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Religion and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?

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I. INTRODUCTION

The problem I want to discuss with you this evening is particularly acute, if not peculiar to, contemporary first world Western culture. It is, like many of our cultural problems such as inclusivity, addictions, and family breakdown, ironically a product, to a large extent, of our unprecedented abundance, leisure, and freedom. The problem is the relationship between religion and spirituality.

Familiar statistics detail the decline of the mainline Protestant churches even though fundamentalist denominations and Roman Catholicism are growing numerically.[1] Nevertheless, Catholic "practice" or institutional participation (in the sense of going to church, espousing Church teaching, observing Church laws, or referring to the clergy for guidance) is much less widespread than in the past and Catholics are much more likely to be involved in what was once called "indifferentism" or the relativizing of exclusivist claims for Catholicism as the unique path to salvation.[2] In other words, although the majority of Americans claim some religious affiliation and religion is apparently a permanent feature of American culture, religion as a powerful influence in individual or societal life seems to be in serious trouble.[3]

On the other hand, spirituality has rarely enjoyed such a high profile, positive evaluation, and even economic success as it does among Americans today. Publishers and bookstores report that spirituality is a major focus of contemporary writing and reading.[4] Workshops on every conceivable type of secular and religious spirituality abound. Retreat houses are booked months and even years in advance. Spiritual renewal programs multiply and spiritual directors and gurus of various stripes, with or without some kind of accreditation, have more clients than they can handle. Spirituality has even become a serious concern of business executives, in the workplace, among athletes, and in the entertainment world. Spirituality as a research discipline is gradually being recognized in the academy as a legitimate field of study. In short, if religion is in trouble, spirituality is in the ascendancy and the irony of this situation evokes puzzlement and anxiety in the religious establishment, scrutiny among theologians, and justification among those who have traded the religion of their past for the spirituality of their present.

The justification of intense interest in spirituality and alienation from religion is often expressed in a statement such as, "I am a spiritual

person (or on a spiritual journey), but I am not very religious."[5] Interestingly enough, and especially among the young, this religionless spirituality often freely avails itself of the accoutrements of religion. Invocation of angels, practices such as meditation or fasting, personal and communal rituals, the use of symbols and sacramentals from various traditions such as incense and candles, crystals, rainsticks, vestments, and religious art are common. Indeed, even the most secular types of spirituality seem bound to borrow some of their resources from the religious traditions they repudiate.

Finally, our era is marked by an unprecedented contact and interchange among religions, not only ecumenical contact with fellow Christians but genuinely inter-religious encounters among the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and between them and the other great world religions.[6] These contacts run the gamut from serious interfaith encounter through dialogue and shared practice[7] even to the point of disciplined "crossing over"[8] to naïvely disrespectful "raiding" of other traditions by spiritual dabblers who appropriate interesting objects or practices from religions not their own. Whatever else can be said, it is no longer the case in the first world that most people are initiated from childhood into a family religious affiliation and remain within it for a lifetime, never seriously questioning its validity and, in turn, passing it on to their own offspring. These religious developments in our culture affect all of us, in one way or another, personally and/or through our children or students.

The subtitle of this lecture suggests three possible models for the relationship between religion and spirituality. First, there are those who consider the two as separate enterprises with no necessary connection. Religion and spirituality are strangers at the banquet of transcendence who never actually meet or converse. This is surely the position, on the one hand, of our contemporaries who respect the religious involvements of others but are simply not interested in participating in it themselves, or of those, on the other hand, who consider correct and faithful religious practice quite adequate to their needs without any superfluous spirituality trimmings. Second, some consider religion and spirituality as conflicting realities, related in inverse proportion. The more spiritual one is, the less religious and vice versa. The two are rivals for the allegiance of serious seekers. This is the position, on the one hand, of many who have repudiated a religion that has hurt them or who simply find religion empty, hypocritical, or fossilized and, on the other hand, of those whose dependence on religious authority is threatened by spirituality which does not ask clerical permission or accept official restraints in its quest for God.[9] Finally, some see religion

and spirituality as two dimensions of a single enterprise which, like body and spirit, are often in tension but are essential to each other. In other words, they see the two as partners in the search for God.

The last is the position for which I will argue in what follows. But I do not plan to do so from a dogmatic position or for apologetic reasons. Rather, by describing with some nuance both religion and spirituality, I will try to uncover both the real and the *ersatz* sources of tension between them and then suggest how a contemporary person who takes seriously the spiritual quest on the one hand and the real resources and problems of religion on the other can situate herself or himself in our religiously pluralistic environment with integrity, freedom, and responsibility.

II. SPIRITUALITY

Many today would argue that spirituality is the more important of the two terms, religion being a form (if not a Procrustean bed) of spirituality. In fact, the priority assigned to either religion or spirituality in relation to the other depends on the level on which one is discussing each term. At its deepest level each is prior and the question of priority becomes a classical chicken-and-egg conundrum. But in contemporary experience, I would argue, spirituality has a certain priority so I will discuss it first.

A. Spirituality as an Anthropological Constant

In its most basic or anthropological sense, spirituality, like personality, is a characteristic of the human being as such. It is the capacity of persons to transcend themselves through knowledge and love, that is, to reach beyond themselves in relationship to others and thus become more than self-enclosed material monads. In this sense, even the newborn child is spiritual while the most ancient rock is not. But we usually reserve the term "spirituality" for a somewhat developed relationality to self, others, the world, and the Transcendent, whether the last is called God or designated by some other term. Although spirituality is not necessarily Christian or Catholic, and I will be making some appropriate distinctions below, my concern, in view of the context of this lecture, is primarily Catholic Christian spirituality.

Spirituality as a developed relationality (rather than a mere capacity) is not generic. We distinguish among spiritualities according to various criteria. For example, we may distinguish qualitatively between a healthy and a rigid spirituality. We may distinguish spiritualities by religious tradition or family as Catholic or Benedictine. Or we may distinguish spiritualities by salient features, e.g., as Eucharistic or

feminist. These distinctions are not necessarily mutually exclusive.
A healthy spirituality may be Catholic, Benedictine, Eucharistic,
and feminist. Conversely, a rigid spirituality may also be Catholic,
Benedictine, Eucharistic, and feminist. In short, although all humans
are spiritual in the basic anthropological sense, and all Christian spiri-
tualities share a deep commonality, each individual develops her or
his spirituality in a unique and personal way, analogously to the way
individuals develop their common humanity into a unique personality.
Therefore, the spiritualities of Christians, even within the same denom-
ination, religious order, or movement, may differ enormously.

B. Spirituality as Life Project and Practice

What, then, is this unique and personal synthesis, denoted by the
term "spirituality?" Peter Van Ness, a professor of religion at Columbia
University who has specialized in the study of nonreligious or secular
spirituality, defines spirituality as "the quest for attaining an optimal
relationship between what one truly is and everything that is."[10] By
"everything that is" he means reality apprehended as a cosmic totality
and by "what one truly is" he means all of the self to which one has
attained. In other words, spirituality is the attempt to relate, in a
positive way, oneself as a personal whole to reality as a cosmic whole.
This definition is broad enough to include both religious and secular
spiritualities.

In my own writings I have offered a somewhat more specified
definition that may serve our purposes. I define spirituality as "the
experience of conscious involvement in the project of life integration
through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."[11]
Like Van Ness, I have tried to define spirituality broadly enough that
the definition can apply to religious and nonreligious or secular spiri-
tualities and specifically enough that it does not include virtually
anything that anyone espouses.

The adjective "spiritual" was coined by St. Paul, who used it to
denote that which is influenced by the Holy Spirit of God (for exam-
ple, "spiritual persons" [1 Corinthians 2:13, 15] or "spiritual blessings"
[Ephesians 1:3; Romans 15:27]) and the substantive, "spirituality,"
derives from that adjective. However, although "spiritual" originated as
a Christian term,[12] spirituality, in the last few decades, has become a
generic term for the living of the human capacity for self-transcendence,
regardless of whether that experience is religious or not. In other words,
spirituality has lost its explicit reference to the influence of the Holy
Spirit and come to refer primarily to the activity of the human spirit.
The term has even been applied retrospectively to the classical Greeks

and Romans and other ancient peoples who certainly would not have applied the term to their own experience.[13] Without going into the arguments for or against this expansion in the application of the terms "spiritual" and "spirituality," I suggest that we have to recognize the linguistic fact that neither religion in general nor Christianity in particular any longer controls the meaning and use of the terms. This being the case, we need to unpack the general definition in order to clarify the meaning of the term as it is being used today and then show how Christian spirituality involves a specification of this general definition.

First, spirituality as we are using it in this definition denotes experience, a term that is itself very difficult to define. In this context, however, it implies that spirituality is not an abstract idea, a theory, an ideology, or a movement of some kind. It is personal-lived reality that has both active and passive dimensions.

Second, spirituality is an experience of *conscious involvement in a project*, which means that it is neither an accidental experience such as the result of a drug overdose, nor an episodic event such as being overwhelmed by a beautiful sunset. It is not a collection of practices such as saying certain prayers, rubbing crystals, or going to church. It is an ongoing and coherent approach to life as a consciously pursued and ongoing enterprise.

Third, spirituality is a project of *life-integration*, which means that it is holistic, involving body and spirit, emotions and thought, activity and passivity, social and individual aspects of life. It is an effort to bring all of life together in an integrated synthesis of ongoing growth and development. Spirituality, then, involves one's whole life in relation to reality as a whole.

Fourth, this project of life-integration is pursued by consistent *self-transcendence toward ultimate value*. This implies that spirituality is essentially positive in its direction. A life of narcissistic egoism, self-destructive addiction, or social violence, even though it may involve the totality of the person's being, is not a spirituality. The focus of self-transcendence is value that the person perceives as ultimate not only in relation to oneself but in some objective sense. One might perceive life itself, personal or social well-being, the good of the earth, justice for all people, or union with God as ultimate value. Sometimes, of course, the perception of ultimate value is mistaken. We have seen tragic examples of this in cults such as Heaven's Gate.[14] What presents itself as spirituality, in other words, requires discernment.

Remembering that, in the concrete, there is no such thing as generic spirituality, let us now apply this general definition of spiritu-

ality to the specific tradition of Christianity. Here we are dealing with an explicitly religious spirituality in which the horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ, in whose life we share through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality is the life of faith, hope, and love within the community of the Church through which we put on the mind of Christ by participating sacramentally and existentially in his paschal mystery. The desired life-integration is personal transformation in Christ, which implies participation in the transformation of the world in justice for all creatures.

Christian spirituality, then, is Christian because of the specification of the general features of spirituality by specifically Christian content: God, Trinity, Christ, Spirit, creation, Church, paschal mystery, sacraments, and so on. However, Christians share the fundamental reality of spirituality with other traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, and native traditions. Some of these traditions, such as Judaism and Hinduism, are specifically religious, that is, theistic, in that they identify deity as the horizon of ultimate value. Others, like Taoism and Buddhism, are analogous to religions in that the horizon of ultimate value is absolutely transcendent although not identified as a personal God. There are other spiritualities that are implicitly or explicitly nonreligious in that they recognize no transcendent reality, nothing beyond the cosmos as naturally knowable. And finally, some spiritualities, e.g., feminist or ecological spiritualities, have both religious and nonreligious forms.[15]

III. RELIGION

With this basic understanding of spirituality as a dimension of human being that is actualized in some people as a life project and practice, we can turn now to a consideration of religion.

A. Three Levels of Religion

Like spirituality, the term "religion" can be used on different levels and may well be accepted on one level and repudiated on another by the same person at the same time. At its most basic, religion is the *fundamental life stance* of the person who believes in transcendent reality, however designated, and assumes some realistic posture before that ultimate reality. Religion in this most basic sense involves a recognition of the total dependence of the creature on the source or matrix of being and life, which gives rise to such attitudes and actions as reverence, gratitude for being and life and all that sustains it, compunction for failure to live in that context in a worthy manner, and reliance on the transcendent for help in living and dying. In this sense, religion is at

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the root of any spiritual quest that is not explicitly atheistic or reductively naturalistic. However vaguely they may define the Ultimate Reality, or however antagonistic toward organized religion they might be, most people speaking of spirituality are religious in this most basic sense.

Second, religion can denote a *spiritual tradition* such as Christianity or Buddhism, usually emanating from some foundational experience of divine or cosmic revelation (e.g., Jesus' experience of divine filiation or the Buddha's enlightenment) that has given rise to a characteristic way of understanding and living in the presence of the numinous. Most people are born into such a tradition remotely in their home culture and often proximately in their family of origin. For example, whether or not they go to church or synagogue or know much about the doctrines of Christianity or Judaism, most North Americans operate within a framework that is traditionally Judeo-Christian. Separating oneself completely from the religious tradition of one's origin and/or culture is actually extremely difficult and requires considerable intellectual effort even for those who have chosen another tradition or deliberately rejected all traditions. Thus, even people who claim to have rejected religion in favor of spirituality probably continue to operate to some degree in relation to a religious tradition, if only by way of contrast. This might come to expression, for example, in an explicit modeling of one's life on Jesus even if one no longer goes to church or checks "Catholic" on a census form. It may even express itself in the version of "God" that the resolute agnostic rejects!

Third, the term "religion" can denote *a religion or institutionalized formulation* of a particular spiritual tradition such as Missouri Synod Lutheranism, Soto Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Reformed Judaism, and so on. Religion as institutionalized tradition, as those who specialize in its study tell us, is a notoriously difficult term to define.[16] Traditionally, and probably in the popular imagination, a religion is identified as an institutionalized system of relating with God or gods, leading to salvation either in this life or another life. However, as scholars have studied societies in the concrete, they have discovered that religion in many cultures is not a separate institution distinguished from parallel institutions such as the political, economic, or educational but that these dimensions of group life are embedded inseparably in the culture as a whole. Furthermore, not all the cultural systems we would identify as religious involve belief in God. For example, Buddhism and Taoism, which are certainly analogous to Hinduism or Christianity as paths of salvation, both totally permeate their respective cultures and are nontheistic. What seems to mark reli-

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gions in the concrete is that they are cultural systems for dealing with ultimate reality, whether or not that ultimate reality is conceptualized as God, and they are organized in particular patterns of creed, code, and cult.

First, they are *cultural systems*. They are institutionalized patterns of belief and behavior in which certain global meanings, usually based on some kind of foundational revelation or revelatory insight, are socially shared. So, for example, Christianity holds certain global convictions based on the Judeo-Christian revelation of God through Jesus which embrace our relationships with self, other human beings, and the world.

Second, religions are *concerned with whatever a society or group considers ultimately important,* however that is defined. This may involve placating dangerous deities or pleasing benevolent ones; assuring fertility or victory in war; honoring ancestors or achieving enlightenment. In Christianity what is ultimately important is salvation, which involves both personal union with God, now and for all eternity, and the transformation of all creation in Christ.

Third, religions are culturally institutionalized in the form of *creed,* or what the group believes about the nature and functioning of personal, cosmic, and transcendent reality; *code,* or what the group holds to be obligatory or forbidden in order to live in accord with ultimate reality; and *cult,* or how the group symbolically expresses its dependence upon ultimate reality whether that be a personal God, the cosmos itself as sacred, the ancestors, or some other transcendent or quasi-transcendent reality. In some way, religions are about the socially mediated human relationship to the sacred, the ultimate, the transcendent, the divine. These are not strictly equivalent terms but religion as institution is basically a cultural system for dealing with that which transcends not only the individual but even the social entity as a whole.

B. The Dialectical Relation Between Religious Tradition and Institutionalization

In light of the foregoing, we can see that religions as cultural systems operate on two levels that are distinguishable but so intimately related that they cannot be separated, namely, the religious tradition and the institutionalization of that tradition in an organized system called a religion or, in some cases, a denomination or a sect within a religious tradition.

Religions are usually born in the intense, often mystical, revelatory experience of a founding figure or group who encounters the divine, the numinous, in some direct way that leads to personal life transfor-

mation, i.e., to spirituality in the developed sense. But if this revelation experience and its characteristic spirituality is to give rise to a religious tradition, is to have followers beyond the original founding figures, the spirituality to which it gives birth must be somehow institutionalized as a religion (or analogous reality). The enlightenment of the Buddha, the burning bush encounter of Moses, the "abba" experience of Jesus gave rise respectively to Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity as traditions lived by communities in some institutionalized form. And it is precisely this institutional character that is both the safeguard and the nemesis of religious traditions and their spiritualities.

The reason for institutionalization is clear. If the spirituality of a religious tradition is to be made available to others, there has to be a way of initiating people into the mystery that has been discovered by or revealed to the founding figures and of sustaining them in living it. By rites of initiation, inculcated teachings and practices, mentoring by mature members, systems of rewards and punishments that encourage correct belief and behavior, and properly celebrated rituals, the religious institution passes on the religious tradition and its spirituality, thus sustaining not only its members but itself as a social reality. The resulting cultural system governs the most important aspects of the life of the group such as sexuality, kinship, worship, the distribution of material goods, the exercise of social power and authority, and so on. Its ultimate purpose, however, is not simply the fostering of social meaning or the regulation of behavior in the society but the personal development and even salvation, i.e., the spirituality, of the persons who make up the society.

In this sense, institutionalization as an organized religion is what makes spirituality as a daily experience of participation in a religious tradition possible for the majority of people. When there is no institutionalized religion, the religious tradition itself dissipates into a vague and shapeless generalized ethos. It may have some kind of private significance for individuals or some kind of public ceremonial function, but there is no way for the participants to share it with one another or embody it in public life. In our country, for example, the banishing of all religions as institutions from public life under a (mis)interpretation of the First Amendment has created a spiritual vacuum in which shared beliefs and values cannot be called upon to shape public policy or sanction private behavior. In the once-Christian Czech Republic, the now widespread atheism is due to the aggressive suppression of institutional religion during the Communist regime.

The danger, of course, in the institutionalization of any religious tradition is that institutions often end up taking the place of the values

they were established to promote. Institutionalization of religion easily leads to empty ritualism, hypocrisy, clericalism, corruption, abuse of power, superstition, and other deformations familiar from the history of religions and from which no religion is totally free. Many people are so scandalized and disillusioned by these deformations that they jettison all connection with institutionalized religion.

Such global rejection of religion involves a failure to distinguish between the authentic and life-giving religious tradition and the spirituality to which it gives rise on the one hand, and its institutional form on the other. It is a classic case of curing a headache by decapitation. The Christian tradition centered in Jesus the Christ has been institutionalized in Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Episcopalianism, and other denominations. Each of these churches has carried the authentic tradition more or less successfully throughout its history. Institutional Catholicism, for example, has had glorious moments, such as the Second Vatican Council, and utterly despicable moments such as the medieval Inquisition and its contemporary counterpart.

Although institutions are notoriously prone to corruption, non-institutionalized spiritualities, especially those unrelated to any religious tradition, are prone to extremism and instability on the one hand and to ghettoizing on the other. When people abandon the religious institution, even (or perhaps especially) if they manage to find a small group of like-minded companions in exile, they are left without the corrective criticism of an historically tested community and the public scrutiny that any society focuses on recognized groups within it. And they also lose the leverage that would enable them to influence systemically either church or society.[17] Such unaffiliated individuals or groups have no access to the sustaining shared practice of a tradition that has stood the test of time. They no longer enjoy the social encouragement, the plausibility structures of a shared sociology of belief, the clarity of a coherent theology, the formative mediation of a canonical sacred literature, the tested tradition of moral ideals and restraints, the wisdom of the great figures in the tradition.

However, it must be frankly acknowledged that the regular practice of institutional religion is no guarantee at all of the internalization of the tradition as personal spirituality, and faithful denominational membership is no guarantee of voice or influence in either church or society.

In short, the institutionalization of religious tradition in organized religions is a paradoxical blessing. It makes it possible to initiate people into an authentic tradition of spirituality, gives them companions on the journey and tested wisdom by which to live, and supports them in times of suffering and personal instability. But it also provides a way

for people to be publicly correct and socially respectable without ever becoming truly spiritual, and it often undermines personal faith by its own infidelity to the tradition, sometimes exacerbated by cynical official insistence that its worst offenses, for example anti-Semitism or the oppression and exclusion of women, are expressions of the divine will. It can require uncommon faith and integrity to find in the Christian tradition the resources for a genuine Catholic spirituality by participating in the life of an institution that is often a very poor vehicle of that tradition.

IV. THE CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT BETWEEN SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Having looked at the meanings of and the distinction between spirituality and religion that have grounded the age-old tension verified in every religious tradition between organized religion and personal spirituality, we are in a position to appreciate the particularly acute version of that conflict today. Because religion is not embedded in Western culture but exists as a distinct institution we, unlike our forebears, can objectify it, compare it to religions in other cultures, and thus problematize it in a way members of more traditional societies could not. The alienation of many contemporary people who have abandoned religion in favor of spirituality has a double source that was not operative in earlier times or more restricted societies. First, postmodernity fosters the pursuit of idiosyncratic and nonreligious spirituality and, second, ideological criticism reinforces the alienation of contemporary seekers from institutionalized religion.

A. Postmodernity and Non-Religious Spirituality

This is not the place, nor do I have the time, to give even a thumbnail sketch of the emerging culture of postmodernity.[18] Suffice it to say that it differs from the modern culture in which most of today's adults were raised by its anti-foundationalism and its rejection of master narratives. This entails the repudiation of any kind of unitary worldview, as well as a recognition that others are irreducibly different and cannot be subsumed into our reality or perspective. A postmodern mentality often involves the repudiation of any claims to normativity or non-negotiable ultimacy by any institution or agency, a thoroughgoing relativism with regard to religion as well as other institutions and authorities, and a despair of genuine relationships with those whose reality is really "other" than our own. Postmodernity, therefore, is characterized by fragmentation of thought and experience which focuses attention on the present moment, on immediate satisfaction, on what works for

me rather than on historical continuity, social consensus, or shared hopes for a common future. In this foundationless, relativistic, and alienated context there is, nevertheless, often a powerfully experienced need for some focus of meaning, some source of direction and value. The intense interest in spirituality today is no doubt partially an expression of this need.

Religion, however, especially the type to which Christianity belongs, presupposes a unitary world view whose master narrative stretching from creation to the end of the world is ontologically based and which makes claims to universal validity while promising an eschatological reward for delayed personal gratification and sacrificial social commitment. In other words, the Christian religion is intrinsically difficult to reconcile with a postmodern sensibility. By contrast, a nonreligious spirituality is often very compatible with that sensibility precisely because it is usually a privatized, idiosyncratic, personally satisfying stance and practice that makes no doctrinal claims, imposes no moral authority outside one's own conscience, creates no necessary personal relationships or social responsibilities, and can be changed or abandoned whenever it seems not to work for the practitioner. Commitment, at least of any permanent kind, which involves both an implied affirmation of personal subjectivity and a conviction about cosmic objectivity, is easily circumvented by a spirituality that has no institutional or community affiliation. Clearly such a spirituality is much more compatible with a postmodern sensibility than the religion of any church, especially Christianity.

B. Ideology Criticism of Institutional Religion

Exacerbating the postmodern challenge to institutional religion and the corresponding attraction of nonreligious spirituality is the serious contemporary ideological criticism of religion itself. Although it began in the Enlightenment, this criticism is exacerbated today by the ecumenical and interreligious experience characteristic of postmodern globalization and the general espousal in the first world of democratic and participative principles of social organization. Three features of institutionalized Western religion, especially Christianity, have become increasingly alienating for contemporary seekers.

First, religions have been, historically, *exclusive*. Exclusivity can be cultural and geographical, as was the case with the great religions of the East before migration within, into, and beyond Asia became common.[19] It can also be tribal, as has been the case with Native American or African religions whose adherents never understood or intended their beliefs to extend beyond the tribe in which the religion was cul-

turally embedded. Or, exclusivity can be doctrinal and cultic as has been the case with Islam, to some extent Judaism (which is unique in many ways), and especially Christianity and its subdivisions. As long as the doctrinal and cultic exclusivity was implicit because there was little or no contact with or conversion agenda toward outsiders, exclusivity posed little problem. But in the cases of Christianity and Islam, which felt called to convert the world to thematic adherence to their religious faith and practice, it became both an agenda of domination by the institution and a litmus test of acceptability for members. There is no need to rehearse the tragic history of Christian persecution of Jews and Muslims, cultural destruction by Christian missionaries, the internecine wars among Christian denominations, the witch hunts and inquisitions within Christian denominations, or the holy wars of Islam. Religious exclusivity has been a source of hatred and violence, which many contemporary believers find so scandalous that they can no longer associate with the sources and purveyors of it.

Second, religions as institutions are traditionally *ideological.* Membership involves acceptance of a particular set of beliefs and obligatory practices and prohibitions. In many cases, fair-minded moderns find some of the doctrines incredible and some of the practices arbitrary or oppressive and they claim the right to dissent. Increasingly, educated people reject the kinds of controls on their minds and behavior, imposed in the name of God, that such beliefs, practices, and prohibitions represent. Repudiating membership in a religious denomination means, for many people, shaking free of narrow-minded dogmatism and guilt-inducing morality for the sake of spiritual breadth, autonomy of conscience, and psychological maturity.

Another aspect of institutional ideology that many people find alienating is the official repudiation of non-Christian practices which a believer might find attractive and spiritually helpful. As Christians have encountered other religions and quasi-religions directly, rather than purely academically, they have experienced the power of rituals and practices from Native American sweat lodges to Zen meditation, from African drumming to feminist nature rituals, from psychotherapy and support groups to channeling and twelve-step programs. Eclecticism, syncretism, and relativism, familiar to the postmodern mind in the areas of art, science, medicine, business, and education, seem natural enough also in the sphere of religion. But even serious scholars of religion who are trying to mediate the inter-religious conversation are often viewed, by church officials, with suspicion or even alarm when they attempt to deal with the possible mutual enrichment of religions.[21] The simplest solution many see to the ideological narrow-

ness and protectionism of the religious institution is to resign from official membership and pursue a personal spirituality within which they can include whatever seems to be of value for the religious quest, whatever the provenance of such resources.

A third problematic feature of institutionalized religions, especially within the Christian tradition, is the *clerical system*. Ministers who fulfill an organizational or service function in a religious group such as sacralizing and recording births and deaths, witnessing marriages, providing materials for devotional practices, or maintaining places of worship or devotion may not pose a problem. But a sacerdotal clergy that claims ontological superiority to ordinary believers and arrogates to itself the exercise of an absolutely necessary intermediary role between the believer and God is highly problematic for many people.[22] The egalitarian theory and practice of Western democratic societies tends to recognize only acquired superiority based on competence or achievement and to be highly suspicious of ascribed status such as that of the clergy. Furthermore, it tends to resent monopoly of scarce resources, whether material or spiritual, by any self-appointed agency, especially if the monopoly is used to subordinate the nonparticipants.[23] Many find intuitively repugnant the claim by a small exclusive group to control the access to God of the vast majority of believers. In a denomination such as Catholicism, which not only has such a clerical system but in which half the membership is barred from access to it on the basis of gender, this repugnance can and has led to disaffiliation from the religion altogether.

In short, the repudiation of institutional religion in favor of personal spirituality is, for many people, actually the repudiation of denominational belonging rather than of religion as such or of religious traditions in their entirety. It arises from a rejection, on the one hand, of a medieval institutional model of the Church that is hardly compatible with either a sophisticated ecclesiology or a postmodern understanding of institutions, and on the other hand, of the exclusivism, ideological legalism, and clericalism that often characterize institutional religion. Nondenominational personal spirituality, by contrast, seems to allow one to seek God, to grow personally, and to commit oneself to the betterment of the world and society with freedom of spirit and openness to all that is good and useful, whatever its source.[24] There can be no question that many such disaffiliated seekers are admirable human beings and some may even exercise a prophetic function by challenging the hypocrisy and control agenda of organized religion and modeling, by the sheer goodness of their lives, a spirituality that seems more authentic.[25]

V. MAKING A CASE FOR THE PARTNERSHIP OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Against the background of this acknowledgment that, at least for some people, a purely private and even idiosyncratic spirituality may work, I want to argue two points: first, that it is not an optimal formula for the spiritual life of individuals or for the good of society; second, that it evades the major challenge to unity that the Gospel addresses to us as human beings and as Christians at this particular juncture in world history.

A. Religion as the Appropriate Context for Spirituality

First, I would suggest that religion is the optimal context for spirituality. The great religious traditions of the world are much more adequate matrices for spiritual development and practice than personally constructed amalgams of beliefs and practices. In reality, such constructed spiritualities are private religions and, while this construction might seem like a creative form of postmodern bricolage, it is often quite naïve about how we humans function, individually and corporately.

I have already pointed out some of the shortcomings of nonaffiliated spirituality for the individual. First, lacking roots in a tested wisdom tradition or community of criticism, such spiritualities are not only prone to remaking all the mistakes of the past but also, more seriously, to extremism and fanaticism. And those who lack the personal intensity to become extremists are likely to drift into spiritual lethargy in the absence of a community of support and encouragement. Community, although never perfect, is the nearly indispensable context for a wise and sustained spirituality. Spirituality that lacks roots in a tradition, although it may relate a person sporadically to a variety of like-minded seekers, lacks the ongoing support and appropriate challenge that a stable community of faith provides.

Second, personal spiritualities composed of a variety of intrinsically unrelated practices must draw on equally unrelated beliefs to sustain and guide the practice. Rigid dogmatism, especially the kind that was imposed on believers in pre-conciliar Catholicism, is rightly bemoaned but the consistency of a thoughtful and critical systematic theology is a crucial structural support for the faith and morality that are integral to any spirituality. For example, the belief that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Christ grounds the moral imperative of absolute respect for others regardless of age, race, gender, or class. Conversely, a general benevolence based on the golden rule is unlikely to ground either costly respect for the enemy or the active commitment to social justice of theologically informed Christian faith.

My third, and most important, hesitation about the adequacy of disaffiliated spirituality is that, while it may respond well to someone's current felt needs, it has no past and no future. It is deprived of the riches of an organic tradition that has developed over centuries in confrontation with historical challenges of all kinds. And even if it facilitates some major spiritual intuitions by the individual, it is intrinsically incapable of contributing them to future generations except, in some extraordinary cases, by way of a written testimony.[27] By contrast, the participant in a religious tradition can both profit from and criticize all that has gone before and thus, at least potentially, can help hand on to successive generations a wiser, more compassionate approach to the universal human dilemmas and challenges. Privatized spirituality, like the "social cocooning" in lifestyle enclaves that sociologists have identified as a major problem in contemporary American society,[28] is at least naïvely narcissistic. It implicitly defines spirituality as a private pursuit for personal gain, even if that gain is socially committed. Although the practitioner may be sincerely attempting to respond to a reality, e.g., God, who transcends herself or himself, she or he remains the sole arbiter of who God is and what God asks. The person accepts as authoritative no challenge to personal blindness or selfishness from sacred texts or community. There is certainly continuity, but there is also a real difference, between the personal openness to challenge that a sincere person but religiously unaffiliated person might try to maintain and the actual accountability that is required of the member of a community.

In summary, the argument I am making for religion as the most productive context for spirituality, for both the individual and the community, is that the quest for God is too complex and too important to be reduced to a private enterprise. It is, of course, crucial for all of us to remain ever vigilant in guarding the liberty of our conscience and the integrity of our practice against the deformations of institutional religion. But while sitting lightly to institution we need to immerse ourselves deeply in our religious tradition and the community called church, which embodies and carries that tradition. Only from within that community can we avail ourselves of its riches and promote not only the integrity of the institution but also the fecundity of the tradition itself.

B. Religious Commitment as the Instrument of Unity

As John Paul II, the Bishop of Rome, has said on a number of occasions á propos of millennial observances, unity is a deep desire of the heart of God and the ultimate vocation of the human race.[29] The

creation story in Genesis, while it tells us nothing scientific about the origin of humanity, forcefully expresses the theological truth that God created humanity as one family. That family was split apart by sin but Jesus' deepest desire, for which he gave his life, is that "all may be one" as he and God are one (John 17:20–21). Ironically, and tragically, one of the most powerful sources of division among humans is religion itself, but in our day historical forces of all kinds are inviting us, challenging us, urging us to overcome religious division.

Globalization itself is involving us with our sisters and brothers of every nation and ethnic group on earth. We know more about other religions than any previous generation. Vatican II opened the windows of the Church, not only toward other Christian denominations and our Jewish and Islamic fellow monotheists, but even tentatively suggested that we reach out across the divide between ourselves and the other great world religions. But these positive forces toward religious unity are counteracted by economic greed and political imperialism, by ancient and recent ethnic hatreds, by fundamentalist extremism and social intolerance, and even by ecclesiastical control agendas.

The path to reconciliation among religions is one we have so recently begun to walk that we have no adequate theological foundation upon which to proceed. Theologians of religion are struggling with such issues as how to reconcile Christianity's absolute and exclusive claims for Jesus Christ as savior of the world with the undeniable salvific efficacy of religious traditions that predate Christianity by millennia and had never heard of Jesus until at least the 16th century. And the very institutional authority that launched Catholicism into the inter-religious enterprise has brought under suspicion the best theologians working on these problems and issued warnings against the types of inter-religious practice that could open Catholics to the riches of other traditions.[31] Nevertheless, the last half of the 20th century was marked by extraordinary efforts at inter-religious encounter led by such remarkable individuals as Thomas Merton, Raimundo Panikkar, Enomiya Lasalle, Bede Griffiths, Pascaline Coff, and others. However rocky the road ahead, the movement toward reconciliation among the world's religions must and will go forward.

One of the clear lessons these pioneers have taught us relates directly to our topic, namely, that fruitful inter-religious dialogue is unlikely to take place, at least at the beginning, at the level of abstract doctrinal exchange but only in the arena of shared practice and reflection on common or analogous religious experience, in other words, in the sphere of spirituality. However, the most serious participants in these shared experiences have consistently insisted that only a person

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deeply immersed in and faithful to her or his own tradition can make a real contribution to this dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue is not promoted by the well-meaning civility of vague nondenominationalism or some attempt at a least common denominator faith or a rootless practice composed of unrelated elements from a variety of traditions. The serious participants in inter-religious dialogue insist upon the difference between shallow syncretism and a gradually emerging organic synthesis, between ungrounded relativism and generous inclusivity, between non-normative eclecticism and thoughtful integration. They know the difference between interior enrichment by the other and extrinsicist accumulation of the exotic. To embody these distinctions in actual practice and illuminate them by theoretical discourse that is fully accountable to each tradition, genuinely open to the other, and committed to a pluralistic unity which we cannot yet imagine, much less describe in detail, is an enormously difficult undertaking. But those with experience in this arena, those persons in different traditions who are recognized as holy within and outside their own communities such as Bede Griffiths, the Dalai Lama, Gandhi, Lao Tzu, Abraham Heschel, and Black Elk, make it quite clear that only those fully committed to their own tradition can both offer its riches to others in a nonimperialistic and credible way and be flexible enough to seriously entertain the challenging gift of the other.

Paul Lakeland, in his very enlightening work on postmodernism, makes an important suggestion about how a Christian believer might reconcile the total claim of her or his faith with the openness to other faiths that is necessary for movement toward unity through honest dialogue. He says that we must enter the arena of dialogue with our own faith tradition behind rather than in front of us.[32] In other words, we do not advance as onto a field of battle with our tradition as shield against heresy or paganism or, worse yet, as a sword with which to vanquish the other. Nor, however, do we check our faith tradition at the door of the conference room and enter as a religious *tabula rasa*. Rather, we enter undefended, securely rooted in our Christian faith tradition that we have internalized through study and practice as our own living spirituality, knowing that our truth can never be ultimately threatened by the truth of the other. What will surely be threatened and must eventually be surrendered are the nonessentials we have absolutized. Beyond that, much that we had never encountered or that we had ruled out *a priori* because we thought we understood it will probably be added to our picture of reality.

Although it would require another essay to develop this point, it is worth mentioning here that Christianity, despite all the disgraceful

lapses in its 2,000-year history, has faithfully carried a unique and crucial religious and spiritual insight that, in my opinion, is desperately needed as an ingredient in any unity we humans can achieve. The incarnation of God in Jesus and the sacramentalism it grounds are at the heart of Christian faith. Herein lies the amazing revelation that divinity is available to us in and through humanity, not by flight from the coordinates of nature, materiality, and history. But as we have cherished this insight for all humanity we have made less progress than our Eastern counterparts in appreciating, intellectually or experientially, divinity's absolute transcendence of all human categories, even being, or primal peoples' sense of the sacredness of the natural cosmos. In other words, we have something to offer and something to receive and that is the basis of the ultimate form of human relationship, friendship. Such friendship is based on God's relationship with us in Jesus: "I no longer call you servants, but I have called you friends." Amazingly, as the Christmas liturgy proclaims, only by accepting from us, in Jesus, the gift of humanity could God offer us, in Christ, the gift of divinity. This is the model of inter-religious exchange in which everyone gains but no one remains unchanged.

VI. CONCLUSION

By way of summary and conclusion, I have tried to describe the religion-spirituality problematic as it presents itself in the cultural context of 21st-century America, analyze spirituality and religion separately, and suggest that they should be related not as strangers or rivals but as partners. Such a relationship, analogous perhaps to the relationship of spirit to body in the one person, is based on a recognition that religion that is uninformed by lived spirituality is dead and often deadly, while spirituality that lacks the structural and functional resources of institutionalized religious tradition is rootless and often fruitless for both the individual and society. Recognizing that the contemporary conflict between spirituality and religion is fueled by the dynamics of postmodernity and ideology criticism and that there is considerable validity in the critique of institutional religion, I have nevertheless argued that religion as tradition is the most appropriate context for the development of a healthy spirituality that is both personally and societally fruitful and that only the rootedness of religious commitment in tradition can equip us for the kind of inter-religious participation that will further the unity of the human family. The conflict between religion and spirituality arises primarily when religious tradition is reduced to and equated with its institutionalization so that the failures of the latter seem to invalidate the former. What we may

be learning from the struggles of our time in this arena is how to sit lightly to institution even as we drink deeply of our tradition. The oft repeated claim of contemporary believers that we do not merely belong to the church but that we are church, well expresses this insight. Christianity, even Catholicism, is not the institution but the people of God. Institution plays an important role in carrying a tradition, but it does not own it or control it in any absolute way.

For those who follow Jesus, a faithful but dangerously critical Jew who was finally executed by the connivance of religious and political power elites, there is no guarantee against the distortions of religious tradition by institutional agencies, but the latter are finally powerless to undermine genuine spirituality. Like Jesus, whose religious horizons, first defined by his Jewish experience, were broadened by his encounter with a genuine and even superior faith outside Judaism (e.g., Matthew 16:21–28; Luke 17:18–19; esp. Matthew 8:10–13) but who continued to believe that salvation is from the Jews (cf. John 4:22), we cannot close our minds or hearts to the truth that comes to us from outside our own tradition nor can we afford to repudiate our own tradition that mediates salvation to us. Like Jesus, however, who encountered God in the tradition of Israel whose psalms were on his lips as he died, we finally commend our lives not to institutions but only into the hands of God.

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1. See Trends Table 2 (U.S. membership changes by denomination) in *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1999,* 67th ed., edited by Eileen W. Lindner, prepared and edited for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 11.

2. The 1999 third national survey of American Roman Catholics was summarized by the members of the research team who conducted it, William V. D'Antonio, Dean R. Hoge, James D. Davidson, and Katherine Meyer in *National Catholic Reporter* 36 (October 29, 1999): 11–20. The poll is particularly significant because it follows, and thus allows comparisons with, the two previous surveys: the 1987 survey published as *American Catholic Laity in a Changing Church* (St. Louis, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1989) and the 1993 survey published as *Laity, American and Catholic: Transforming the Church* (St. Louis, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1996). The *NCR* captioned the issue "American Catholics: Attachment to core beliefs endures, link to institution weakens, NCR-Gallup survey reveals."

3. In 1995, 69 percent of those responding to a Gallup poll said they were members of a church or synagogue, the same percentage as in 1980. However, in 1995, 57 percent of those polled said they believed the influence of religion as a whole on American life was decreasing, compared to 39 percent in 1985 (George H. Gallup, Jr., *Religion in America 1996* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Religion Research Center, 1996], 41, 54–55). Interestingly, in a 1999 Gallup ethics poll, clergy were ranked sixth in the top 10 among professions considered "most honest" by the U.S. population (reported in *Emerging Trends* 21 [December 1999]: 3).

4. Examples of the range of writing considered "spiritual" is the new series "Best Spiritual Writing," edited by Philip Zaleski, which includes *The Best Spiritual Writing 1998,* introduction by Patricia Hampl (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998) and *The Best Spiritual Writing 1999,* introduction by Kathleen Norris (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

5. Diarmuid ÓMurchú, in *Reclaiming Spirituality: A New Spiritual Framework for Today's World* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), describes the conflict in the first two chapters. Although I have serious reservations about his analysis and conclusions, his description is vivid and helpful.

6. Testimony to this phenomenon is the increasing momentum of the

movement of the World's Parliament of Religion. The first occurred in Chicago in 1893; the second 100 years later in 1993 (also in Chicago); the third six years later in 1999 in Capetown, South Africa, and plans call for regular meetings in the future. Information on the Parliament of the World's Religions (as it is now called) can be obtained from the Web site www.cpwr.org.

7. An excellent example of such encounter in practice is chronicled in *The Gethsemani Encounter: A Dialogue on the Spiritual Life by Buddhist and Christian Monastics,* edited by Donald W. Mitchell and James A. Wiseman (New York: Continuum, 1998).

8. The journey of Bede Griffiths from Protestantism to Catholicism, into religious life as a Benedictine, and finally to the Camaldolese and from his very bourgeois English Christian background to immersion in Hinduism is a striking contemporary example. It is recounted by Shirley du Boulay in a fine work, *Beyond the Darkness: A Biography of Bede Griffiths* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

More familiar to many is the story of Thomas Merton who, over a lifetime in the Cistercians, moved from a censorious and narrow-minded arrogance toward not only non-Catholics but even nonmonastics to a humble and intense involvement in the study of Eastern spiritual traditions, especially Buddhism and Taoism, and died at an inter-faith meeting in Bangkok. The story of that final journey is available in *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton,* edited from his original notebooks by Naomi Burton, Patrick Hart, and James Laughlin (New York: New Directions, 1973).

9. The fear among some members of the Catholic hierarchy about both feminist spirituality and Eastern spiritualities seems to be evoked by the freedom from clerical control that both manifest.

10. Peter Van Ness, "Introduction: Spirituality and the Secular Quest," in *Spirituality and the Secular Quest,* World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest, vol. 22, edited by Peter Van Ness (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 5.

11. I proposed a slightly different version of this definition in "The Study of Christian Spirituality: The Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline," *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* 1 (Spring 1998): 1, 3–12.

12. Lucy Tinsely, *The French Expression for Spirituality and Devotion: A Semantic Study,* Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures 47

(Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1953) was augmented by Jean Leclercq in his article, "'Spiritualitas'," *Studi Medievali* 3 (1963): 279–96, which he wrote in response to the study by Italian historian Gustavo Vinay, "'Spiritualitá': Invito a una discussione," Studi Medievali 2 (1961): 705–709. Leclercq's study, in turn, has been summarized and augmented by Walter H. Principe in "Toward Defining Spirituality," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 12 (1983): 127–41.

13. This phenomenon is partly due to the decision by the general editor, Ewert Cousins, of the Crossroad Series, *World Spirituality,* to include in the series volumes on archaic spiritualities of Asia and Europe, ancient Near Eastern spirituality, and classical Mediterranean spirituality. These inclusions were justified by the working hypothesis of the series about the nature of spirituality as the actualization of "that inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions 'the spirit'" (Preface to the series).

14. Thirty-nine members of the Heaven's Gate cult committed suicide at a Southern California mansion in March 1997, in the belief that a spaceship following the Hale-Bopp comet would take them to a galactic paradise.

15. For a good example of the overlapping and interaction of spiritualities, both religious and nonreligious, in a kind of contemporary synthesis, see Patricia M. Mische, "Toward a Global Spirituality," *The Whole Earth Papers,* no. 16 (New York: Global Education Associates, 1982). Although herself a Christian, Mische is proposing a kind of spirituality that could be affirmed and practiced from within a number of religious traditions and even by those who might be unwilling to admit any explicitly religious motivation but are convinced of the sacredness of cosmic reality and the vocation of all to the human quest.

16. I find most cogent the definition offered by Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic, 1973), 90–91, which says, "a religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men [sic] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."

17. One of reasons the civil rights movement had the leverage it did was because of its rootedness in the black church. The same can be said for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, which was theologically underwritten by the Kairos movement. The Kairos documents and related

materials are available in Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990).

18. An excellent introduction to the sources and ethos of the postmodern sensibility is Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

19. The spread of Buddhism, first within Asia and then beyond, is a remarkable example of the inculturation of a culturally rooted tradition in new environments. An accessible account is available in Robert C. Lester, "Buddhism: The Path to Nirvana," in *Religious Traditions of the World*, edited by H. Byron Earhart (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 847–971.

20. There has been historically and continues to be to some extent an ethnic and even a quasi-national character to Judaism that has no real parallel in other religious traditions. However, since conversion to Judaism is possible, the biological, ethnic, and/or national features are not absolutes.

21. The recent warning about the writings of Anthony de Mello by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification on Positions of Father Anthony de Mello," with a cover letter by Cardinal Ratzinger seeking the banning of his books (available in *Origins* 28 (1998): 211–14), and the current investigation of the careful Gregorian University theologian of religions, Jacques Depuis, (especially of his treatise, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997]) are examples of such concern.

22. Both Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978) and Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) exposed the link between control of divine forgiveness and control of society. More recently, A. W. Richard Sipe, in *Sex, Priest, and Power: Anatomy of a Crisis* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1995), 98–100, has discussed the same dynamic, recalling Friedrich Nietzsche's analysis and connecting the sexual scandals that have undermined the credibility of the clergy to the decline of sacramental confession through which such power to control access to divine forgiveness has traditionally been exercised.

23. Leonardo Boff, in *Church, Charism, and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, translated by John W. Diercksmeier (New

York: Crossroad, 1985) applied the liberationist analysis of monopoly of material resources to what he called the monopoly of symbolic resources through the sacerdotal control of the sacramental system.

24. Philippians 4:8 seems to encourage such an open-minded approach to religious matters among Christians.

25. Two examples of this function, both ambiguous but striking, are the late theologian, Charles Davis, who not only resigned from the clergy but disaffiliated from the Roman Catholic Church shortly after Vatican II over the issue of papal power, and Mary Daly, the self-proclaimed post-Christian feminist philosopher-theologian who became convinced that the sexism of the Church is irremediable and salvation will have to come from a society of women.

26. Ronald Rolheiser in his well-received book on contemporary spirituality, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), explores the importance and character of community as a dimension of authentic Christian spirituality in chapter 6, "A Spirituality of Ecclesiology," pp. 111–140.

27. Examples of such documents from spiritual pioneers are the writings of Simone Weil (see *Waiting for God* [New York: Harper & Row, 1973]), who actually espoused the Catholic Christian tradition but never accepted baptism because of her need to remain in solidarity with those outside the Church and of Etty Hillesum (see *An Interrupted Life: The Diaries of Etty Hillesum 1941–1943* [New York: Washington Square Press, 1983] and *Letters from Westerbork,* translated by Arnold J. Pomerans [London: Grafton, 1988]) who was culturally Jewish and died in Auschwitz because of her choice to remain in solidarity with her people but whose stunning religious faith and extraordinary spirituality were never embodied in institutional religious affiliation. Both of these women, however, were deeply and widely read in religion and philosophy, involved with spiritual guides who were mediators of the riches of tradition, and inheritors through their families and friends of traditional religious resources. Both practiced rigorously the traditional disciplines of prayer, fasting, and social commitment.

28. See Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 71–75.

29. A particularly eloquent discussion of this topic, particularly in relation

to Christian ecumenism, is the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint,* available in English in *Origins* 25 (1995): 49–55.

30. The Catholic Theological Society of America devoted its 1993 annual convention to discussion of this topic. See *Proceedings of the Forty-Eighth Annual Convention* (Santa Clara, Calif.: CTSA, 1993).

31. "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation," issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Origins* 19 (1989): 492–98.

32. See Lakeland, *Postmodernism,* ch. 3, pp. 87–113.