

# The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion

*Edited by*

Richard K. Fenn

*Princeton Theological Seminary*



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There are two generations of sociologists at work together in these pages, and they provide a foundation for more to come. How long the world will last as they have described it here is anybody's guess. That they have given us a striking picture of the sociological landscape and of some of its very personal heights and depths, I have no doubt at all.

In editing a book of this length there are inevitable differences in style among the authors. As editor I have sought to impose as little uniformity as possible in this regard, and where authors have disagreed with the advice of the publisher I have tended to support the author. No one but myself is therefore responsible for variations in the use of inclusive language or for some authors' references, for instance, to places and times that will resonate with some readers but not all. Having asked authors to make sure that their own viewpoints are clearly visible even in fairly abstract or complex discussions, as editor I was in no position and had no desire to smooth out the differences in their usage. The reader, I trust, will gain an appreciation of the extraordinary differences among authors that nonetheless contribute to what is a remarkable consensus on the shape and direction of religious and social change.

Of course I have regrets that some sociologists who might have appeared in these pages are not represented. There are therefore also some topics that we have not covered as well as we might. I bear sole responsibility for the final shape of this volume.

Richard K. Fenn

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The publishers apologize for any errors or omissions in the above list and would be grateful to be notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in the next edition or reprint of this book.

# Preface

Sociologists' ideas about the causes and consequences of religion are scattered in a variety of studies, each of which focuses on a particular development in the relation of religion to social systems. Some, like Bernice Martin in her chapter on Pentecostals and on women, focus on various groups and their claims to the sacred, while others, like Grace Davie in her chapter for this volume, focus on established institutions and their struggles to keep and expand their clientele. Still others focus on the way professional groups seek to answer the questions and meet the needs of their clients, in a way that seeks, often unsuccessfully, to maintain the status and authority of the professional providers of consolation and advice. See, for example, the chapter on the viability of the churches by Robin Gill for a sober assessment of their prospects for the future. See also the interesting argument, put forward by James Beckford, that religion increasingly resembles a social movement rather than an institution. Still others focus on the way that whole societies attract and seek to hold the loyalty and allegiance of their members through the adept use of sacred symbol. Roberto Cipriani's chapter, for instance, argues that there is a religious culture in Italy that does enhance the value and legitimacy of the public sphere: a civic culture that is profoundly religious in origin and sacred in the sentiments of allegiance that it attracts and sustains. There is a wealth of detail and no small amount of theory involved in these accounts, but there is also no single overriding theory that places each of them in a larger perspective.

The resulting literature thus generates a number of claims that appear to be competing and sometimes contradictory. Take, for example, the sociological discussion of the process of secularization. Some argue that Christianity is subject to that process, and that Christianity itself is therefore headed for various changes and even a slow but inevitable decline. Steve Bruce's chapter is a particularly good case in point. Others claim that Christianity is a secularizing force in Western societies. So far from being a victim of the process of secularization,



it has set it in motion and continued to secularize the more resistant and communal forms of magic and piety. That has long been one of the arguments of Bryan Wilson, whose contribution to this volume reminds us that the result is a moral wasteland. Some sociologists claim that societies inevitably generate their own forms of religious identity and symbolism; religion is thus going to be a continuing factor wherever societies are to be found. This is a Durkheimian viewpoint, and it is well worth reading Donald Nielsen's chapter to encounter a nuanced and somewhat modernized version of that position. Others claim that these forms of religion are secondary and derivative from the interactions and endeavors of individuals. On this view the societal forms of religion are at best a halo effect, a residue of the past and thus vulnerable to being undermined by the innovations and struggles of individuals themselves. Steve Bruce and Danièle Hervieu-Léger, in their contributions to this volume, make it clear that individuals are taking responsibility for an increasingly broad range of decisions, activities, and concerns; in the future institutionalized forms of religion cannot provide an obligatory framework for individual piety and allegiance but merely a set of resources and options for individual devotion. It is a view consistent with the methodological individualism of Max Weber and at odds with a Durkheimian perspective that makes individual religiosity the by-product of social facts and forces. Of sociological debates and apparent differences there appears to be no end.

What, then, is to be done? In this Preface I would like to suggest that there is less to these differences than meets the eye. They are largely the result of selective attention to different parts of the sociological landscape. It matters a great deal whether sociologists are looking at an entire society, a nation perhaps, or whether they are looking at an institution, a community, a professional group, or merely at two or three gathered together in the desperate hope of gaining some freedom from the social forces that are keeping them dependent and helpless. It also matters a great deal whether sociologists are looking at societies that are relatively immune to the forces of nature or the intrusion of other societies and can substitute social for natural laws, or whether they are looking at vulnerable societies whose boundaries against outside influences and unpredictable threats are relatively weak and who must therefore live more by the Spirit. For the same reason it matters a lot whether sociologists are looking at societies in which the division of labor is not very complicated, and many individuals can thus aspire to many roles, or whether in fact the division of labor is fairly specialized and is arranged in hierarchies, such that many are called but very few are chosen for particular duties. Linda Woodhead, in her contribution to this volume, makes the telling point that the advent of women in the workforce is indeed changing the degree to which roles can be not only specialized but segregated, so that the separation of work from family life and the concerns of the community is less pronounced today than it has been even in the recent past. It is no wonder that sociologists of religion disagree about the relation of religion to social life; they are looking at something like a cross between a mosaic and a mobile.

Nonetheless, there are some very simple propositions that one can cull from the literature of the last century: very simple indeed. The first is that religious beliefs and practices are born in the separation of social systems from their natural surroundings. It is not just Freudians who would argue that the illusion of a presence in the world of supernatural beings is the result of living in a social order that has just begun to distinguish itself from nature itself. Among the first islands of social life the world beyond its shores was indeed huge, mysterious, inviting, threatening, and supremely powerful. No wonder that it was personified in the social imagination with the same figures who to a child seemed necessary for one's survival and yet dangerous to one's desires and aspirations.

Later sociologists who do not drink from the well of psychoanalysis nonetheless have carried forward the same argument: that religion emerges as social systems seek to distance themselves from the natural world around them. Societies need time to react to threats from their environments: at first to threats from the wind and the rain, as Freud pointed out, but also later on from the threat of subversion and invasion. Some, like Israel, can count the time in which they have to react to attack from neighbors in a matter of minutes and seconds; others have more time in which to muster their forces. Time is always, however, of the essence of a society's survival. It is not only danger but opportunity that lies outside the borders of a social system: herds of buffalo moving across the plains, or shifts in international capital. Here, too, societies need time in order to react, to safeguard their currencies, and seize opportunities for investment. For many societies, as Peter Beyer points out, this distance from a complex environment is increasingly difficult to obtain.

It is not surprising, then, that societies have used religious symbols and beliefs to imagine their relationship to their natural and social environments. It is also no accident that societies have used religious practices to manage their relationships to their environments. Societies must have ways to reduce the terror of the unknown and to imagine the opportunities for new life and vitality that lie beyond the borders of their immediate and customary knowledge. They have needed access to gods that bring terror and mercy, whose favor spells the difference between life and death, and whose domains extend beyond the borders of the community or the nation. Societies have needed seers who can see beyond those borders, who can tell them who and what is coming, and who can point the way to new freedoms, new land, new sources of milk and honey. These are the gods of space, and they are the more essential, the more a society begins to have distance from its environment. Now, however, it is increasingly clear, as Nicholas Demerath and Peter Beyer argue, that religion itself is subject to forces from outside any particular society, and that we may need therefore to redefine or imagine religion in entirely new ways that take into account the cross-cultural influences that are shaping religion in any particular social system. How can religion be a secondary line of cultural defense for any nation when it is subject to precisely the same transnational forces that are eroding the identity and autonomy of the nation itself?

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It is also not surprising that as a society can buy time by strengthening its borders with nature or with other societies, it begins to feel dependent on divine sources of time. No wonder that gods have been those who can warn of coming floods or who can avert disastrous plagues, visiting them on a society's neighbors in the nick of time. No wonder that the gods have been those who could promise a forthcoming day of relief and liberation, or who are remembered as having signaled and provided a decisive event at the formation of the community itself. Since timing is essential to maintaining a society's boundaries with nature, it has had to use divine sources of authority to know when to plant and when to harvest, when to store up against periods of famine and when to provide relief. Take away from religion the knowledge of the times, of better days, and days of wrath, and one has a god of space alone.

Of course, boundaries between nature and social systems are seldom perfect. As transplants of organs from animals to humans become more commonplace, so does the recognition that chimpanzees, for instance, not only employ rituals to pacify their communities but also can be relatively human in their use of symbols, lies, deception, and humor to trick their captors. It is not surprising, therefore, that modern fears focus on immigrants who bring microbes and the wrong genes, or on terrorists who bring germ warfare or explosives into the world of the familiar and the ordinary. Neither is it surprising that popular entertainment focuses on aliens from other planets who bring various forms of wisdom, terror, or captivation from other worlds beyond our ken and imagination.

That is why it is particularly important that David Martin, Bryan Wilson, Bernice Martin, and Nicholas Jay Demerath have provided us with several models for understanding processes of secularization that originate outside the social system as well as come from within. The Martins have made us aware that in many societies the impetus to change and development is coming from within. In her chapter on the community development that is emanating from the African-American churches, Katie Day also calls our attention to similar processes of innovation and social change: some of these, from quarters insufficiently studied by sociologists, some of whom have had a very limited notion of the capacity of individuals to find their own sources of regeneration and to make their own declarations of relative freedom. They are quite capable of standing outside their social systems and of facing both life and death on their own terms.

The very inventiveness and openness of individuals to new sources of inspiration and authority make it difficult for any society to know where nature ends and social life begins or to decide where its moral and cultural or even demographic boundaries are drawn. That is why some societies have used religion not only to symbolize and imagine the unknown elements of their environments but to purify themselves of unwanted, alien influences. In turn, it is not surprising that religion has treated some enemies as though they were forces of nature. The unruly young or the merely seditious have been thought subject to animal spirits, from which they must be liberated. Neighboring peoples of an inferior

and unreliable nature have been typified as monkeys, pigs, or worse, in the lexicon of natural epithets. Religion has offered a panoply of demonic symbols for humans that are overtly animal in nature; their horns and hoofs are especially revealing. Religion has also offered a set of practices for exorcising the animal-demonic and restoring a harmonious relationship with nature, as though nature were indeed a person. That was precisely Freud's point in *The Future of An Illusion*.

Thus, even when boundaries between nature and society are relatively clear, the boundaries between one social system and another are notoriously difficult to specify and maintain. Outside influences creep in and internal resources go astray. This has been especially true of peoples, like Israel, who have been subject to other kingdoms and empires. Wherever currency and language, marriages and worship, have been double-coded, so to speak, it has been hard for the members of these societies to know to whom they truly belong. Loyalty becomes a perennial issue, as do purity and openness to exchange with outsiders. What does the use of a foreign currency say about one's primary allegiance? What is the proper language or register for speaking in public or in private, among fellow believers and among dissidents, and in the privacy of one's own devotions? What is one to do with a foreign wife or an Arab suitor, when love and loyalty conflict with social obligation and cultic obedience? What is one to do with prayers for the emperor or with gentiles in the courtyard? Religion has helped to say which of these issues is serious and which is of no account.

Religious beliefs have reassured a people that they are divinely chosen, even if their own choices must remain ambiguous and conflicting. Sometimes religion has imposed the harshest of penalties on foreign spouses and alien devotion, but at other times it has merely provided a language for a society to express its awareness that alien and seditious forces are at work in its midst. Inevitably, when boundaries are at issue the question of time is raised to the boiling point. Religion then instructs a society whether to wait for a time of purification and renewed independence or to mobilize for a day of final accounting. Otherwise its edicts would only be about space, keeping a safe distance, and digging below the surface, whereas it is time that is running out on any society whose boundaries are more like the Maginot Line than the Chinese Wall.

Now, if we look back at these fairly simple statements, we find that they have one thing in common. Individuals and communities, institutions and whole societies, live in a world that is beyond their knowledge but not beyond their imagination. In fact, imagination is absolutely necessary to personal and communal survival. One has to rely on dreams or visions, seers or prophets, futurists or sociologists, in order to sense the possibilities for fulfillment and satisfaction that the world might in fact have to offer. David Martin's chapter in this volume makes it clear that the religious vision and the sociological imagination have much in common; both face empirical tests and are subject to the passage of time. However, those whom sociologists may overlook or despise, religious enthusiasts especially of a Pentecostal variety, may in fact have a vision of the future and of the possibilities that a social system has yet to offer that is far more accurate, in

the long run, than sociologists' prognostications. Hope and faith are sometimes right, if only because they may be self-fulfilling. Conversely, the threats to human life often beggar the imagination; one has to conceive imaginatively of mortal threats that range from microbes to jealous siblings, from angry fathers to rival peoples, and from these more familiar dangers to those that come from distant warlords and natural eruptions from the tops of mountains or the bottom of the sea. One does not need to have been Sigmund Freud to realize that conscious life is something of a conspiracy against reality, so loathsome and fearful are the dangers or so forbidden are the objects of human desire. One could be a Malinowski or even a Talcott Parsons, both of whom understood that the sacred was a vast reduction of the very real uncertainty with which individuals and societies have had to cope over time.

Reductions of the sort that make up sacred beliefs and practices, then, take some of the mystery out of the unknown. The first steps toward demystification have always been taken under the auspices of groups and individuals who claimed to be able to spare ordinary mortals a full and devastating encounter with what was in any case beyond their knowledge and control. The reduction might take the form of ten laws carved in tablets of stone, or a veil in the temple separating all but the highest and purest of priests from a devastating and mortally dangerous encounter with the truly Sacred. Let Sacred with a capital S, then, stand for the sum total of the unknown that lies beyond human imagination, knowledge, and control. That leaves the sacred as the sphere of beliefs and practices that reduce uncertainty to something that can be depicted or seen or stated and which can be approached by those select groups and practitioners who have acquired the proper, prescribed actions and states of mind. In studies of ritual we find examples of this professionalized approach to the sacred: this vast reduction of ambiguity and uncertainty. Nonetheless, as Catherine Bell argues, it would be a mistake to find in rituals merely a group of individuals being prompted and put through their paces by professionalized seers or magicians, clergy or officials of various sorts. Even in the more formal rituals there are elements of play and subversion, in which individual and groups lay claim to invisible and unspoken aspects of the Sacred that lie behind the more or less authorized forms of the sacred.

Steps toward demystification, then, appear to initiate the process that sociologists have long called "secularization." Looking only at that aspect of the process that reduces hitherto unimaginable uncertainty to what might be grasped figuratively by the mind or spirit, the process is just what one would expect of a social system: a reduction of the range of possible events, relationships, encounters, and choices to a range that can be symbolized. It is in that sense a conscious conspiracy against reality. Looked at, however, as a cultural innovation, the first step constitutes the original manufacture of the sacred out of the apparently ordinary or trivial matter of everyday life. Thus feathers and stones, syllables and intonations, take on a level of meaning and mystery that they had hitherto lacked until they were set aside for that purpose. It all depends on where one is standing whether one is able to focus primarily on the process

of secularization or the manufacture of the sacred. They are twin aspects of the same moment. Be sure to note Thomas Luckmann's chapter on moral communication in Germany, in which the sacred lives in and under the more secular forms of communication, and in which secular offices, like that of the President, are the vehicle for communication about the sacred.

I have been suggesting that secularization is a process in which lesser mysteries are substituted for greater ones. I have also been arguing that the process initially occurs as social systems slowly separate themselves from their natural and social environments. Further, I am arguing that to grasp what is going on at any given time sociologists need to develop a conception of "the times" or the moment in which they live or which they are intent on describing. At any point it is safe to say that the past is present in the very acts by which those in the present are seeking to separate the present from the past. It is also safe to say that every attempt to reduce mystery creates a lesser mystery that takes the place of what was once transcendent and obscure, threatening or filled with elusive promise. In turn these monuments to the sacred become themselves the objects of further attempts to reduce mystery, to make it available, to turn it from silence or suggestion into discourse, and to appropriate it for the proximate world of tasks in hand. Note Danièle Hervieu-Léger's dialectical argument about the process of secularization at various levels of society.

## PART I

# Classical and Contemporary Theory: Recycling, Continuity, Progress, or New Departures?

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# Editorial Commentary: Religion and the Secular; the Sacred and the Profane: The Scope of the Argument

Richard K. Fenn

There is a startling degree of unanimity in this book. Certainly there is a tendency among these contributors to agree that institutionalized religion has lost its monopoly on the sacred and that other sectors of modern societies have taken over many of the functions and some of the meaning formerly invested in religious institutions. The secular world, so to speak, has therefore developed its own sources of inspiration and authority. Religion may therefore be no longer able to bind together the manifestations of the sacred that typify complex societies, especially because the sacred is now strewn across a wide range. Furthermore, individuals and communities now claim direct access to the sacred, without mediation by religious professionals or a clerical elite. This new immediacy allows individuals and communities to construct the sacred in ways that are more democratic, egalitarian, playful, inventive, and potentially subversive than in the recent past.

This increased spiritual inventiveness, along with the dispersion and diffusion of the sacred outside of major institutions like the church or the state, has opened up a wide range of possibilities for mutuality and interaction. Some of these possibilities are as risky as they are ambiguous. In China the spread of a well-organized religious group devoted to traditional shamanic and meditative practices, Falun Gong, is seen to pose a threat to the state and is vilified as fomenting superstition, “evil thinking,” and social instability. Its leader’s use of the Internet to communicate with tens of millions of followers compounds the appearance of a cohesive and disciplined body capable of instant mobilization. Other religious groups, with an international leadership and with followers in a variety of nations may also pose a threat to the cohesiveness of particular societies, whether they support paramilitary and terrorist organizations or declare the independence of their members from traditional sources of discrimination and oppression. The international Pentecostal movement is a prime example of such liberation from below.

The sacred is the institution by which individuals and groups, communities and societies attempt to transcend the passage of time. The sacred reduces multiple possibilities both for life and death to times and occasions that can be marked and solemnized, celebrated and remembered. Thus the seasons of an individual's life are sacralized in rites of passage that mark the coming of adulthood, marriage, and death itself. The sacred thus links the passage of time for the individual to the observances of the larger society. That linkage assures the individual that the rhythms and seasons of life are part of a larger temporal order, the tides of which will continue to ebb and flow according to the sacred calendar. The momentous occasions in the life of the society such as war and peace are similarly celebrated in memorials that assure its citizens that no sacrifice for the nation or the people will go unremembered and prove therefore to have been in vain. The anniversaries of the death of Malcolm X, of the holocaust of the Branch Davidians, of the death of Princess Diana, of the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, of the Easter uprising, of massacres in Vietnam, North Korea, or Beijing are remembered and honored locally or in private among those whose lives were most deeply affected. Some indeed are mentioned on the national media in brief segments of reporting on what happened "on this day" in years past. As the sacred becomes dispersed and unfocused, however, the nation's ceremonies can no longer collect, as it were, the woes and aspirations, the griefs and hopes of all the people.

What passes for the sacred vastly reduces the wide range of possibility that in fact exists within society: possibilities for cruelty and the destruction of the spirit as well as possibilities for the resuscitation of the crushed soul and the rejuvenation of moribund communities. When societies become integrated, however, these various possibilities no longer stay within the range of professional understanding and common sense. They may sometimes come back, moreover, with a vengeance. In the meantime, eschatologies and millennial religious enthusiasm are expressions of the desire of some members of a society for a final accounting and for a settlement of all grievances. It is part of the sociological task to look under the surface of the familiar for what has long been concealed there in the way of patient longing and forceful anticipation.

Of course, sociologists seldom agree on everything, and those who have contributed to this book are no exception. Some, for instance, would argue that secularization consists of the process in which religion loses its influence on politics and economics as well as its monopoly over the sacred. The worlds of work and government become increasingly autonomous, follow their own rules, and regard religious groups and institutions as one among many interests to be brokered. Just as religion loses its control over how people raise children, make their living, or govern themselves, it also loses its control over the sacred itself. Thus the sacred is less often to be found at times or in places owned and controlled by professionals like the clergy. Instead, the sacred is increasingly to be found in a wide diversity of locales, among groups that had previously enjoyed very little in the way of spiritual gifts or charisma, and among individuals who find their own sources of inspiration and authority. Others, however, find in this same

process a resacralizing of the world, in which areas of social life formerly considered to be under the domain of rationality come under spiritual influence, and what was once profane and lacked any mystery becomes enchanted once again. From their viewpoint, for instance, women who bring spiritual and moral concerns back into the workplace and gain new freedom for themselves under the auspices of the Holy Spirit are signs that secularization is hardly as widespread or inevitable a social process as some sociologists have thought it to be. While many of the sociologists represented in this volume might therefore agree that the sacred genie, so to speak, is out of the bottle of institutionalized religion, they might not agree as to whether that Great Escape represents or undermines the process of secularization.

The more complex and diverse a society becomes, moreover, and the more varied become the expressions of the sacred, the more abstract and formulaic become the beliefs and values of religion, and the more distant they are from the decisions and contexts that constitute everyday life. Activities or functions, rites and other symbolic acts, that were once owned and controlled by a single institution are transferred to other contexts. Shoes that were once produced within the household economy were later produced under the central control of a manager who monopolized the means of production, provided capital and machinery, set schedules and quotas, and provided sole access to the larger market. Religious instruction on marriage and child raising, churchly prohibitions on sexual or economic activity, and the prescriptions for government that were once produced by religious officials and intellectuals, are now produced under secular auspices. Note that these changes are often discussed as aspects of “differentiation.”

With regard to the process of differentiation, secularization usually represents a narrowing of the scope of institutionalized religion’s authoritative control over the sacred. Other institutions then lay claim to the sacred, as in the “sacred” doctor–patient relationship or attorney–client communication. These operate under the seal of a secular confessional, except where insurance companies and public prosecutors assert their interests and authority. Similarly, the arts and crafts of teaching, healing, judging, predicting the future, and pastoral care have been transferred from the church to educators, doctors, an independent judiciary, social scientists and social workers and therapists.

Secularization thus makes it difficult for individuals to act as if their allegiances to this world and the next could be played out on a single stage. There is no religious framework to guarantee that they could be both faithful sons and daughters of their families and natural communities, on the one hand, and citizens of a larger society on the other. The loyalty of the child to the home and family, to the place of birth and the familiarity of old surroundings comes inevitably into conflict with the demands of the larger society for tribute, for the development of skills, the performance of duties, and possibly for the sacrifice of one’s very life. Early loves become untenable or embarrassing. Secularization exposes the conflict between personal inspiration and allegiance to a higher social authority or the contradiction embedded in dying that others may live.

The more secularized a society, the more it will therefore have to articulate and control its perennial and endemic sources of conflict and cleavage. The world of the small community comes more visibly into conflict with the opportunities and threats represented by the larger society. The family and all ties based on kinship are threatened by the possibilities for association and satisfaction represented by commerce, work, politics, and the military. However, secularization limits the capacity of religion to integrate conflicting ways of life and to place sectional loyalties and class divisions within a larger context of adherence and belief.

It may therefore now be necessary for sociologists to redefine religion or at least imagine it in new ways. It may help, for the sake of threading one's way through the discussions in this volume, to think of *religion as a way of tying together multiple experiences and memories of the sacred into a single system of belief and practice*. That is, after all, what major religions do; they integrate a vast repertoire of insights into the sacred, of memories and experience, of revelations and pronouncements. Thus integrated, these forms of the sacred represent a more or less comprehensive and authoritative view of the world: of things to be hoped for and dreaded, of persons to be feared and loved, of ways of life to be honored and despised, of times and places to be approached freely or with careful circumspection.

However, to study religion from a sociological viewpoint opens us not only to the world that has emerged from a welter of sacred moments and peoples, times and places, but also to forms of the sacred that have been lost. That missing world may be an imaginary social order remembered as harmonious and egalitarian, organic and cooperative, or it may be the original matrix from which all humans have come: a maternal world where there was a peace that passed all understanding. In either event, religion expresses the awareness that we live in a world whose foundations are known only by the signs of their former presence. Indeed, religion is as much about absence as it is about presence.

That is why there is so often a touch of nostalgia or even melancholy in religion, and an awareness of loss often typifies studies of the sacred. Indeed, several of the sociologists represented in this volume know the world to be a place where the sacred is distinguished more by its absence than its presence: empty cathedrals, collective amnesia, the ghosts of dead beliefs, and the emptiness of a cultural wasteland. For instance, Bryan Wilson's contribution to this volume notes the tragic passing of a world that was once essential to the formation of modern societies and still remains necessary in its absence. He argues that the world of face-to-face relations was once the basis of all social obligations. In the family and the local community one learned the disciplines of self-restraint and acquired a self-regard that dignified others as well as the self. The disciplines of reliability and work so essential to industrial societies were acquired in the very contexts that industrial societies are so effective in destroying: the home, the community, and indeed all the other stable matrices of personal identity. In Part 2, moreover, we will find Grace Davie suggesting that there are still public places in Europe that enshrine sacred memory, but they are increasingly becoming empty of any direct expression of piety and are more like

museums than shrines. Participation in the sacred is thus optional, temporary, vicarious, and derivative: a state that may well be one of transition toward a final extension of the profane into the sanctuary itself. The sense of a holding environment, a maternal space that encompasses all profane activities, may finally yield to the recognition that sacred space is empty after all. Disenchantment continues, though somewhat less intensely and more abated than previously may have been thought to be true of European societies.

Wilson notes that, whereas roles were once clusters of social obligation, they are now largely impersonal, empty of moral instruction, and governed by rational standards of technique and performance. Whereas government once embodied a moral order, it is now based on incentives and relies on surveillance. Indeed government itself is a source of the very cynicism and “de-moralization” that make modern societies conducive to skepticism and silent protest. The economy itself, once reliant on moral standards for work and credit, relies heavily on surveillance and offers a meaningless array of artificial choices. It is consumption, he argues, no longer production, that provides the currency for personal identity in a market of rival selves.

Wilson’s chapter on the de-moralization of Western societies is nicely in tension with the emphasis of Bernice Martin on what might be called the remoralization of Latin America, Africa, Asia, and parts of Eastern Europe and the remains of the Soviet Union. Bernice Martin notes that women are using traditional, even patriarchal, forms of Christianity to negotiate for themselves a social order that recognizes their gifts, gives them renewed authority and a real, however limited, social status, and that opens up to them positions of leadership not only in the home but in the community. There is, in the Pentecostal movement worldwide, a creative adaptation of religious dissent for the purpose of creating new forms of solidarity between men and women, new havens in a heartless world, and new opportunities for personal growth and for upward social mobility. These opportunities come to those who refuse to become ciphers or victims, however much they have been abused by authoritarian regimes or left out of the mainstream of technological development.

Bernice Martin’s chapter particularly addresses the cultured despisers of religious enthusiasm who have notably failed either to see or, if they saw, to understand the significance of the Pentecostal revolution worldwide. Feminists appear to have noticed women taking leadership roles in Pentecostal communities, but they focused instead primarily on the patriarchal forms and ideology and failed to analyze the actual renegotiation of the roles and authority of women in the community. Marxists appear to have failed to see the significance of the Pentecostal movement for the liberation of women and the empowerment of an oppressed class. Some saw in Pentecostalism the fruits of American colonialism or a new extension of capitalist-induced desires for consumption; others were more interested in liberation theology and ecclesial base communities that had a more direct connection with Western Marxist ideology but enjoyed far less popularity among the poor than Pentecostalism itself. Sociologists who were insistent on the notion of secularization failed to see Pentecostalism as any thing

more than a regression or a movement that, by instilling the Protestant ethic, would create worldly success and religious disinterest. From Bernice Martin's chapter we gain a picture of a religious movement that is not likely to defeat itself by its own successes; rather it is one that calls into question the hitherto successful paradigms of Western sociology. Certainly it provides new forms of self-discipline, arouses long-term commitments to self-improvement, defends the family from external pressure, releases the energies and recruits the talents of women and men alike, and opens up new futures for a generation of children who otherwise would have been trapped in traditional gender roles and in the poverty that these roles perpetuate.

Bernice Martin's comments on the narrowness of disciplinary or ideological viewpoints tells us that the sociology of religion needs to be open to insights and methods from other fields of inquiry. Crossing disciplinary borders is particularly fruitful when sociologists are candid and articulate about their commitments and make clear how the field looks from the place where they have chosen to stand. For instance, another contributor, David Martin, combines sociological with theological insight into the modern city. Indeed he sees in cities not only a pattern for the larger society, in which some groups or communities are rendered relatively marginal, but also a pattern that evokes certain cities of antiquity. With his historically oriented sociological vision, furthermore, Martin can perceive the city as being both maternal and heavenly, as in the case of Jerusalem itself. Unless one understands cities as embodying reminiscence, therefore, as well as referring to the future, one will not understand either the innovations of the modern world or its continuity with the past. Indeed, David Martin's chapter suggests that the city embodies the sacred in all its contemporary complexity, ambiguity, risk, and possibility.

Over and beyond the aspects of the sacred that are institutionalized in religious beliefs and practices or located either in the city or in landscape, the Sacred is the sum total of a society's potential. It is the realm of what is unknown: the partially realized potentiality for new forms of social life or for division and destruction. Thus the Sacred contains knowledge that is unimaginable until it is discovered or revealed, and this knowledge can upset the premises on which a society or community is based. The Sacred also contains motives and ambitions, intentions and impulses, that have the potential either to generate new recruits for parenting and soldiering or for rebellion and revolution. It is therefore no wonder that societies take considerable pains to orchestrate and regulate the Sacred so that individuals are exposed to its power in limited and socially acceptable forms and on stated occasions.

The Sacred is always full of an uncanny potency. Where that force comes from, of course, is a matter on which not all sociologists can yet agree. Some find it reflected in the potent symbols of a faith that itself has origins outside society and nature. Others see it reflecting only society itself. Even if social in origin, however, the Sacred nonetheless can be socially disruptive. Emile Durkheim spoke of *mana*; Weber spoke of charisma. Georg Simmel spoke, as Victoria Erickson reminds us in this volume, of the soul as having the capacity