resisted, but which is there nonetheless. For most men, this has meant some transcendence of the 'everyday,' i.e., of the limits of the cognitive – involving both mystical and orgiastic forms of ecstasy. "The orgiastic, the mystical, the contemplative, the boringly ritualistic, the intermittent ecstasy (at key times in life), and even the repression of the sacred are response patterns to the numinous that are as old as man's religion." (UM 167-168)

However, there is a difference in modern man's apprehension of sacred symbols. Now they must be **interpreted**. Even the numinous must be explained after it has been experienced, though all the explanations in the world will not induce a hierophany. This does not mean that the capacity for the numinous has declined; to assume this is an *a priori* assumption based on a model of 'evolutionary process' that cannot be substantiated by any empirical data. "It may very well be that sense of the sacred grows or expands as social conditions change, but that does not mean that there has been a steady evolutionary decline in man's capacity for the sacred." "In our highly rationalistic, technological,

and scientific society the capacity for the sacred has managed to survive and even to come back to haunt some of those who but a few years ago celebrated its demise." (UM 169-170)

G notes that in the "literature of the sacred," there are two kinds of extraordinariness in particular which seem to produce reactions that traditionally have been called religious. One is that kind of phenomenon which simultaneously imposes on man a demand for explanation and also provides him with an explanation. The second is that sort of phenomenon which both imposes on man and provides him with a sense of being profoundly **related** to his fellowmen. Thus, sacredness relates to man's experience of the need for meaning and the need for belonging, as well as to the fulfillment of these needs. Further, man learns his interpretation of reality through social interaction. And it is the sharing of explanations/interpretations which provide the common bonds of unity and enables man to unify himself with his fellows. It seems to G that these two aspects of religion have been divorced in the modern urban industrial world and there has been a strong tendency by those who analyze religion to emphasize one aspect or the other. (DS 16-17)

Religion and **SEX**:

Some of the 'conventional wisdom' regarding sex would have it that the institution of marriage is declining and that previously chastity/fidelity were much more popular than today. G counters that all the available data indicate a remarkable persistence and permanency in attitude toward marriage/family; further, he has doubts as to any historical period having been a bastion of chastity. G does note at the outset of his treatment of sexuality, that it will be 'tentative' and 'speculative.' (UM 171-172)

In the history of religions, little attention has been paid to the issue of whether it is possible for religion to avoid being deeply involved in human sexuality, and for sexuality to avoid having powerful religious overtones. Many writers explain the fertility dimension of the nature religions by the fact that archaic peoples depended desperately on the workings of fertility in nature, from which it naturally followed that fertility would be considered inevitably a hierophany, a manifestation of numinous power. But G insists on the reasonableness of arguing that "since sex is such a powerful force in human life, one's view of sexuality will be intimately linked to one's view of ultimate reality, and that therefore religion will shape attitudes toward sexuality (and vice versa) even after man has left the explicit fertility religions behind. . . . Sex, since it participates in the life-producing powers of the universe, may be numinous and hierophantic quite independently of whether man's primary mode of production is agriculture." (UM 173-174)

Gilkey notes the power of the experience of **birth**, in which the wonder of existence manifests itself; he sees this as grounding the fact of fertility being one of the primary forms of the sacred in religion. "This experience of an ultimate, awesome, and yet wondrous power of life on which every value depends is, then, the explanation for a whole range of religious phenomena extending from sexual and birth symbols and rites through vegetation and agricultural symbols and rites, to the universal importance of feminine deities. It also may help explain the strange and awesome power of women in human life. . . Woman can feel directly within herself and so from within – and man knows this deeply – the ultimate power of

life by which all creatures come, working through and in her, and thus in her experience of herself as mother, she enjoys a closer touch with ultimacy of being, life, and power.” He continues: “All the aspects of birth bespeak this experience of an ultimate power of life which works **in** and **through** the mother, not by her.” He also goes on to note that in our understandable scientific concern for the safety of the birth process, we may block the “incursion of strange experiences and events,” thus losing all sense of the event’s “beauty and mystery.” If we allow such an experience, birth can be a symbol of that which is sacred. (UM 174-176)

G insists that for considerable numbers of men in many moments of their lives, sexuality **is** religious, and that an attempt to endow sex with religious meaning is inevitable in the human condition. L The oldest examples that we have, e.g., of any human sculpture are Paleolithic female figurines. Thus, even before the rise of agriculture, when man was still a hunting and food-gathering creature, the woman’s sexuality was seen as a hierophany. Campbell sees these figurines as “the earliest detectable expression of that undying ritual idea which sees in Woman the embodiment of the beginning and continuance of life, as well as the symbol of the immortality of that earthly matter which is in itself without form, yet clothes all forms. . . (these figurines) suggest that the obvious analogy of woman’s life-giving and nourishing powers with those of the earth must already have led man to associate fertile womanhood with the idea of the motherhood of nature.” Eliade continues this into analysis of fertility cults: ‘The mystical connection between the fertility of the soil and the creative force of woman is one of the basic intuitions of what one may call ‘the agricultural mentality’. . . . And as agriculture became more developed, it tended to give man a more and more important role. If woman was identified with the soil, man felt himself to be one with the seeds which make it fertile.”

Though Judaism went beyond the fertility cults, it maintained unmistakable fertility components. Walter Harrelson insists that “the Israelites certainly gave large place in their thinking and in their worship to the motif of fertility. . . Yahweh was both the God of history and of fertility.” The archaic nature festivals were not eliminated by the covenant, but transformed: “All fruits of the soil, all fruit of the womb, were gifts of God – for Israel as much as for her neighbors. What was eliminated was the necessity or even the possibility for faithful Israel to strike some bargain with God, to induce the earth to produce, or even to participate cultically in the earth’s renewal.” So though overt fertility rituals were removed, “the mystery of fertility was not eliminated, but the ritual acts and mythological explanations of those acts were slowly demythologized and fertility was drained of much of its numinous power in this way.” When the ritual practices associated with pagan fertility rites were less a threat, motifs deriving from fertility religion were permitted to stand within the ceremonies connected, e.g., with the feast of Booths. (UM 179-182)

Concerning Christianity, G notes that “in the Easter Vigil liturgy of the Roman Catholic church a lighted candle is plunged three times into the holy water; as obvious symbol of sexual intercourse as one could possibly imagine. . . this fertility rite – and surely it is – is of very ancient origin in the Roman Catholic liturgy, dating probably to fourth-century Rome and almost certainly taken over from the pagan spring festival celebration there. . . those who inserted the ceremony into the liturgy most assuredly knew what it represented.” (UM 182)

The hierophanous dimension of sex was, like all manifestations of the sacred, both fascinating and terrifying. Purification rituals may reflect this. Campbell suggests that the ritual purification required of women who had given birth or who had completed a menstrual period was based not so much on the notion that sexuality was “obscene” but rather that a woman’s sexuality was dangerous! Herbert Richardson writes of the development of the all-male group in man’s “escape” from the power of woman and matrilineal society. There had been such anxiety facing the sexual mana of the female that the laws of avoidance and hostility toward the female are directly related to this. The male friendship group (not just in archaic societies but even, e.g., among contemporary adolescents) and related “avoidance procedures” can be seen as an attempt on the part of males to protect themselves from what they saw as the frightening and dominating hierophantic power of women. The role of a puberty test of the male’s competence in virginity is to establish competence in segmenting a sphere of voluntary behavior off from the sphere of instinctual bodily behavior. In the post-axial period (corresponding to the beginning of the common era) man became aware of the existence and power of the transcendent and unchanging over the cycle of nature. From that point, sexual abstinence allows a man to break away, not so much any longer from a feared natural power, but through a mortal world to a transcendent world. Related to this was the phenomenon of *philia*, same-sex friendships. Christianity made possible friendship between men and women; this led to the practice of “syneisaktism” (spiritual marriage) in which a couple lived in the same house, frequently in the same room/bed, and yet conducted themselves as brothers and sisters. Virginity on the part of women opened the way to this new kind of spiritual community and to the new kind of functional equality of men and women which it involved. G remarks with some glee that “the Irish – of all people – were apparently the last to give up the practice of the ‘co-ed monastery’.” (UM 183-188)

G acknowledges the negative dimension of the patristic tradition concerning sex, but comments: “These negative views must be understood against the background of the world view of the time. The human body was viewed as a limitation on the human personality, and sex something so obviously corporeal as to be a serious limitation on the freedom and growth of the spirit. Friendship was only possible for those who could become fully human, and to be fully human they had to transcend their bodily passions. The Christian insight was the discovery that women were human too and could transcend the powerful physical force within themselves. In the Christian view of things women were as capable of friendship as men.” For there to be the possibility of integrating sex and friendship there was needed the modern discovery that instinctual behavior can be transformed/integrated within the personal order. But between this modern effort and the primitive Church stands the fascinating period of romantic love in the late Middle Ages: “a period in which men and women strove for friendship that was indeed sexual but still, in theory, at least, quite above the ‘animality’ of sexual intercourse.” Of this phenomenon, Morton Hunt writes: “In this cauldron of sustained tension between absolute virginity and erotic gratification, the sexual process was moralized, personalized, and embellished. Most importantly, these courtly lovers were learning, for the first time in human history, how to integrate sexuality with friendship. The express intention of the theoreticians of this late medieval movement was to create a new behavioral possibility: heterosexual friendships, the intimate love between men and women as equals, an equality that would not require any renunciation of the sexuality of the other. . . . In courtly love, there was something new: a love that could express sexual feeling and sexual differences without

becoming overcome by anxiety and falling prey to aggression. This self-confidence would develop from the gradual exploitation, understanding, and appreciation of sexual differences, an exploration that could be continued without danger precisely because, by common consent, the relation was to remain chaste! Notice that, in courtly love, virginity was a moral competence required of both men and women because the pleasures sought were mutual. . . . Courtly love also softened the differences between men and women. . . 'Feminine' was distinguished from 'female;' 'masculine' was distinguished from 'male'. . . the male could learn tenderness and sentimentality." Richardson notes that the contemporary courtship process with its "technical virginity" of necking and petting, serves as a similar time of acquiring the skills in affection and friendship which are demanded by contemporary American culture." (UM 188-192)

Luckmann holds that sexuality is an integral part of the themes of self-expression and self-realization which are involved in contemporary religious consciousness. Sexuality has come to play a unique role as a source of 'ultimate' significance for the individual who is retrenched in 'the private sphere.' G extends this by noting that "much of the emotional disturbance in contemporary America comes from lack of confidence and clarity about one's sexual identity." (UM 193-194)

G remarks: "While there have been a considerable number of changes in man's attitude toward sexuality since the Ice Age, these changes have not been total or pervasive. . . the principal difference between our time and any previous age is that now we have categories of thought and analysis which lead us to expect and demand friendship in our marriage relationships." So, the modalities of the relationship between sex and religion may have changed, but sexuality is still something about which we are highly ambivalent: "If sexuality is not a *res tremendens et fascinans*, nothing else is." "For most human beings there are times in life when sexuality becomes distinctly numinous – at marriage and childbirth in particular, but other times as well. There are attitudes and behavior when we are dealing with sexuality that indicate quite forcefully we know we are dealing with a power that is mysterious – a power that for all our rationality, all our confidence, all our assertions of naturalness we are not able to completely understand or completely control. In this respect I argue we are very little different from our Paleolithic ancestors who also knew that they did not understand it or control it, and that it represented a power which in some fashion was 'totally other'." (UM 197-199)

Religion and ETHICS:

In primitive societies, ethics is inseparable from religion (which does not mean that everyone in such societies obeys the laws!) this is not to say that specific solutions are provided by religion for every specific situation, but that one's meaning system did provide one with certain overarching myths which lay down broad, implicit guidelines for appropriate behavior. The ethical dimension of the myths certainly reflect what goes on in the culture, because the relationship between a culture and its meaning system is reciprocal: the meaning system shapes the culture and the culture shapes the meaning system. (UM 200-201)

However, when rational/abstract thought began to separate itself from myth in the millennia before Christ, legal and ethical systems began to emerge as distinct from the myths, both of which systems purported in one way or another to be rooted in the nature of things. Thus both in the Mosaic law and

Aristotle's ethics were taken to have an overriding moral vigor precisely because they reflected either the wishes of the deity or the nature of reality. However, the 'conventional wisdom' argues that in our time morality has been "desacralized," i.e., it is no longer rooted in a religious view of reality, and it has been personalized. (UN 201)

G sees three forms of argumentation against 'absolute moral traditions:'

1. "Political" situationism contends that issues are so complex that it is practically impossible to determine rightness/wrongness, and the best one can do is engage in pragmatic thought and decision-making;
2. "Theological situationism" involves minimalizing the importance of principles, focusing instead on the need for "loving motivation;"
3. "Social-scientific situationism" regards morality as a matter of subjective development (e.g., Kohlberg).

With political situationism, G agrees that political decisions are extremely complex and that moral self-righteousness on the part of political leaders is extremely dangerous, but he insists that it does not follow from this that there are no certain general imperatives which may govern political decision-making (though it is probable that such principles will for the most part be negative). He also sees a certain continuity between theological situationists and Jesuit casuistry, both of which realize that there is an inevitable strain between ethical principles and individual decisions; but he insists that both elements of that strain must be honored if one is not to end up denying all moral responsibility. Finally, with Keniston, G criticizes Kohlberg's position for the way in which "abstract personal moral principles" are intimately related to development of moral self-righteousness, zealotry, dogmatism, fanaticism, and insensitivity, Keniston insists on the need for such development to be matched by development in such things as compassion, love, and empathic identification with others. "Compassion without morality is sentimental and effusive, while morality without compassion is cold and inhumane." G notes that love/compassion/empathy seem to be required "by the nature of things." Why should such a difficult, messy, complicated virtue such as compassion be necessary? G's answer, of course, is that if compassion is an absolute then there must be something in the nature of things that makes it an absolute; in other words it is rooted ultimately in one's concept/interpretation of what is really real. G makes a similar analysis of moral outrage, contending that the only reason that we can judge our moral decision to be superior to someone else's is that we are able to argue that our decision is more in keeping with the moral principle that is rooted in the nature of things. Thus, the moral outrage of a protestor makes no sense at all unless it is a "religious" outrage, i.e., an outrage which views an evil as a violation of the way things "ought" to be, and things "ought" to be that way because the norms of oughtness are part of the basic and ultimate nature of reality. (UM 202-209)

G contends that man is a norm-fashioning creature, who arranges the patterns of relationships with others in structures so that much of his behavior is routing; this frees him to devote his attention/energies to matters of substance rather than process. He also elaborates normative structures for himself so that many of his decisions become routine, and these norms eventually turn into ethical systems. Such systems can lose their vitality and become juridic/legalistic; thus there is an inevitable

tension between codifying and revivifying normative structures, as well as between general principles about the way things should be and practical decisions in concrete circumstances. (UM 209-210)

Most people simply do not question the relationship between religion and ethics. And Gilkey argues that we need the religious myths to warn us of our own inadequacies and limitations as moral agents, for however high and noble our principles, it is easy for us to become narrow, selfish, and blind when it comes to the application of those principles. The religious mythologies warn us of our own weakness and sinfulness and of the dangers of thinking that we are so rational and so 'in control of our emotions' that we can make moral decisions independently of feedback and checks and balances either from our community or from our ethical tradition. Gilkey further notes that "the great increase in man's ability to control what is outside him through technology has not led to any corresponding increase either in man's control over himself or over his historical fate."

Religious **SOCIALIZATION**:

G notes that the basic ethical values that a child learns in American society do not differ greatly across denominational lines, though there are certain areas of special emphasis within the various denominations. But in the general population, there is far more held in common; this commonality involves certain basic 'doctrinal' values that all Americans learn:

1. We learn all the benefits of the American way, political and economic;
2. We learn to be grateful to God for the American way;
3. We learn that religion is part of the American way.

Religion is presented to the young American as a means of explaining ultimate questions and responding to crises that produce a challenge to the stable order and operation of the world and of his life; the American view of religion tends to be optimistic, involving a belief in progress. Religion is also presented as a basis on which to root ethical commitments and for passing on one's ethical commitments to children. G notes that such ethical/doctrinal values tend to be a rather high level of geniality and to be vaguely Protestant in their orientation. (DS 227-229)

In the socialization process, the young American also learns that he is one of the "we" who stand over against the "they." There are many kinds of "we's" and they's," but one extremely important "we" is his religious denomination. We are active in our churches both as a means of associating with our own kind and also avoiding too intimate association with others. We reinforce symbolic differences with other groups because they differentiate those who are committed to our traditions from those who are committed to another tradition. (DS 230)

G argues that **loyalty** to one's religio-ethnic denomination is of central importance, though this also involves perceiving other traditions as valid patterns of being American. This means that a young American grows up perceiving his society in terms both of unity and diversity; yet the diversity is organized. Religion is a means of social differentiation, and as a modality of participation in a larger American society it is a manifestation of the fact that America is a denominational society. Thus, loyalty to the religious tradition, particularly to those doctrinal, ethical, and cultic elements which are of major

symbolic importance in the context of American society will be extremely important to the young American for his becoming himself and being an American. (DS 231-232)

G notes that many critics dismiss American religion as “inauthentic” because it is seen as “culture religion.” He insists, however, that no society could possibly be neutral on the subject of religion, noting that American society is favorably disposed toward religion for reasons of history, geography, culture, and social structure. The critics do not see this fact as beneficial but as harmful; their perspective seems to involve that one is not authentically religious unless one is a martyr. But G, of course, presents a different view. The fact that there are strong religious denominations with elaborate institutional systems has made possible a great deal more enthusiasm, zeal, and scholarship in matters religious than one can find in almost any Western society at the present time. The choice for the religious groups in the Western world seems to be between a society that is committed to religion but is relatively mediocre religiously and one which is apathetic and indifferent to any and all religious activity. And while prophecy, witness, zeal, charity are terribly difficult to measure, it is at least tenable to suggest that the denominational society for all its weaknesses and failings seems to produce more of these phenomena than does the indifferent society. (DS 233-234)

Cultural religion is rooted deep in the American past and in the historical, social, and cultural experiences of those who belong to the various religious traditions. However authentic or unauthentic it may be, it has been around for a long time, and there is no statistical data to suggest that it will not be around for a long time to come.

THEORIES and PREDICTIONS:

G indicates that an advantage to ‘low-level’ theorizing, such as in DS, is that it lends itself to hypotheses that can more readily be tested.

Concerning apostasy, G’s theorizing would lead to the expectation that levels would be low and that there would be little change over time in apostasy rates. He indicates that studies confirm such expectation. NORC data indicates that when ‘returners’ and ‘converts’ are taken into account there was virtually no net loss for Catholics from 1961-1968 in the college graduate study. G sums up the tables: “The Protestants are the heaviest losers in the games of changing religious affiliation. The Catholics had the least net losses, largely because of their ability to attract converts. The Jews suffer only moderate losses, mostly because of a tendency of some Jewish apostates to reassume a nominal Jewish affiliation. The 1968 protestant leavers were substantially what one might expect from one’s knowledge of the 1961 leavers. The Protestants who returned in 1968 scored high on ‘happiness’ but low on ‘good health’ – a combination that neither the leavers nor those who remained Protestant indicated. The Catholics who left in 1968 were a deviant group, disproportionately female, Irish or Italian, and graduates of Catholic schools. (DS 237-242)

John Kotre’s research into the psychological/personality correlates of apostasy among Catholics found that the major predictor whether one was ‘in’ or ‘out’ was the existence of religious conflict in one’s family background. It is precisely those who experienced a religious conflict in their family background

who are most likely to break out of the structure the denominational society had created for them. (DS 242)

Given the contention that one acquires one's interpretive scheme in the very early phases of the socialization process, it is understandable that if this process is a relatively benign and emotionally satisfying one, a person is much less likely to feel at conflict with his interpretive scheme than he does if he has acquired it in the midst of a stressful and turbulent emotional situation. (UM 242)

Research by Capolvitz indicates that apostasy is symptomatic not only of the loss of religious faith, but of rejection of a particular ascriptive community as a basis for identification. A picture emerges of "the apostate as a person who is likely to be maladjusted in his social milieu, who is oriented to values that are not widely held in the society (intellectuality, culture, and idealism) and who is highly critical of the societal status quo. (DS 242-244)

Concerning **intermarriage**, G hypothesized that exogamy rates would be fairly low and that they would be roughly similar in all major American denominations: further, hypothesized that the rates would not change significantly over time. Research indicates that about four fifths of the members of each of the four Protestant denominations are married to people whose present religious affiliation is the same as their own: the ratio of mixed marriages does not vary much across denominational lines. Further, the tendency to seek denominational homogeneity in marriage did not seem to have weakened between 1957 and 1968. Denominational homogeneity is maintained by Catholics and Jews through the process of marrying within one's own denominational boundaries, whereas it is maintained by other religious groups largely through considerable shifting of denominational affiliations. He speculates that the strain toward denominational homogeneity is rooted in the American belief that religious differences between husband and wife are not good either for the marriage relationship or for the children of the marriage. (DS 244-247).

A general hypothesis is this: **in American society the meaning function of religion takes on added importance – at least in terms of propositional orthodoxy – precisely because of the strong belonging function that a denominational society makes possible for religion.** The difficult variable to operationalized in trying to test this would be the meaning variable, because meaning indicates not merely propositional orthodoxy but adherence to religion as an 'interpretive scheme' – and measures for researching this are difficult to elaborate. (DS 249)

Concerning the **future**, G offers the following predictions (cf. R2 168-170, and DS 249-251), in general contending that the behavior patterns, the social structures, the human relationships of the beginning of the twenty-first century are not likely to be too different from those of the middle of the twentieth century:

1. Religion will not lose its adherents.
2. Nor is religion likely to lose its 'influence.' It will still provide at least a substantial component of the ultimate interpretive scheme or meaning system with the overwhelming majority of the population; it will also have indirect impact on society through the religiously influenced ethical

decisions of its members and direct influence over society because it provides part of the underpinning for general social consensus.

3. The sacred is not being replaced by the secular.
4. Full-time clergy working with the local congregations will continue to be the majority of religious functionaries.
5. Dionysian and ecstatic ritual will become more common.
6. Religious institutions will persist, becoming more elaborate and more sophisticated and more dependent on academic experts than they are at the present time. Denominations will continue to be characteristic.
7. Doctrinal orthodoxy will remain strong.
8. The local congregations may become smaller and more diversified, but they will remain.
9. The crusade for social/secular relevance will not either sweep away the passivity of the religious masses or drive the masses out of the churches.

G does acknowledge that there are likely to be a number of dramatic changes (R2 171-173):

1. There will be a tremendous increase in the dialogue between religion and the social sciences.
2. Social science will realize that religion plays a pervasively important role in human behavior.
3. Religion (especially theology) will be increasingly concerned about the interpretability of man and the human condition.
4. There will be much more emphasis in religion on personality development being equivalent to religious development, and on the central role of sexuality in this developmental process.
5. Religion will be much more concerned about small, intimate, fellowship congregations.
6. There will be a consolidation of democratic tolerant organizational theories and practices in most American religious denominations.
7. There will also be considerably more sympathetic understanding of the wisdom of alternative religious traditions.
8. There will be a further strengthening of the responsibility of the individual as the ultimate religious and ethical agent in the context of the circumstances in which he finds himself and of his personal relationships with those around him.
9. There will be substantially more emphasis in religion on the non-rational; related to this, there will be a further decline in Puritanism.
10. The clergyman's role function as "God's man" in contemporary implies a considerable development of his skills as an expressive and affective leader.

A key need is for the churches to reinterpret their own mythological tradition. A new approach is needed which concedes that the traditional myths were not designed to convey precise/scientific history, but which also argues that they do have existential truth relevant to the situation in which modern man, with all his marvelous scientific tools, finds himself. The basic challenge is to interpret myths that have been 'broken;' i.e., the factual component of the mythological narrative is now subject to review and criticism by science, and, indeed, can in no sense claim to compete with science as a description of what literally happened in the past. It must be kept in mind that the mythmaker was not trying to narrate science or history as we understand those terms today; rather, he was trying to say something about the nature of the ultimate reality in which he and his fellows found themselves. E.g., the important point about the Exodus story is not how many days Moses spent on Mount Sinai but rather that the Sinai story

conveys to those who hear it a world view, an ethical system, a sense of mission and hope rooted in the conviction that God has entered into a covenant with the Israelite people. And in Christian mythology, the basic issue is not so much how exactly the events of Jesus' resurrection occurred, but rather the existential truth conveyed in the Resurrection story: through Jesus mankind triumphed over sin and death. The interpretive scheme stated in the Sinai and Easter experiences is far more 'marvelous' than the mere physical facts recounted. (UM 244-2

In our age of explicit articulation the substantive content of the myth must be explicitly articulated, although it is most unlikely that those who have completely repressed the mythopoetic dimensions of their thought processes will ever really be able to understand the myth, even when its substantive content is liberated somewhat from its mythopoetic garb. Nonetheless, without myth man is ill-equipped to cope with the ultimate/existential issues of actual life and the questions of human and historical destiny. If the churches do not provide response to these critical problems out of their own tradition, then presumably new myth-makers will appear on the scene to hawk their wares.

A 'second stage' of Greeley's theorizing on religion can be found in the following works:

- *Religion: A Secular Theory*. NY: Free Press, 1982.
- *The Religious Imagination*. NY: Sadlier, 1981. [This work is intended to be an empirical study testing the theory set forth in RST (RI 5).]

There are also numerous related volumes:

- *Parish, Priest and People*. [With Mary Durkin, David Tracy, John Shea, and William McCready.] Chicago: Thomas More, 1981.
- *Young Catholics in the United States and Canada*. [With Joan Fee, William McCready, and Theresa Sullivan.] NY: Sadlier, 1981.
- *The Young Catholic Family*. Chicago: Thomas More, 1980.
- *Angry Catholic Women*. [With Mary Durkin.] Chicago: Thomas More, 1984.

The thesis statements in the following pages are taken from RST.

G offers thirteen introductory points in RST:

1. By 'secular' he means prior to 'ecclesiastical.'
2. In speaking of a **model** of religion, he means an oversimplified and schematized design/template/pattern which provides a useful perspective for understanding; it thus stands open to being complemented by other models/perspectives.
3. His focus is on **preconscious imagery** ("stories") which makes a claim to be a uniquely valid description of the Way Things Really Are.
4. Though writing sociology, G remains open to literature from other fields: anthropology, philosophy, theology.
5. As sociologist, G contends that even religious experiences are influenced by a person's cultural/structural background.

6. The theory presented is **empirical**, i.e., based on empirical evidence.
7. Though the theory is consistent, it does not intend to be 'tight.'
8. The large number of theses (99) indicate the complexity of religion.
9. There is no *a priori* definition of religion operative in the theory, G insists that one should begin with data, not definitions.
10. The theory is not "evolutionary."
11. A central contention is that religion begins prerationally, though it moves toward rational formulation.
12. G does not find "genetic" approaches to religion particularly enlightening. Thus, he insists that there is a powerful tendency to hope in human nature; the issue of where such hope 'comes from' is bracketed.
13. G does not offer scholarly *apparatus* in RST.

HOPEFULNESS:

2.1 In the human personality there exists a propensity to hope.

G notes Kübler-Ross's research which indicates, e.g., a tendency for dying persons to be hopeful in a final state; later research indicated hopefulness resultant from near-death experiences. He also cites Chesterton's post-near-death-experience affirmation that "life was much too important to ever be anything but life." Further, in Greeley/McCready research, 80% of the respondents gave optimistic or hopeful responses to vignettes. (RST 15-17)

G argues that all such research demonstrates a powerful and persistent tendency for persons to hope even when the situation seems hopeless, even when they can find no specific content to their hope. (RI 7)

The primordial/fundamental question is whether reality is such as to guarantee the propensity to hope: "Is Reality truly that which we experience in our interludes of hopefulness?" (RI 8)

2.2 There also exists the need that this hope periodically be validated.

In order to be sustained through tragedy/disappointment, hopefulness needs reinforcement; this accounts for the human propensity to engage in religious activities/behaviors. (RST 18)

2.3 In the human organism there is a capacity to find validation for hopefulness in a wide variety of experiences which are perceived as having been triggered by realities beyond the organism

A considerable body of research indicates that intense religious experiences are widespread in the human race. But G's research with McCready finds, further, that if you include 'uncanny' experiences of perhaps less intensity (ecstatic/sacred/purpose experiences) 50% of the respondents report them. Maslow and Tracy each refer to these. The point is that when we experience "the boundaries of our existence, basic questions arise as to the meaning of life; in the very experience of finitude, a "hint of an explanation" may be grasped. **Limit**-experience stirs up 'wonder' and can 'disclose' reality insofar as **gratuity** is experienced as well as finiteness. It raises the question, i.e., of the possible **graciousness of existence**; such limit-experiences can be

religious precisely in their capacity to arouse “wonder.” In that sense, it can involve **revelation** of the nature of what is beyond-the-horizon; such disclosive experiences reveal a world of meaning **beyond the everyday**, a world through which religious symbols come. Such experiences renew hopefulness. (RST 18-25)

In research, the following percentages of respondents indicated the frequency of their religious experience (RI 35):

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| None | 30% |
| Almost none | 16% |
| A few | 18% |
| Several | 23% |
| Many | 19% |

- 2.4 These experiences are perceived as an **encounter with goodness** which exists in the realities that trigger them, but which also in some fashion exist apart from or even beyond the triggering realities.

T. Fawcett argues that in such experiences there must be (1) a real **existential need**, to which (2) the moment of **disclosure** responds, and (3) from which the experience is embodied in **symbolic form**. This is the “descent” phase; there must be a predisposition to wonder, to which ‘everyday realities’ can ‘speak’ in a revelatory sacramental fashion. Fawcett then speaks of an “ascent” phase: (1) the very symbolization can become the basis for further disclosure, from which (2) creative perception occurs, and (3) further symbolization of integration/wholeness results. (RST 25-27)

G. offers two examples: (1) Nature-experiences of Autumn/Spring responding to human realities of life/hope; (b) encounter with a beautiful woman which triggers experience of loneliness, yet also possibilities for union. (RST 27-29)

The ‘triggers’ of such experiences become symbols which both embody felt problems and pointers to an ‘answer.’ Out of this, one’s ordinary structures of perception are shattered, reorganized into new structures, which remain as a symbol to recall the experience. Such **restructured perceptions** lead to **restructured living**. The primary response, i.e., is action; reflection is derivative. (RST 29-32)

- 2.5 The goodness experience is perceived as overwhelming and yet **ambiguous**: good-but-mixed-with-ungood-but-still-good.

Because of the intensity of the experience, the reality of despair/evil is felt intensely; graciousness is not perceived as utterly vanquishing such realities, but as being ‘slightly more powerful.’

- 2.6 The propensity of hope, the need for validation of hope, the capacity to experience goodness in external realities, and the perception of that goodness as ambiguous are all functions of that

dimension of the organism which is called the prerational or the *preconscious*; these capacities and experiences are primarily a function of that aspect of the organism (brain?) in which free-floating **images**, pictures, stories exist independently of direct control by the conscious self.

G refers to this as the **poetic** dimension. He refers to Levi-Strauss who speaks of the mythmaker as operating with a limited number of images which are creatively “rearranged” by a playful imagination. Such a creative process is “intellectual,” but not in a logical, discursive fashion. **Kubie** refers to the “pre-conscious,” in which the essential process is uncovering **new relationships** among both new and old data. This is very similar to what **Maritain** called **creative intuition** – an activity which is principally unconscious, but the point of which emerges into consciousness. Maritain: “It is that energy which operates on the images gathered by our senses, drawing the intelligible content from these images.” It is in this realm, G argues, that the **religious imagination** produces the symbols which resonate with the reality that has been experienced. (RST 33-41)

G also refers to Michael **Polanyi**’s notion of **tacit knowing**: at some level in our personalities we intuit the truth about reality, and then, under the influence of this intuition, seek to ask questions which will enable us to “surface” our insight as an articulated answer to this questions. (RI 10)

The creative process is intellectual, but in a quite different way than our ordinary thought process is intellectual. (RI 12)

- 2.7 Almost any external reality is capable of triggering an experience that will reinforce hope; **certain realities**, because of their power and importance, are **especially likely to do so** – sun, water, night, mountains, fire, birth, sexual differentiation, food, drink, etc. The **language** which wells up out of our “creative imagination” which **articulates** our experience with these realities is likely to be as ambiguous as the experience itself.

In RI, G adds oil, love, marriage, death, community. (RI 9)

Research also indicates an influence between benign/warm religious imagery and sensitivity to nature: a religious sensitivity to nature is likely to lead to and enhance imagination and graciousness, while a gracious story of the meaning of the cosmos and of human life is very likely to render a person more sensitive to the religious implications of nature. (RI 34)

The ‘thing’ which reveals itself to us in such experience does so in its fullness: dense, multilayered, polyvalent. The language appropriate for expressing such reality is that of metaphor, parable, paradox. Of its very nature, limit-**language** involves tension, because of the tension inherent in the experience. Such a language involves an **intensification** of everyday language; since the experience is ‘beyond’ everyday experience, the language must be ‘beyond’ everyday language. It tends to be “odd,” “unusual.” It attempts not only to speak about the experience, but to make such an experience possible for the hearer/reader of the language. A reader, e.g., tries to find the meaning “in-front-of” a poem, s/he tries to experience possible

insight into the nature of Reality. And because of the dense nature of such experience and expression, it is possible that a hearer/reader may have an insight not had by the original experience-expresser; such language is a suggestive invitation to further discovery. (RST 43-47)

- 2.8 In addition to being perceived as ambiguous and overwhelming, the goodness which is encountered in experiences which reinforce hope is perceived as **mystifying, fascinating, terrifying, and hilarious.**

Obviously influenced by Otto, G asserts that both terror and fascination result from the fact that the Other is both Totally Other and yet not totally dissimilar from us. (RST 48)

- 2.9 Implicit in the experience of hope is the possibility of “**salvation.**” Religious groups which do not confirm that possibility or sufficiently emphasize it run the risk of losing some of their members that others do not.

By ‘salvation,’ G means the continued pursuit of that which is revealed in the experience of hope. A common term for such experiences, accordingly, is **grace.** (RST 49-50)

Just as a “gracious” hostess is charming, concerned, attractive, affectionate, so the “otherness” encountered in hope-rewarding experiences seems to be “gracious.” (RI 8)

SYMBOLS and STORIES:

- 3.1 A **symbol** is a picture or an image which **resonates and articulates and re-presents the experience of grace.** It also may be used to share this experience with others by re-presenting to the others parallel experiences of their own.
Real communication at this level is not a matter of ‘imposing’ my experience on another, but of reaching into the raw material of his/her preconscious to stimulate them in order to recall parallel experiences of his/her own. (RST 53-54)

The purpose of religious discourse is not to communicate doctrinal propositions, but rather to stir up in the other person resonances of experiences similar to that which the religious storyteller himself or herself has had. (RI 17)

- 3.2 The experience of grace promises salvation by **validating the purposefulness of human life:** our existence is not a series of random, unconnected events. It has, rather, a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion. Thus, the importance of narrative form, “story.”

Recognition of such an overarching purpose is the essence of hope. (RST 54)

Research shows that a high correlation between having religious experiences and being confident that “everything will be all right;” it also makes religious devotion and affiliation more likely. (RI 135+)

- 3.3 Implicit in the experience of grace is the **linking** of a story of an individual with a Great Story. The meaning of the individual life is related to the overarching Meaning of the Cosmos.

The Cosmos of which I am a part also has a beginning/middle/end; my 'story' is part of the larger 'Story.' (RST 55)

Our own experiences of grace give an inchoate meaning to the story of our lives; they hint at purposes which exist beyond ourselves; they suggest that the story of our life which has a beginning, a middle, and a trajectory toward conclusion, may well have a gracious purpose. Articulated and resonating together with stories of our religious heritage, these personalized religious stories constitute a fundamental theme, a basic *leitmotif* which underpins and validates our own existence. (RI 17)

- 3.4 **Creation and renewal images** are fundamental responses to the experience of grace. When religious groups lose such images, many of their members tend to turn elsewhere for images of creation and re-creation.

G notes the work of Long and Campbell which demonstrates the universality of creation mythology, which serves to provide an explanation for the cosmos and an opportunity for the individual to link his own purposes with the purpose of cosmos. Creation is perceived as the imposition of order on chaos. The religious power of such stories derives from the ease with which they flow from and can be readily linked back to individual experience. (RST 56)

- 3.5 The images, then, which re-present and resonate and articulate experiences of grace are stories linking my story to a cosmic story, linking the purpose of my life to Higher Purpose^{4s}.

Grace-produced symbols are **stories**, in the sense of dynamic, moving images. The grace-experience is one of an ongoing story, and the grace-symbol resonates, represents, and articulates that ongoing story. The 'raw material' of such a story is present in the preconscious, to be rearranged by the creative imagination in such fashion as to rearticulate the renewing experience of grace. G's research indicates that it is possible to find **patterns** of religious images in respondents; e.g., 'warm' images of God/Jesus/Mary correlate significantly with happy family experiences, marital/sexual fulfillment, social commitment, and seem to be affected by hope-experiences. Such 'patterns' of images (John Shea: "Stories of God") can profoundly affect our lives, and it is possible for our stories to be more or less warm/hopeful. (RST 57-60).

- 3.6 There is an enormous **variety** in the religious stories that human persons create for themselves. A person's story is **shaped** by biological, cultural, educational, psychological, ethnic, and biographic factors.

Both the hope/grace experience and our articulation of it are profoundly shaped by what we bring to the experience; this includes our past experiences, and a whole repertory of symbols – personal and from our 'heritage.' (RST 61)

- 3.7 The primary purpose of religious stories is the articulation of the **relationship between good and evil**. There are four scenarios: optimism, pessimism, fatalism, and hope.

It is the fact of evil which necessitates the validation of hope. The four-fold typification of response to evil is from Ricoeur:

- The **optimist** sees reality as ultimately good, with inconsequential evil.
- The **pessimist** sees the world as cruel/hostile.
- The **fatalist** is much like the pessimist, but further sees little point in even trying to deal with the evil forces of the cosmos.
- The **hopeful** perspective does not deny the intense reality of evil, but believes in the ultimate triumph of good. (RST 62-63)

McCready's research used a different typification to characterize responses to vignettes: religious optimist, hopeful, secular optimist, pessimist. In a sample of over 1,400 respondents, he found the following distribution:

| <u>Value Type</u> | <u>%</u> |
|--------------------|----------|
| Religious optimist | 22% |
| Hopeful | 22% |
| Secular optimist | 14% |
| Pessimist | 24% |
| Diffuse | 18% |

He discovered various background correlations: income, education, religion, region, family relationships, marital satisfaction. (RST 64-65)

G argues that much of the powerful dynamic of **religious and ethical** behavior comes from stories/experiences which spring up spontaneously in the creative imagination as our response to experiences of grace; these are prerational, requiring reflection but not replaced by it. He insists on the significance of such experiences and images for motivating behavior. (RST 66-67)

3.8 There is no evidence that the proportions who have high capacity for grace experiences and a high need to represent those experiences in "stories of grace" have undergone any substantial change in the course of human history.

G's research tries to **measure the religious imagination**. He asks young Catholic respondents to choose from 8-10 adjectives/nouns (with four categories of agreement to each) with regard to Mary, Jesus, God, and heaven. Thus, there are 144 possible responses, of which a respondent chooses 36; G contends that this constitutes a limited/incomplete – but nevertheless useful – profile of his/her religious imagination. (RI 23) The responses are summarized in Table 2.1 (RI 26):

| | Mean For MEN | Label | Mean for WOMEN | |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | 2.209 | Image of God as Judge | 2.345 | |
| | 1.795 | Image of God as Protector | 1.478 | |
| | 1.970 | Image of God as Redeemer | 1.280 | |
| | 2.448 | Image of God as Lover | 2.599 | |
| | 2.069 | Image of God as Master | 1.994 | |
| | 3.124 | Image of God as Mother | 2.968 | |
| | 1.411 | Image of God as Creator | 1.301 | |
| 1 = | 1.699 | Image of God as Father | 1.556 | Extremely likely |
| | 1.476 | Jesus as Gentle | 1.287 | |
| 2 = | 2.365 | Jesus as Stern | 2.535 | Somewhat likely |
| | 1.493 | Jesus as Warm | 1.271 | |
| 3 = Not | 2.933 | Jesus as Distant | 3.000 | too likely |
| | 2.731 | Jesus as Demanding | 2.962 | |
| 4 = Not | 1.479 | Jesus as Patient | 1.276 | likely at all |
| | 3.362 | Jesus as Irrelevant | 3.404 | |
| Observations: | 2.510 | Jesus as Challenging | 2.504 | Images for Mary |
| and Jesus tend | 1.566 | Jesus as Comforting | 1.298 | to be more |
| “warm” and | 1.291 | Mary as Gentle | 1.157 | “positive” than |
| those for God. It | 3.003 | Mary as Stern | 3.092 | seems that |
| emphasis on the | 1.362 | Mary as Warm | 1.188 | power, majesty, |
| and | 3.053 | Mary as Distant | 3.122 | righteousness of |
| God has made | 3.192 | Mary as Demanding | 3.328 | him a much |
| more distant and | 1.468 | Mary as Patient | 1.247 | less attractive |
| figure for young | 3.274 | Mary as Irrelevant | 3.390 | Catholics than |
| are Jesus and | 3.063 | Mary as Challenging | 3.086 | Mary. (RI 24-27) |
| | 1.468 | Mary as Comforting | 1.239 | |
| | 1.633 | Heaven: Peace and Tranquility | 1.499 | |
| | 2.846 | Heaven: Intense Action | 2.919 | |
| | 2.328 | Heaven: Similar Life | 2.288 | |
| I am here | 2.654 | Heaven: Lack things after death | 2.740 | missing two |
| pages of my | 3.239 | Heaven: Shadow life | 3.288 | original text of |
| notes, which will | 2.017 | Heaven: Spirit life | 1.938 | need to be |
| reconstructed. | 2.331 | Heaven: Paradise after death | 2.328 | |
| | 2.036 | Heaven: Intellectual communion | 1.842 | |
| | 1.579 | Heaven: Union with God | 1.363 | |
| | 1.722 | Heaven: Reunion after death | 1.470 | |

re-presenting implacable victory; other symbols in the tradition are linked around this ‘privileged’ story and have their meanings transformed in its light. Again, it is important to realize that this arrangement of symbols exists in the preconscious before it is ever articulated. The arrangement of symbols is, thus, more poetic than logical; philosophical reflection is essential, but it is derivative. (RST 83-86)

- 5.2 Religious heritages are **transmitted** primarily by the use of symbol systems to replicate the experiences which gave rise to them.

Telling tales, singing songs, dancing dances, and celebrating feasts is intended to **re-create experiences**, to reach into the preconscious and call forth past experiences and link these experiences – poetically – to the basic symbol arrangement which constitutes the heritage. Such religious practices involve layer upon layer of religious experience. E.g., Passover-Easter involves pagan fertility, Israelite liberation, and Christian resurrection – all poetically woven together through symbols which articulate all the background elements. (RST 87-88)

- 5.3 Symbol systems or story arrangements are **passed on** within a religious tradition especially through the **preconscious** in early childhood. There is no guarantee, however, that such transmission will be consistent with the overarching emphasis of the Great Tradition.

The emotional/psychological contexts of one's socialization is an integral element in the interweaving of symbols in one's own preconscious assimilation of the tradition; such contexts can easily involve distortions. (RST 90)

- 5.4 Within any religious heritage there is a wide variety of cues from specific symbols and linkages among cues which are not inconsistent with the founding experience.

- 5.5 The arrangement and rearrangement of symbols within the heritage is also an exercise of the poetic capacity of the person and the group.

- 5.6 **Rearrangement** of cues and cue linkages occurs in response to new stimuli from the external environment and as a result of additional experiences of goodness.

Thus, it is possible for such rearrangement to be consistent with privileged story; rearrangement allows new aspects to be highlighted for illuminating a new set of circumstances. Accordingly, it is possible that **new experience of goodness** may enrich the heritage. A couple's sexual relationship, e.g., involves the possibility of encounters with otherness; their experiences become revelatory. The importance of this was not emphasized in previous social situations; with the contemporary stress on fulfillment in marriage and the difficulty in achieving it, it becomes imperative to make explicit connections between such experiences and the overarching story of the tradition. (RST 91-93)

- 5.7 In a complex society all major religious heritages seem to develop **institutions** which one way or another strive to guarantee fidelity to the original religious heritage.

Such institutions are necessary to consider whether propositional statements fall within the tradition. They seem generally incapable, however, of dealing with the pre-propositional dimensions of human rationality. (RST 93-94)

- 5.8 Religious institutions suffer the same difficulties as do other institutions of transmitting instructions from the top which will be effectively carried out at the bottom.

Necessary for obtaining faithful response is the prior task of obtaining consent from the membership. (RST 94-95)

BELIEF SYSTEMS:

- 6.1 In reflecting on his religious imageries, the individual develops a “**world view**,” a response to the critical problems of human suffering and death.

We reflect on our religious images, unpack them, analyze them, criticize them, evaluate them, explain them, systematize them, and sort them out. (RST 97)

- 6.2 The world view is something more elaborate than a religious story. But it is also less elaborate than a doctrinal proposition. Doctrinal propositions and world views need not correlate.

A world view is a **practical orientation** of the rational dimensions of the personality; it gives a person a pattern of meaning with which to respond to life's most serious problems. (RST 98)

- 6.3 Religious images are a much stronger predictor of world view than is doctrinal orthodoxy.

But when doctrinal propositions are solidly **linked** with the religious imagination, they will have a considerable impact on world view. (RST 99)

- 6.4 Religious images also tend to correlate more powerfully with **social behavior** and attitude than do doctrinal propositions.

Thus, doctrinal propositions seem to have effect on social commitment only if they are rooted in the creative imagination. (RST 99)

- 6.5 Those who first experience “founding events” normally articulate the experience initially in terms of a “symbol arrangement” which is readily **available**.

Jesus' followers, e.g., turned to the Jewish tradition in order to articulate their conviction – rising out of the ‘Easter event’ – that Jesus-who-died still lives. (RST 100)

- 6.6 However, rearrangements take place in this available system precisely because it is necessary to distinguish what is special and unique about “founding events.”

There is continuity, but a new arrangement of stories – a new linkage of symbols. (RST 101)

- 6.7 Very early, it became necessary to “explain” or “**interpret**” the symbolization. At this point, there is a change from poetry to prose, and reflective propositions.

Such reflection can be utterly faithful to the ‘trajectory’ launched by the original experience/symbolization. (RST 101-102)

- 6.8 At first many different interpretative systems emerge. They tend to converge in an integrated system.

6.9 Then philosophical perspectives are adopted for explaining to disciplined reason the meaning contained in the prose text recounting the experience of the founding event.

- 6.10 Eventually a number of prose statements (or **creeds**) are developed to articulate clearly and precisely the meaning of the experience and the essentials for faith in that experience.

There is tension between creed and story: creed is too precise for story, but story is too variegated/rich for creed. But the tension is necessary: a belief-system without creed may be too amorphous to survive; one without system will lack human vitality. (RST 103)

- 6.11 Reforms within religious heritages normally appeal either to early creedal statements or to the original symbolizations against more elaborate and/or rigidified doctrinal structures which are perceived as intervening between the purity of the past and the present condition.

One must return to the stories and to the original experience if one is to get to the raw, primal strength of a religious heritage. But one needs reflection if one is to humanly/reasonably live the implications of the story. But ultimately, all the vitality of personal religion and religious heritage depends on the raw, elementary, primal strength of experience and the story which articulates it. (RST 104-105)

COMMUNION:

- 7.1 Often the experience of goodness involves a feeling that one has been the object of communication. Often, also, it is felt that it is possible to communicate back to the other.

- 7.2 Such communication may be called **prayer**, a common phenomenon in the human condition.

Of U.S. respondents: 50% pray daily; 80% pray weekly; 90% pray at least sometimes. (RST 108)

- 7.3 The more powerful and vivid the story appears in the religious imagination, the stronger the propensity to prayer.

Prayer seems to be like religious imagery in that it is affected not by propositional education or by propositional orthodoxy, but by experiences, especially family experiences and religious and family experiences as these are mediated by warm religious images. (RST 109)

- 7.4 When prayer becomes external and formal it may be called **ritual**.

Both private and public prayer are attempts at responding to the experienced otherness. There is a high research correlation between prayer and psychological well-being. (RST 109-110)

- 7.5 Prayer and ritual are often designed not merely to respond to communication, but to **produce communion**, that is, an experience of unity with the previously perceived goodness.

Two things are asserted here: (1) one deliberately goes into a prayer situation seeking to establish a linkage with the otherness that was encountered in the grace experience; and (2) prayer/ritual do in fact sometimes replicate the original grace-experience – more or less strongly. The emphasis of formal rituals on the basic symbols of a religious heritage seems designed to reproduce at least a hint of prior experience; and biographical accounts (e.g., Paul Claudel) make clear the potential power of such ritual. (RST 110-111)

- 7.6 Prayer and ritual involve the **poetic dimension** of the personality precisely because they are designed to reproduce an earlier experience which impacted on the poetic capacity (creative imagination, preconscious).

Eliade, e.g., contends that the ritual is a reenactment of the paradigmatic battle between the forces of order and chaos. It links that battle with the daily struggle in the lives of the people contending against chaos. Thus, ritual links the people to the paradigmatic events, and motivates them to continue the effect of such events by sharing in them by extending the boundaries of order against chaos. There is, thus, an essentially imaginative dimension to ritual. (RST 112-113)

- 7.7 Therefore, ritual not only disposes toward community, but is also a powerful **institution of religious socialization**.

Ritual passes on religious symbols/stories and the experiences of hopefulness contained in these stories. (RST 113)

- 7.8 Ritual is also a form of **play** and, hence, reflects the “hilarity” of otherness.

Religious ritual creates its own world in which the creative imagination is freed from the obligations of everyday routine to create a “make believe” environment in which one may encounter otherness. In such an environment, it becomes possible for the creative imagination to work much as it does in dream or in poetry – freed from the perceptual patterns of the everyday. And given the fact that there are bound to be often incongruous juxtapositions, hilarity seems inevitable. (RST 113-114)

- 7.9 When rituals become ritualized they have less effectiveness both at renewing experiences of grace and passing on symbol systems.

When ritual becomes rigidly constrained by regulation, it has much less power to excite the imagination, to recall past experiences, to revitalize and renew hopefulness and to reinvest with religious energy the symbol objects it contains within its ceremonial. (RST 115)

- 7.10 Precisely because prayer is an act in linking the story of one’s own life to the overarching story, one can expect correlations between prayer and various measures of **psychological well-being**.

NORC data indicates that frequency of prayer correlates positively with psychological well-being, sexual fulfillment, marital satisfaction, and even willingness to cooperate with interviewers! This

correlation is especially noted in respondents whose prayers were frequently ones of **gratitude**. (RST 116)

- 7.11 The more benign and graceful the stories of God in a person's religious imagination, the more likely s/he is to pray frequently.

Images of God especially as **Mother** and **Lover** correlate powerfully with frequent prayer.

HORIZONTAL COMMUNITY:

- 8.1 There is a tendency to **share an experience of goodness** with others so that the experience can be **articulated** for oneself and **validated** by others.

Thus, churches are brought into being by experiences of hope; and whatever other purpose they may serve, one of their purposes will always remain to facilitate renewals of hopefulness. (RST 119)

- 8.2 In some cases the **support of others** is perceived as essential for responding to the demands goodness makes.

The grace which is encountered is imagined as requiring not merely the response of the individual who has experienced grace, but the response of others and, indeed, the response of everyone! Thus, some hope-renewing experiences will lead to the formation and the development of religious community. (RST 120)

- 8.3 A principal function of the religious community is to provide an interpretation for individual, and, perhaps, collective hope-renewing experiences.

There is a powerful propensity to seek an interpretation of such experiences. Religious community takes shape when persons share an interpretation of various experiences, and then when they share experiences which further share interpretation. (RST 120-121)

- 8.4 Communities of interpretation grow and develop according to the dynamic which affects the growth and development of any human group from the simple collectivity to a complex organization.

As the interpretative group grows and as routine behavior patterns are established, the organized collectivity, once a means to the end of renewing and reinforcing experiences of hope, may become an end in itself. Institutional problems take on an importance which may at times minimize or even exclude the primary goal of sustaining the memory and reenacting and reproducing the first graced experience. Yet, even in the most rigid and most institutionalized church, it is rare for the primary goal to disappear completely; and the interpretation of shared or common experiences of grace continues to occur. (RST 122-123)

- 8.5 Religious communities exist, therefore, **to replicate, enhance, validate, interpret and reaffirm past experiences of goodness and predispose for future experiences.**

- 8.6 The religious community itself can both **trigger** hope-renewing experiences and act as a **symbol** of such an experience.

The church, e.g., as communion-of-all-the-faithful becomes an image in the preconscious which articulates experiences and links them to the heritage. (RST 124)

- 8.7 In some societies, especially simple ones, the religious community is not distinct from the basic social realities of family and tribe.

- 8.8 In other and more complex societies the community of interpretation may take on institutional existence separate from the tribe and family. Nevertheless, tribe and, particularly, family continue to play an important role in both horizontal religious community and as a link in vertical community.

Family is a link between the individual and: (a) the presently existing community of interpretation; and (b) the religious heritage handed down from the past. (RST 125)

- 8.9 The family is normally more important than the church, both as a community of religious heritage and a community of current religious interpretation.

That is to say that the church passes on an interpretation of common religious symbols mostly **through its families**. (RST 126)

- 8.10 When church, tribe, and family fail to act as communities of religious transmission and interpretation, other collectivities will tend to fill the vacuum

- 8.11 In a highly differentiated society there is a strong tendency for religious congruence in primary group relationships.

Thus, persons are more at ease with those who share the same religious stories and basic beliefs; hence, they selectively recruit for their primary groups those who share such stories. Further, once an intimate relationship has been established, the intimacy of the relationship itself draws those who are in it toward common religious symbols and interpretation. (RST 127)

- 8.12 In the **modern** world, churches are **voluntary** organizations, which means that leadership's power is based largely on its ability to obtain **consent**.

- 8.13 Hence, it is very easy for members to adhere to a tradition, a heritage, a community, and even an organization and still reject an important doctrinal or difficult ethical proposition.

E.g., the crisis precipitated by the Vatican Council and by the birth-control encyclical apparently persuaded American Catholics that they were indeed members in a voluntary organization, and that no one could force them to participate in the organization in ways that they did not deem appropriate. (RST 129)

- 8.14 The closer a religious influence is to where a person lives (and, indeed, to where he sleeps) the more impact it will have on his religious life.

I.e., parent and spouse are the most important religious influences on people's lives.

SOCIETY:

- 9.1 In simple, undifferentiated societies there is little distinction between religious stories and other social stories. Religion, nevertheless, is not completely identified with the social order. In more differentiated societies religious stories emerge as clearly distinctive religious symbols and social symbols interact with one another in **mutually influencing** direction. Finally, in complex and highly differentiated societies like our own, religious stories have only an **indirect influence** on social stories through their influence in shaping the perspectives and the world views of individuals and families.

This is G's summary adaptation of the Parsons-Luckmann debate; both Parsons and Luckmann posit differentiation, but Luckmann contends that it means religion has lost its significance whereas parsons argues for the continued – though indirect – influence of religion. G argues that the influence between 'stories' is complex; it is not a matter of asking which influences which, but rather of how the mutuality of influence operates in any given situation. It becomes then a matter of specifying for which kinds of people, which links exist between religious symbols and other social symbols. (RST 133-134)

- 9.2 The flow of influence between religion and the rest of the society is **reciprocal**.
- 9.3 In some circumstances religious stories and religious groupings validate and confirm the dominant social perspective. In other circumstances religious stories and religious groupings are at odds with the dominant perspective, and they even explicitly attempt to destroy it.

Religion influences the shape of the social structure through its impact on the individual's view of the purpose of his/her life and through ethical imperatives. And there is reason to expect considerable influence of religion on economic/social structures, because religious stories seem almost inevitably to affect the other stories in a person's life, since the religious stories deal with life's ultimate goal and purpose. (RST 134-135)

T. Hoffman's research indicates that imaging God as Mother correlates very highly with social concern; also correlating are the images of Lover and Redeemer (RI 120). Having religious experience(s) also correlates with social concern and political activities. (RI 128)

- 9.4 Society influences religion especially because the institutions and relationships of society shape the "receiving apparatus" with which a person comes to his experience of otherness.

G admits that it is obvious that social structures influence religious convictions/behaviors; he insists, however, that inadequate attention has been paid to the how of this. His own recognition of this is primarily in different religious styles between ethnic groups. (RST 136)

9.5 Society itself can be both an occasion of religious experience and a symbol for articulating experiences of grace.

I.e., commitment to the social and political story of a nation can serve as an articulation and a representation of an encounter with grace. (RST 137)

FAMILY:

10.1 The family is the primary group *par excellence*. Propositions made about primary group and religion in the previous section are *a fortiori* applicable to the family.

10.2 The family is the key community of **religious transmission** because the basic religious symbol arrangement in the preconscious seems to occur in the **early childhood socialization** process.

The most powerful impact on the “grace scale” came when the young person reported that s/he was very close to both parents. For young men what is really important in enhancing all three (Jesus/Mary/God) of their images is to be close to both parents; for young women, to enhance their stories of Jesus and Mary it is necessary for them to be close to their fathers. Closeness to both parents enhances somewhat a young woman’s story of grace. (RI 53-54)

10.3 It is also often the family which transmits the **preliminary interpretation** of the symbols and the simple creedal formularies of religious heritage.

10.4 There is, however, no guarantee of harmony among symbol arrangement, creed and interpretation signals which a child receives.

There is a strain toward consistency among imagery, world view, and doctrinal orthodoxy, but that strain is, by no means, irresistible. (RST 140)

10.5 The most important religious socialization experience in childhood is the child’s perception of whether the world is **benign or malign**.

Ordinary experience of family life is as important in shaping the religious imagination as are hope-renewing experiences of goodness. (RI 59)

McCready: The religious issue at this stage of life is whether or not one can learn to trust in the graciousness of reality. Trust stems from what the children seen in their parents’ life and in the context within which they are raised.” G observes that children watch in fascination the story their parents are telling. The underlying theme of hope or despair, of graciousness or absurdity which runs through the parental story is surely communicated with the main themes of the stories. (RI 61)

- 10.5 This perception is closely linked to the acquisition of **sexual identity**. If the child perceives that sexual identity is easily lost, he will be inclined to be pessimistic or fatalistic in his religious stories.

McCready's interpretation of his research is that the acquisition of sexual identity is a potential grace experience in which otherness may be perceived, but need not necessarily be perceived, as benign and gracious. If my identity is perceived as precarious, the world tends to be experienced as a very dangerous place. Thus, the warmth and joy of family life and family sexual intimacy as perceived by the child is not only in itself an experience of grace, but also a predisposition for subsequent experience. (RST 141-142)

- 10.7 Certain kinds of unhealthy or, at least, narrow psychological dispositions can easily be related to religious behavior, particularly when the family experience of the person has been harsh.

The early family is a **sacrament**: Warm families produce warm stories of God; repressive families turn God into a harsh judge. Some religious stories open the personality toward greater sympathy for other human beings; other religious stories close the personality in on itself. (RST 143)

- 10.8 The basic symbol arrangement absorbed in the early years is tenacious. It might be modified by later experiences and by conscious effort (perhaps by psychotherapy), but the stories of childhood cannot be driven out of the preconscious completely.

G contends that even persons who 'disaffiliate' from a religious tradition will carry residual religious imagery from their childhood socialization. (RST 144)

- 10.9 Religion is closely related to childhood experience (when stories of God are so profoundly affected by the story of one's own childhood). **Revolt against parents frequently involves revolt against religion.**

John Kotre's research indicates a relationship between family unrest and religious dissatisfaction. In a revolt against parents, God easily becomes a surrogate father and the church a surrogate mother. One punishes the mother/father by endeavoring to punish God/church. The preconscious creates a story in which alienation from family/church are part of one's quest for freedom/maturity. The more unrest there was in the family of origin, the more likely is religious revolt. (RST 145)

- 10.10 The more **religious joy** there was in the life of the family of origin, the more likely the person is to have intense experiences of goodness.

- 10.11 The more religious joy there was in the family of origin, the more satisfactory is the marriage or adjustment in the family of procreation. L Warm religious images intervene between these two family experiences.

Loving parents are conducive to imagining God as a lover, and imagining God as a lover is both conducive to marital fulfillment and is reinforced by marital fulfillment. (RST 146)

- 10.12 There is a tendency for the late teens and early twenties to be a **period of religious disaffection** linked with a larger disaffection to other institutions of the society. However, at the end of the twenties there is a tendency for many of the disaffected to return.

NORC data shows decline in religious devotion/affiliation from 18 to 28. But between 28 and 30 there was a sharp “**rebound**,” accompanied by an increase in marital happiness and a resurgence in warm religious images. It was precisely among those happily married young Catholic families that religious devotion rebounded most sharply, and especially in those families where the husbands’ and wives’ religious imagery converged toward a joint family imagery of religious warmth. (RST 146-147)

- 10.13 Therefore, just as the family of origin is the first primary institution of religious socialization, so the family of procreation is the second. The proposition about primary groups in the previous chapter is especially applicable not merely to the parent-child group, but also the **husband-wife** primary group.

The greatest agreement between husbands and wives at the top of the grace scale is in the first two years of marriage, and in the last two years of the first decade of marriage. After some years of “confusion,” there appears to be a **convergence** of grace stories (RI 97, 99). After the first five years of marriage, the spouse becomes the most powerful influence on the religious imagination of an adult Catholic. (RI 101)

- 10.14 The happier the relationship between the husband and wife, the stronger the religious influence on one or the other, the more likely is the influence to be positive in terms of religious devotion.

The family of procreation is the critical religious socialize in adulthood, and the warmer the family, the more positive the religious outcome. (RST 148)

Especially significant is a couple’s sexual fulfillment: the spouse in a sexually fulfilling marriage is more than twice as influential in shaping the religious imagination as all other influences combined (RI 101). If the story of grace is being ‘told’ by a sexually fulfilling mate, the religious imagination will have a very gracious view of God, heaven, Jesus, and Mary; this has obvious policy implications. (RI 103)

Combine a gracefully story-telling spouse with good sermons and you have a very gracious religious imagination. (RI 102)

- 10.15 It would appear that the direction of the flow of imaginative religious socialization in marriage is **from husband to wife**.

The impact of husbands' "gracious imagery" on the wives is twice that of wives on husbands. This **may** be because a woman would be less likely to expect piety from her husband, and when finding it is deeply affected. (RI 99)

SEXUAL DIFFERENTIATION:

11.1 Sexual differentiation is a prime **trigger** for experiences of goodness.

The primary importance of fertility made it inevitable that it would become a major religious symbol, a trigger of experiences of hope and a resonator which enables one to tell stories about that experience of hope. Otherness was often perceived as an aroused lover, both because the experience of otherness might be triggered by sexual experiences and because the otherness often seemed rather like an aroused lover. (RST 51)

11.2 Otherness is often experienced as simultaneously **maternal and paternal**, life giving and life organizing.

Imagery of God as Father and Mother, masculine and feminine, has remarkable durability. The Virgin Mary's function often is to reflect the tenderness, the "socio-emotional" aspects of God. Research shows that those who have had a 'religious experience' are more likely to image God as mother/lover. (RST 152)

11.3 There is, therefore, a tendency for otherness to be seen sometimes as male and sometimes as female, either as a single deity or as many deities, some masculine, some feminine, or as one deity combining maleness and femaleness and many other deities (saints, for example) who are either male or female.

Men and women imagine the deity as possessing qualities of the opposite sex as perceived in **relationship** with their own sex or of one's own sex also as perceived in **relationship** with the opposite sex. (RST 153)

11.4 In experiences of hope, The Other of "otherness" is frequently experienced with a **passion** and a demand that parallels human **eroticism**.

11.5 Just as human loves go through **cycles** and periodicities, so do apparently relations between humans and the "other."

It may be precisely because we know periodicities in all our human intimacies that we project such a model into our relationship with the "other." (RST 154)

11.6 There is an empirical correlation between human love and divine love.

11.7 There are four dimensions in the experience of the sacred as woman: **mother, bride, death, and virgin**.

LIFE CYCLE:

12.1 There are **different experiences** of goodness at different **stages** of the life cycle.

Two life-cycle phenomena are prominent in NORC data: (1) a decline in religious devotion in the middle twenties, followed by a rebirth which occurs particularly at the time of marriage in the alter twenties; and 92) a slump in marital happiness between the second and eighth years, followed by a very sharp rebound in the ninth and tenth years of marriage. (RI 107)

Concerning the first phenomena, a combination of marriage and age (though neither in isolation) appears to lead to the rebound; as Catholics move toward their fortieth birthday, their religious devotion continues to increase. But it is also significant that during the mid-twenties decrease in devotion, there does not appear to be a corresponding change in religious imagination (RI 109). Another part of the return during the thirties may be a generational phenomenon; i.e., those who were part of the exodus following *Humanae Vitae* have come to “compartmentalize” their sexual attitudes/behaviors from religious devotion. (RI 112)

Concerning the marriage cycle, it seems that the “rebound” at the end of the first decade of marriage remains fairly steady until the twentieth year of marriage. There appears to be somewhat of a mini-crisis at about the fifteenth/sixteenth years (perhaps accompanying the number of teenagers in the house). But in the first half of the third decade of marriage there is another sharp decline, which rebounds again after twenty-five years. The pattern appears similar among husbands and wives, except for a greater tendency for women to declines in marital satisfaction in the mini-crisis during the middle of the second decade. Thus, there are critical **turning points**: the eighth/ninth years of marriage; the middle/late teen years of the marriage; in the first half of the third decade of marriage. (RI 112-113)

The religious imagination is a powerful asset both for the individual and for the Church during the life cycle crises. It draws young adults back to religious devotion and it draws husbands and wives back to satisfactory levels of marital intimacy. (RI 115)

12.2 There are **different sensitivities** to the intrusion of goodness at different stages of the life cycle.

12.3 There are **different responses** to the ambiguity of goodness at different stages of the life cycle.

12.4 Different **aspects** of religious stories (symbols) and different **linkages** among the various stories seem to respond to the different needs of individuals at different stages of the life cycle.

The story of a person's life changes and, hence, the religious stories which give meaning to his/her life also change. (RST 158)

12.5 On the basis of the scanty information available to us from the life cycle literature it would appear that after infancy the critical **turning points** occur in mid-adolescence, at the time of marriage, at the “turning thirty” period, and during the “middle years.”

But one must be careful not to impose a singly life-cycle model on the American population; there are, rather, many life cycle models, some appropriate for some individuals and others for other individuals. (RST 159)

TEENAGERS:

NORC data indicates considerable difference between (a) teenage respondents and 9b) young adult Catholics. Teenagers are considerably more likely to image God as lover (12%), mother (11%); more likely to image heaven as a life like this one but better (12%, as a life of intense action (12%), and as a paradise of pleasure/delight (19%). (RI 137)

These differences could be explained as either (a) life cycle or (b) cohort phenomena. Though any conclusion in this regard must be tentative, the **cohort** explanation seems more probable. It seems that these teenagers reflect the influence of the Second Vatican Council. This seems especially to have been mediated through their **mothers**. (RI 139-140)

It also seems that those young adults who report having association with their parish (especially a sympathetic relationship with a parish priest) are very similar on these scales to the teenagers. Their acquisition of this "new religious consciousness" seems, thus, to come through priests, whereas the teenagers' comes through their mothers. (RI 141-142)

This "**new breed**" wants a number of things in the Church: better sermons (70%); improved quality of church leaders (64%); updated church teaching on birth-control and divorce (73%); priests to be able to marry (49%); women to be ordained priests (46%); more order and discipline in the church (44%). They were more likely than the young adults to think it to be "highly important" to consider a life goal of "helping to solve social problems." They were also twice as likely to consider as a very important life goal serving God in a Church career (13% vs. 6%). (RI 145-146)

FEMINISM:

G's operational definition of "feminism" for analysis of data is the **propensity to blur the distinction between the male and female role**. This 'blurring' is operationalized in three variables: (1) the conviction that it is important that women should be ordained; (2) the belief that a working mother does not harm the child; and (3) the propensity to see "having children" as a less important life goal. The general conclusion is that feminist attitudes among young women have a considerable negative effect on religious behavior. (RI 167-168)

There was no correlation between 'feminism' and strain in family of origin. The most significant correlation was with the woman's own education and her father's education; there was also correlation between 'feminism' and having had a strong relationship with one's mother; also, 'feminists' tend to have generally liberal political leanings. (RI 168)

Those high on the feminism scale were as likely as those low on it to be in satisfying marriages; they tended to have somewhat fewer children, yet still had more children than the American average. (RI 171)

Significantly, 'feminist' attitudes do not have a depressant effect on religious devotion unless a young woman displays low levels of confidence in Church leaders. Thus: **it is precisely the combination of low confidence in religious leadership and 'feminist' attitudes which leads to devotional alienation** (RI 170). Two-thirds of Catholic young women experience some negative impact on their religious behavior of 'feminist' attitudes and another one-fifth have experienced substantial impact on their religious devotion and affiliation because of the 'feminist' positions. (RI 173)

One is forced to conclude that learning of gender roles is a very considerable problem for the Church and its ministry, not only to women in their twenties but to all Catholic women born since 1930. And for the young and not-so-young, a lack of confidence in Church leaders seems to be a substantial part of the problem. It is the blurring of gender roles (for which the ordination of women is an excellent symbolic indicator) that a substantial proportion of women see as the real issue – and the lack of understanding of this issue by Church leadership as the real problem. (RI 176-177)

There seems to be no significant correlation between "feminism" and "religious imagination." (RI 179)

| Feminist alienation among Catholics seems to imply membership of denominations, Baptist, perceive opposed to women and maintenance of roles. In toher where leaders are women are not denomination. (RI 178) | LOW HIGH | | is especially strong and Baptists. This that the women some Catholic and their leaders as equality for committed to the the old gender denominations not so perceived, alienated from the |
|--|--|----------|---|
| | Weekly Mass | 50 30 | |
| | Weekly Communion | 33 20 | |
| | Frequent Prayer | 46 34 | |
| | Approve abortion/defective child | 80 88 | |
| | Approve abortion/no more children wanted | 26 57 | |
| | Close to God | 50 40 | |
| | Close to Church | 24 13 | |
| | Close to Parish | 20 10 | |
| | Alienated from Church | 48 67 | |
| | Parish priests sympathetic | 36 30 | |
| | Sermons excellent | 19 13 | |
| | Approve pastor's job | 80 73 | |

Religious Attitudes/Behaviors of Women by "Feminism" Scale (RI 169):

