Healing, the Individual Search for Meaning, and Modernity

James V. Spickard
Professor of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Redlands
Redlands, California (USA)

Lecture to the Seminar on
"Spirituality, Hope, and Meaning in the Process of Healing"
University of Southern Denmark
Odense, September 2007

FINAL TEXT
(as delivered 23 Sept, 2007)

I have been asked to speak on "Healing, the Individual Search for Meaning, and Modernity". This is a fascinating topic that connects with my own research on several levels. As some of you know, my first ethnographic fieldwork was an investigation of Sekai Kyusei-kyo, one of the 700 or so new religions founded in Japan in the 20th century – and a religion for which spiritual healing is of core importance.[1] I have more recently been identified as a sociologist of religious individualism, and that in two senses. First, I have done quite a bit of work on the phenomenology of religious experience – that is to say, religion as it appears in the subjective consciousness of individuals.[2] Second, I have written about radical Catholic activists, whose interior religious lives are so important that they will not let their own church speak for them in religious matters.[3] Furthermore, my current intellectual project involves what is happening to religion in late modernity – a topic on which there are many opinions and few firm conclusions.[4] With this work on spiritual healing, religious individuality, and the nature of late modernity, I seem to have written on all three aspects of my assigned title.

Fortunately, I have some new things to say about these topics, and I have taken the opportunity of this seminar to develop my ideas about them. What I present to you today is thus new thinking, at least for me. It is therefore somewhat tentative. It is, however, formed enough to be worth presenting for your discussion.

I must remind you, however, that I teach in a department of Sociology and Anthropology and I am trained in both disciplines. This predisposes me to identify and expose people's cultural assumptions – including scholars'. There is a reason that cartoon anthropologists are so often portrayed bathing in native's stewpots: people don't like us because we disturb what they think sacred. If you are looking for someone to recite for you what you already think you know, then I'm the wrong guy. If, however, you want your sacred concepts dug up, turned over, and perhaps built into something more worthy, then I'll try to serve.

Let me take a moment to set a context for my remarks. The overall topic of this seminar is "the interface between spirituality and healing". This sounds straightforward, until one examines the words a bit more closely. As one of my mentors used to say, some terms are "oblong blurs": they have a meaning, but no one can quite say what that meaning is or identify the exact object to which the term refers. 'Spirituality' is one such blur. When we use

---

[1] Spickard (1991a; 2004b).
[2] Spickard (1991b; 1992; 2004a; 2005).
[3] Spickard (2003); McGuire and Spickard (2003).
[4] Spickard (2006a; 2006b).

1

it, people think they know what we're talking about but no one really does, quite.

The result can be quite humorous. I'm reminded of a sermon I once heard, which the (male) pastor began by saying, "I had a very spiritual experience this week." At this, the elderly woman sitting next to me leaned over and whispered, "I'm sure she was." Among other things, this reminds us that 'spirituality' is in the eye of the beholder.

Many people, however, including scholars, now use the term 'spirituality' as something distinct from 'religion' – as in the title of Robert Fuller's (2001) book Spiritual But Not Religious. The idea is that 'spirituality' is an inward, personal matter, whereas 'religion' is an external and social one. Some such distinction has deep roots in Western culture, from the medieval Catholic division between 'religious' and 'secular' clergy to the current fascination with the contemplative life – which, if you read the New Age press, anyone is now supposed to be able to practice without the discipline of Benedict's Rule. But the current distinction is much simpler than before.

In Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead's presentation, for example, 'religion' involves conformity to life-as-constituted-by-external-roles-and-authority, whereas the key value for 'spirituality' is, in their words, "authentic connection with the inner depths of one's unique life-in-relation."[5] Tracing this to a late-modern subjective turn, variously documented by Charles Taylor, Anthony Giddens, and Philip Rieff,[6] Heelas and Woodhead argue that 'spirituality' is gradually supplanting 'religion' in both Western Europe and in America. (Parenthetically, their own survey numbers do not particularly support this claim.)

I am not, however, interested in polling data. Such data seldom settle matters; indeed, they usually obscure the most serious issues – in this case the cultural and theological values embedded in the very way that Heelas, Woodhead, and others pose the question. As Robert Orsi points out (in the article that I asked you to read), the 'spirituality'/'religion' split is at base a value distinction between 'good' and 'bad' religion.[7] Here, a virtuous, authentic personal life triumphs over a conformist, dogmatic institutional order. In what amounts to a new Reformation, 'spirituality' purifies religion of its ideological and institutional dross. Even scientists can be attracted.[8]

---

[5] Heelas and Woodhead (2005:4).

[6] Taylor (1989); Giddens (1991); Rieff (1987).

[7] Orsi (2005:185ff).

[8] See, for example, the June, 2007 special issue of Zygon on the rapprochement between spirituality and science. See also Rue (2005), whose title – Religion is Not About God – says it all.

One hundred years ago, 'enlightened' American scholars similarly distinguished between 'Christianity' and 'sectarianism'. The former was, to use Orsi's words, "recast as an ethical system [that] was good and even necessary for American democracy."[9] The latter was seen as 'primitive', 'superstitious', 'intolerant', and 'dogmatic'. Sociologists emphasized Christianity's integrative role in social life, as opposed to sectarianism's divisiveness. Christianity generated ideals that called forth the best in people; sectarianism made them narrow and shrill. I find it interesting that those contemporary Americans who self-identify as 'Christians' are the spiritual descendants of the late-19th century sects, while it is now the 'spiritual but not religious' folk who see themselves as the sustainers of democracy: ethical, tolerant, and non-dogmatic.

Orsi also notes that this value-laden distinction also masquerades as science. It has certainly infected the psychologists of the 'faith development' school, who treat individual decision-making and spiritual independence as signs of a more mature faith. In James Fowler's famous model,[10] "individuative-reflective faith" (stage 4) supersedes "mythic-literal faith" (stage 2) and "synthetic-conventional faith" (stage 3) – clearly a transition from dogmatic conventionality to enlightened individualism. Interestingly, the "individuative-reflective" stage is itself superseded by a high-level "conjunctive" stage, for which (to use Fowler's words)

> there must be an opening to the voices of one's "deeper self." Importantly, this involves a critical recognition of one's social unconscious – the myths, ideal images and prejudices built deeply into the self-system by virtue of one's nurture within a particular social class, religious tradition, ethnic group or the like.[11]

It strikes me that this ability to recognize the socio-cultural limits of one's class, religious, and ethnic ideologies is precisely what is missing in the current distinction between 'spirituality' and 'religion'. Both terminological distinctions, that of 100 years ago and of today, seem too much like a self-congratulatory intellectual elite creating a new religious discourse that just so happens to honor its own position. As Orsi wrote about the previous intellectual era, "normative terms were presented as analytical categories, and their implicit moral and cultural assumptions went unchallenged."[12] One of the core tasks of sociology is to bring our own ideological assumptions to the surface. Our unreflective use of the term 'spirituality' screams for cultural deconstruction.

---

[9] Orsi (2005:186).

[10] Fowler (1981; 1999).

[11] Fowler (1986:230).

[12] Orsi (2005:187).

That is not, however, what I am going to do – at least not next. Instead, I want to introduce a separate idea, this time from Luhmannian social theory.[13] Niklas Luhmann describes the modern world as consisting of a set of interlocking but differentiated communicative systems, each of which governs activity in a specific part of life. The legal system, for example, consists of all those events having to do with law-making, law-enforcement, legal reasoning, and so on. Laws are passed, arrests are made, disputes end up in court, judges hand down decisions – all these things are part of a single system governed by particular kinds of rules. Laws are 'legal' if enacted in certain ways, enforcement is 'legitimate' if carried out according to specific norms, disputes are 'rightly decided' if they match the law or standard precedent. All this is, of course, embedded in speech – 'discourse' to use the term *au courant*. Like any good communications theorist, Luhmann sees that discourse drives action by shaping how we think about the world. Legal discourse lies at the heart of the legal system, as medical discourse lies at the heart of the medical system, economic discourse lies at the heart of the economic system, and so on.

As a result of these discourses, moreover, modern people 'know' that certain things fall under legal sway and other things do not. Pillow talk, for example, is not part of the legal system[14] – and most people would be upset to find the police or lawyers invading their most private conversations. Law is not religion (at least not in the modern world), nor is it medicine, nor education, so it does not govern worship, cure, and learning, even though it may have points of contact with these other life-spheres. These spheres and others are normally separate, each with its own activities, institutions, and (above all) forms of conversation. Luhmann calls these systems self-referential, by which he means that the activities and conversations that embody them reinforce them as well. Every time a law is passed, every time an arrest warrant is issued, every time anyone takes a dispute to court, the legal system is strengthened and differentiated from other systems, which might have been called on in its stead. (I could, for example, call on God to curse a malefactor instead of suing him. Typically, I do not.)

As Luhmann points out, none of these systems is static, nor are there fixed or inevitable dividing lines between them. The legal, medical, and religious systems were quite different in the past, and they will likely be quite different in the future. On the other hand, people get upset when they see the lines move. For example, one of the major complaints about American President George W. Bush has been that he has used his political power to withdraw certain activities from the legal sphere and assign them to the military. Thus he has redefined 'war prisoners', who have internationally recognized legal rights, into 'enemy combatants', who – he claims – do not. In Luhmannian terms, this puts the state-system above the legal system, which counters 60 years of post-War effort to bring states under international legal control. Europe has firmly accomplished the latter, witnessed by the European Court of Human Rights. By the early 1990s, human rights activists, myself included, hoped that the rest of the world was moving in the same direction. Few of us supposed that the Bush Administration would be able to erase decades of 'progress' in such a short while. (By reminding us that 'progress' cannot be taken for granted, Luhmannian theory also reminds us that our analytic categories are not always value-free.)

I introduce Luhmann's approach because it lets me make two points that are central to my remarks today. First, the modern world arguably consists of a series of semi-independent institutional systems, constituted by talk, each of which governs a specific area of human life. One of these is the medical system, which bears at least some relationship to 'healing' – the first of the three concepts on which I have agreed to speak. Another is the religious system, which bears at least some relationship to 'spirituality' – the overall theme of this seminar. I think it important to note the discursive nature of these two systems, whether or not we accept Luhmann's philosophy whole hog.

Second, the exact boundaries of Luhmannian systems can change over time, generally as a result of social turmoil. The Westphalian state-system famously grew out of the chaos of the Thirty Years War; modern democracy grew out of revolutionary disorder;[15] Europe's fascist movements (arguably) grew out of the status anxieties of the European lower-middle classes in the early years of the 20th century.[16] Though our era is by no means as chaotic as these, I wish us to entertain the possibility that our struggle to define the relationship between 'healing' and 'medicine', on the one hand, and 'spirituality' and 'religion', on the other, is part of a larger pattern of institutional boundary shifts.

Put another way, we are seeing a change in what I call "the standard model" of these institutional spheres. For centuries in the West, churches dominated the religious sphere; now they may no longer be doing so.[17] Allopathic medicine has similarly dominated the medical sphere since the early

---

[13] Luhmann (1982; 1998). For a readable overview, see Lechner (2000:125-29). For an application of Luhmann's theories to religion, see Beyer (1994; 1995; 2006).

[14] The example is Lechner's (2000:127).

[15] But see Moore (1966).

[16] Neumann (1944); Adorno et al (1950); Arendt (1951).

[17] Meredith McGuire (2003; 2008) has outlined the connection between the elite-oriented "Long Reformations" of 16th-17th century Europe and the dominant role that the concept 'church' has played in contemporary sociology of religion.

20th century; it has lately lost some of its conceptual, though little of its financial, clout. Historians of both sectors can detail the ways that religious and medical organizations have sought to retain their control – through such tactics as state-sponsorship, accreditation, and even advertising.[18] The fact that we are having a conference on "Spirituality, Hope, and Meaning in the Process of Healing" indicates that this control is not total.

Let me outline what I think are the "standard models" of the three concepts that my lecture is supposed to connect: 'healing', 'the individual search for meaning' and 'modernity'. Then I shall spend some time questioning those models' adequacy at explaining current trends.

Healing

What is "the standard model" of healing in today's world? Clearly, healing discourse is dominated by scientific medicine. 'Healing' is conceptually tied up with 'sickness', against which doctors, hospitals, clinics, scientists, drug companies, and the like are seen as our primary defenders. Few people, on falling ill, go first to the grocer or to the parson. They typically choose such options either when medical care is too expensive, as it is for many in the United States, or when it does not work, as can be true anywhere. Such 'not working' can be absolute, such as the current failure to cure many cancers. Or it can be relative, in that some medical cures seem worse than the diseases they are combating. (Extreme chemotherapy comes to mind). In these cases, people turn to various alternative medical practices, most of which, but not all, seek gentler ways to cure.

Medicine is thus at the center of the standard model of the healing system, surrounded by a wispy penumbra of alternative therapies. A growing number of these alternatives label themselves 'spiritual therapies', which implies a connection to something that has not been part of the scientific canon. This makes sense for two reasons. First, the religious system is still, for most Westerners, the institutional sphere tasked with giving us answers about death. Scientific medicine has done much to push death to life's margins, but we still need somewhere to turn when medicine fails. Thus religious discourse and medical discourse remain connected, even for those who do not themselves participate in the religious sphere.

The second reason that some therapies identify themselves as spiritual, I think, is the residual respect that people hold for spiritual/religious matters. Even in secular Europe, most people retain the sense that there are higher powers and meaning to life.[19] Connecting non-medical therapies to

this sphere lends them status – and a non-empirical *cachet* that they might otherwise lack.

I shall return to this point at the end of my talk, but I think it important to note the ideological role played by 'tradition' in this account. Many, perhaps most spiritual therapies present themselves as somehow connected to long-standing, if hidden traditions. Whether *reiki* or *qi-gong*, Ayurvedic herbalism or chakra work, the idea is that such therapies are as well-grounded in centuries of study as allopathic medicine is grounded in science. More so, even, because 'the spiritual' has been with our species far longer – according to this ideological tale.

That said, it seems likely that most spiritually oriented practitioners are sincere. A few hours spent surfing websites, tracking down references, and the like uncovers a wealth of information about such therapies, almost all of it presented in a generous and giving spirit.[20] Most present themselves as wholistic, and as providing a more complete 'healing' than is possible with allopathic medicine alone. In this, they follow books like Stephen Levine's (1987) Healing into Life and Death, which encouraged its readers to separate the idea of 'healing' from the idea of 'cure'. In Levine's rather influential formulation, 'healing' often happens whether or not the ill person dies.[21] Simultaneously, mere physical survival is not 'healing' enough. In the past decade or so, the standard model of healing has begun – but only begun – to absorb the attitude that healing is multifaceted and involves the whole person.

Search for Meaning

The 'search for meaning' also has a standard model, though, unlike 'healing', its discourse does not constitute a differentiated Luhmannian sphere. In common parlance, this search is personal. Groups do not search for meaning; individuals do. Indeed, meaning is seen as residing in individuals; groups may have common outlooks, but those outlooks are only manifest by individuals, who can choose whether or not to adopt them. You and I, for example, may attribute quite different meanings to our common experiences. The standard model tells that this is one of the attributes of complex societies – and a reason that old-style anthropologists used to study unitary 'cultures' in homogenous villages.

---

[18] See Freund, et al. (2003).

[19] The 1999-2002 World Values Survey found that even among Danes, 78% of the population believes in a personal God, a Spirit, or a higher Life Force. This drops by only 11% (to 67%) among the 52% of the Danish population that never attends church.

[20] The Web's evanescence mitigates against specific citations, but I found Daniel Benor's Wholistic Healing Research site (2007) fairly typical.

[21] See also Levine (1978; 1982).

Furthermore, the image of searching for meaning implies that it is not already present – which again supposedly distinguishes the modern era from the traditional one. In the past, we imagine, people took their meaning from their social surroundings. Tradition gave them a sure sense of themselves, their societies, and their life purposes. Today, the story goes, it does not do so. The individual search for meaning is thus supposed to be tied up with modern life, as distinct from other eras.

Even in complex society, the individual search for meaning is also popularly identified with the middle and higher social classes. The 'lower orders' supposedly lack the financial wherewithal to be able to afford such personal search. Indeed, the imagined negative relationship between the need to work for a living and the freedom to find meaning in life is reinforced by the standard model's image of two of the main life points at which meaning-search is supposedly most often to occur. The first of these is among youth, in their late teens and early twenties, who have left the security of childhood but have not yet settled into the harness of responsible family life. The second is among the already-established, whose careers have plateaued or ended and who must now rethink their lives in the context of limitation and decline. (A third, of course, is when facing death, which supposedly forces one to decide what is 'really' important.)

Please note that I am depicting an ideology, here, not anyone's real life. All standard models are ideological, as we shall see.

Modernity.

The third standard model I wish to present is of 'modernity'. There are, of course, several such models: Durkheim's, Weber's, Parsons', Giddens' and so on, just to list some of the sociological classics. Most of these share some common features, and those features are echoed in popular discourse. I cannot survey the whole field, but it makes sense to highlight a small set of these features – ones that I think will prove useful as we move forward.

The first common feature is a supposedly changed relationship between the individual and society, accompanied by a shift in the locus of authority, which releases that individual from the (so-called) 'dead hand of tradition'. This takes several forms, depending on which model-builder one is consulting. W.W. Rostow, Alex Inkeles, and other modernization theorists, for example, argued that economic development can only occur when individuals free themselves from traditional ties to family and community, accumulate capital, and then rationally organize their businesses for reinvestment.[22] Embedded in this image are a series of oppositions: individual vs. family and community; rationality vs. attachment; progress vs. stasis; and

so on – all of which are embedded in the overall opposition 'modernity' vs. 'tradition'. 'Modernity' is thus imagined as non-traditional; as individualistic; as involving rationality rather than sentiment; and is requiring a loss of community.

This latter theme is the only overt negative in the bunch. Sociologists have done a good deal of writing on 'the quest for community', to borrow the title of one of Robert Nisbet's books[23], by which they mean the wish on the part of moderns for a sense of connection with others that has supposedly been lost in our helter-skelter world.[24] Yet, as Mary Douglas somewhere remarked, why do people think that 'community' such is a good thing? Have they never lived in small towns? Have they never read novels? Few contemporaries would give up their personal freedom for the intrusiveness of such places, where everyone knows everyone else's business and is happy to talk about it so you'll get back in line.[25] Personally, I fled that environment at age seventeen, but I have absorbed enough of the standard model to wonder what I lost. The standard model of modernity captures this ambivalence.

A second defining feature of modernity is its reflexivity. Simply put, the modern age thinks about itself and describes itself so often and so thoroughly that this thinking and describing changes the very social relationships under discussion. In Anthony Giddens' phrasing, ours is a world "which is thoroughly constituted through reflexively applied knowledge."[26] What we know about the world is based on what we read and hear about it, which usually overrides our direct experience. My students, for example, enter my introductory sociology course absolutely convinced that America is made up of several firmly bounded racial minorities, which together make up nearly 40% of our population. No matter that that they have never seen very many such minorities, nor that they cannot even figure out with which such groups their own classmates identify. They are convinced that such groups are distinct

---

[22] Rostow (1960); Inkeles and Smith (1974).

[23] Nisbet (1953).

[24] I don't know whether Danes attribute a sense of community to minority groups that they, themselves, believe they lack, but this is certainly true in the U.S. One hears there much talk of 'the Black community', 'the gay community', and so on, as if these social categories were somehow unified interacting groups. Some are, some aren't, but the presumption is that oppressed minorities at least get a senses of connection with one another, to compensate for being locked out of the modern mainstream.

[25] I can no longer locate Douglas's comment, which I read some years ago. I note, however, historian Lawrence Stone's (1977:98) similar judgment that "the Elizabethan village was a place filled with malice and hatred, its only unifying bond being the occasional episode of mass hysteria." He goes on to note that "The only modern equivalent is the Oxford Common Room."

[26] Giddens (1990:39). See also Giddens (1991); Beck *et al.* (1994).

and cumulatively numerous because that is the impression they get from the mass media. My course deconstructs the media concept of 'race' and gives them accurate figures, but in this case, too, their new knowledge changes the way that they act toward others. Thinking about society changes that society; this is a commonplace assertion today, but few other eras would have recognized its force.

Barry Smart notes that this has consequences for our sense of certainty about the world. In his words:

> The circularity of the relationship between social knowledge and social realities, the fact that social knowledge constitutes a resource which unavoidably, and unpredictably, contributes to the transformation of the social contexts analyzed, has meant that knowledge is of necessity continually subject to revision.[27]

The philosophical motor of this revision is a relentless, constant questioning of our own cultural assumptions. In Mary Douglas's phrasing, "It is part of our culture to recognise at last our cognitive precariousness. It is part of our culture to be sophisticated about fundamentalist claims to secure knowledge".[28] Modernity is the social order that cannot accept pat answers, that makes a virtue out of revising its own knowledge, that worships scientific (and other) revolutions. For modernity does not just question what we think we know about the world; it also questions established social relationships. Not for nothing is the French Revolution the archetypal modern event. It applied Enlightenment virtues to social life, creating in the process both a promise and a nightmare. The subsequent 200 years have shown us the dialectic of that enlightenment[29], for both good and ill.

This social and cognitive precariousness leads us to a third feature of the standard model – that modernity arouses a lot of resistance. The standard model tells us that modern social relations corrode the traditional world, and that this world reacts, sometimes violently. Benjamin Barber's Jihad vs McWorld portrays this at the level of popular intellectualism.[30] "The Fundamentalism Project", undertaken by Martin Marty, Scott Appleby, Gabriel Almond and their collaborators, portrays it in a more academic vein.[31] Both argue that modernity has disorganized traditional societies, which have responded with movements of social revitalization.[32] Some of these take the

---

[27] Smart (2000:472-73).
[28] Douglas (1975:xviii).
[29] Horkheimer and Adorno (1944).
[30] Barber (1995).
[31] Marty and Appleby (1991; 1992); Almond *et al.* (2003).
[32] For an early and influential theoretical presentation of such movements, see Wallace (1956; 1957).

---

form of religions, others are avowedly political, but both are of a particular kind: they worship certainty. Whatever their nature, these faiths give their adherents answers. They reject modernity's cognitive instability by positing a single, true revelation that answers all life's questions. They are thus dogmatic, intolerant, and sectarian – precisely the signs of primitivism that self-described 'enlightened Christianity' rejected a century ago. They are the return of the repressed, disvalued, that shakes modernity to its core.

That, at least, is the standard presentation. I shall devote the next part of this lecture to showing that there is more here than meets the eye.

The Social Locations of Spiritual Healing

I shall start with the standard model of healing, especially with one inconvenient fact. Spiritual healing exists in <u>two</u> social locations, not just one. The standard model, remember, located 'spiritual healing' at the periphery of the medical healing system and emphasized its difference from religion. This healing system's 'spirituality' does not typically happen in churches, especially not those churches that make dogmatic demands on their members. Some liberal churches do not taboo spiritual healing, but neither do they try to dominate it. Tolerant and eclectic themselves, they celebrate its tolerance and eclecticity. They appreciate the fact that it bridges the ideological gap between religion and science, which these churches would very much like to close.

This spiritual healing – what we might call the 'left-wing' variety – draws on unnamed higher powers, on the individual's connection with the universe, or on some similar concept, but it does not do so in any sectarian way. If it acknowledges its connection with religion at all, it identifies itself with whatever 'stands behind all religions' – a vague and inclusive formulation that forestalls criticism. Left-wing spiritual healing is thus willing to be part of the medical system's alternative penumbra. Its practitioners may themselves see spiritual healing as the best path to physical healing, but they do not force others to do so.

The healing at the Johrei Centers – the current American incarnation of the Japanese healing church that I studied in the 1970s – is of this type. My 2003 interviews with current leaders revealed an open, eclectic group that looked back with disfavor on the sectarian period that I documented in my earlier work. These leaders were still seeking ways to bring their healing practice to the mainstream. They were, in fact, considering dissolving themselves as a religion and becoming a network of alternative healing practitioners. Being a church, they said, had made them too concerned about trivial matters. *Johrei*'s healing powers, they thought, could cleanse people spiritu-

ally as well as physically. Beliefs, formal membership, and even the organization itself were much less important in their eyes.[33]

Left-wing spiritual healing seems often to organize itself into such practitioner networks. Indeed, many practitioners draw on several different healing traditions, tailoring their wares to their clients, who are much more concerned with what works than with orthodoxy.

This is only part of the picture, however. Much spiritual healing is definitely 'right-wing'. Commonly found among Pentecostals and other religious sectarians, this is old-time 'faith-healing', sometimes in a new guise. Typical is the ministry of Oral Roberts, begun as a tent revival, which grew into a multi-million dollar evangelistic operation, including a now-closed medical complex dedicated to uniting medicine and prayer. Roberts is perhaps most infamous for his 1987 televised threat that God would "call him home" if his viewers did not contribute enough to his healing ministry.[34] (They did, and God did not). But his kind of spiritual healing is fairly mainstream among American Pentecostals.

To outsiders, Roberts and his ilk carry a backwoods image, like the snake handlers and strychnine drinkers who also court danger in the name of faith. Christian Scientists are not so backwoods, but they, too, have received considerable bad press for denying their children standard medical care. Jehovah's Witnesses have sued and been sued over their refusal to allow blood transfusions. All these have oppose the medical establishment enough to give spiritual healing a bad name in some circles. Theirs are not the complementary spiritual alternatives that the standard model envisions.

There are, however, other cases. Margaret Poloma has written extensively on spiritual healing in the Toronto Blessing – a third-wave Pentecostalism that she labels "mainstream mysticism".[35] Here, middle-class participants embrace the laying-on-of-hands and intercessory prayer, not as a substitute for standard medicine but as part of a wholistic approach that regrasps medicine and faith in one movement. It is not, however, meditation and crystal therapy. Being "slain in the spirit" – knocked flat to the floor by God's power – is not what left-wing spiritual healing has in mind.

Neither is the Word of Faith Movement's "prosperity theology" – the promise that poverty and sickness can be conquered by positive thinking.[36] An African-American mixture of old-style Holiness Movement, late-20th century Pentecostalism, and New Thought, Word of Faith promises "prosperity, divine health, and material wealth" to all believers. "Name it and claim it",

they are told. The Holy Spirit brings wealth as well as health, to those with open minds.

Seen globally, such movements dwarf the left-wing alternative. African Christianity, for example, has a similarly this-worldly religious outlook that seeks both bodily and financial prosperity. As Philip Jenkins puts it,

> The practice of healing is one of the strongest themes unifying the new Southern churches, both mainstream and independent, and perhaps their strongest selling point for their congregations. … Today, rising African churches stand or fall by their success in healing, and elaborate rituals have formed around healing practices[37]

Though African Christianity identifies Christ as the ultimate source of this healing, this approach is consonate with traditional African attitudes. Andrew Walls describes such healing as

> being addressed to the person, as the center of a complex of influences. It is addressed to the person as a target of outside attack, as sufferer from unwanted legacies, as carrier of the sense of failure and unfulfilled duty.[38]

Despite being this-worldly, right-wing spiritual healing inhabits a dualistic universe. All is not copasetic. Everything does not work toward healing and good. Instead, positive and negative powers struggle for dominion, with human well-being in the balance. For healing to occur, negatives powers must be vanquished and cast out, and it may take spiritual violence to do so. Being slain in the spirit is merely a contemporary North American form of this struggle. In Africa, action against witchcraft is its most important mode. As Walls comments, "Academic theologians in the West may not put witchcraft high on the agenda, but it's the issue that hits ordinary African Christians full in the face."[39]

This is not a matter of primitivism, though the standard model of religion would call it that. It is, instead, a different way of seeing the world. What I am calling left-wing spiritual healing sees a unitary life-giving universe, with which the healthy individual must learn to be aligned. Right-wing spiritual healing inhabits a dualistic universe, and sees health as under attack. Which of these, I ask, is more aligned with a medical system that sees germs as its enemy, that fights against cancer, and that seeks constantly to eradicate disease?

Do you have such right-wing spiritual healers in Denmark? I don't happen to know. I suspect they are here, if only among your new immigrants

---

[33] Spickard (2004b).

[34] See Harrell (1985); Randi (1989).

[35] Poloma (2003); Poloma and Hoelter (1998).

[36] Harrison (2005).

[37] Jenkins (2002:124-25).

[38] Walls (1996:13).

[39] Quoted by Jenkins (2002:123).

and among those Christian evangelicals and pentecostals who may have imported enthusiastic religion from my benighted continent. I did locate a cover story in the April, 2000 issue of Charisma magazine, about Danish evangelical Christians who are trying to purify Copenhagen's Christiania. It describes what amounts to spiritual warfare, in which aggressive prayer is seen as a form of healing – both physical and spiritual, both for individuals and for the community at large.[40]

It is important to remember Orsi's warning, here. We need to avoid the trap of thinking that our values constitute adequate analytical categories. It is far too easy to treat right-wing spiritual healing as 'bad' and left-wing spiritual healing as 'good' – especially since that very distinction is built into the standard healing model. If we do so, we can only confirm our prejudices. We can learn nothing new.

This does not, however, answer the question posed by my title. That title asks, "What is the relationship between 'healing', 'the individual search for meaning' and 'modernity' – all these terms being in scare-quotes. Let's now approach this from the other end: from the standard model of modernity.

Modernity as Globalization

I have described the standard model of modernity in terms of three attributes: first, a changed relationship between the individual and society, such that the individual is liberated from the dead hand of tradition; second, well-developed social reflexivity, such that individual and social reflection on social life alter that life, and this alteration is constant and ongoing; and third, that this cycle of reflection and change arouses resistance on modernity's margins, which manifests itself in fundamentalisms, revitalization movements, and so on.

Were this picture complete, there would be little for me to discuss. I could simply tell you that that newly liberated individuals, who have lost touch with traditional sources of meaning, must now search for a sense of themselves in a rapidly changing social world. 'Healing', I could say, is an apt metaphor for this individual life-task. What I have called left-wing spiritual alternative therapies give individuals a sense of support and direction at a time of crisis in their lives – and in a way that speaks to many aspects of their condition. Its holism speaks to their sense of fragmentation, its spirituality speaks to their wish for transcendence, and the gentle way in which both are phrased allows them to keep their individuality while still imagining that they are partaking of some unspecified greater plan.[41] What I have called

right-wing spiritual healing, on the other hand, is part of a tradition-oriented protest against modernity, embraced by peoples seeking to preserve their familiar way of life, and especially by those seeking external certainty in an increasingly uncertain world.

Standard models are very comforting. They are also usually wrong. In this case, the standard model's built-in bias toward inward-looking individualism is one more instance of values masquerading as analytic categories. I think I owe you something more.

Instead of starting with the standard model of modernity, I want to start with a different aspect of our late-modern world: globalization. As you know, there are several versions of globalization theory. These range from Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems approach[42] through André Gunder Frank's Asian-centered rejoinder[43] and Thomas Friedman's celebration of the contemporary "flat" world[44] to Roland Robertson's focus on the interaction of the global and the local[45] and Niklas Luhmann's description of global communications systems (which I have already described). Each of these emphasizes different parts of the picture. Globalization clearly involves the transnational flow of both goods and ideas, the lowering of legal, technological, and conceptual barriers, and the increasing interpenetration of various parts of the world. It does not involve, as Wallerstein reminds us, any equalization of power. The world system clearly has winners and losers, though these shift over time.

We can find a useful approach to globalization in the work of Olivier Roy, a scholar of contemporary Islam.[46] Roy points out that goods and ideas are not the only things that now flow around the globe. So do people. About 3% of the world's population, nearly 190 million souls, now live outside their countries of birth.[47] The bulk of these come from the world's poorer countries to the richer ones, seeking asylum, a better life, but above all jobs. Some are temporary migrants, expecting to return home. Others become permanent residents, legal or illegal, making lives for themselves in their new locale.

Today's migrants differ from those of 100 years ago in two respects. First, they do not flow just across the oceans from the 'old world' to the 'new', but now flow in all directions, wherever opportunities arise. Second,

---

[40] Dixon (2000).

[41] Cf Thomas Luckmann's descriptions of the individualized religions of late modernity (1967; 1990).

[42] Wallerstein (2004). For a related overview, see Chirot (1977).

[43] Frank (1998).

[44] Friedman (2006).

[45] Robertson (1992a).

[46] Roy (2006). See also Roy (1996).

[47] These figures are taken from a 22 June, 2007 New York Times article on "Global Migration".

many do not simply move from one country to another but instead become effectively transnational. They remain a part of their home economy, sending remittances in amounts that in some cases exceed 1/3 of these economies' gross national income. They maintain transnational social relations that connect their new homes with their natal cities and villages. For example, the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> recently ran a story about Indian immigrants in California who adjust their work hours to fit Bombay time, the better to match the people they are supervising.[48] In a more scholarly vein, Peggy Levitt describes how Dominicans living in the U.S. continue to participate in their home religious organizations by e-mail, phone, and fax.[49] In each case, communications technology collapses distance in a way unthinkable in previous eras.

Framing these individuals as 'migrants' may not be the best way of understanding them. The term implies that people leave one home and arrive at a different one, where they supposedly assimilate with some degree of permanence. Though transnational travelers often switch citizenship in the old way, several factors are new. First, they do not necessarily stay in the country to which they first move. Many become internationalists, having been born in one country, being citizens of a second, now working in a third – after previously working in a fourth, fifth, and so on. Indians carrying British passports working in the Gulf States are a good example. The 9-11 terrorists (mostly Egyptians and Saudis who studied in Germany and moved to the U.S. to learn to fly airplanes) are another. Second, they easily maintain their international connections, aided by a communications technology that makes global contact as simple as calling next door. A good portion of them find a primary identity in these networks, rather than in their new locale. Indeed, knowing one's neighbors is less and less common in the present age, as mediated communication surpasses the face-to-face variety, even among the poor. Old-style immigration studies do not help us understand this situation, given these studies' focus on assimilation to a supposedly stable host culture.

By and large, American sociologists of religion have clung to the assimilation model, focusing their research on how religious participation has helped immigrants adjust to American society.[50] Though certainly part of the picture, there is much more going on. Elizabeth McAlister's study of Haitians in New York, for example, shows how her informants use New York's Catholic street festivals to underscore their Vodou-Catholic identity, without assimilating to the U.S. Catholic norm.[51] The proper unit of analysis for their religious life is not the parish or congregation that they attend, but an international Vodouist network that reaches from private healing ceremonies in New York's boroughs to Italian-run festivals in East Harlem to the shrine of Notre Dame de Mont Carmel in Sodo, Haiti.

Olivier Roy argues that most contemporary immigration is best conceived neither as a set of journeys to somewhere – immigrations – nor as journeys from somewhere – diasporas. Instead, it is best grasped as the creation of delocalized peoples, who must craft new identities that correspond to their delocalized situation. Muslim immigrants to Europe, he says, have become particularly deterritorialized. Those of the first generation are unable to find work in their home countries – for either economic or political reasons – and they are also not accepted in their countries of residence. The second generation feels accepted in neither place, even if they could return to their parents' countries of origin – which is not the case with many, such as exiled Palestinians. Even if they are formally citizens of one country or another, identifying with that citizenship is barred. In his words,

> Muslims [in Europe] are no longer foreigners. But this integration was achieved neither through assimilation, as was often hoped by the host countries, nor through the making of a multicultural society, as it is often described (that is, the juxtaposition of different corporate cultures). It was achieved through the recasting of pristine identities into new variable sets of identity patterns, which evade any attempt to 'substantialise' them. Identities are less a given fact than an individual choice, and can change over time or in relation to social circumstances, and overlap with other identities.[52]

Roy argues that many such deterritorialized individuals cease to be 'Egyptians', 'Algerians', "Palestinians', and so on, but cannot become simply 'British', 'French', 'German', or even 'American'.

> Highly qualified professionals (such as computer programmers and doctors) and scholars are going from position to position according to market opportunities and political circumstances: an Egyptian born Muslim Brother may teach in Kuala Lumpur, then in Tampa or Berlin. … The same happens with political refugees. An uprooted, deterritorialized and cosmopolitan intelligentsia, sharing a common language (English or, less often, modern literary Arabic), plays a role in producing values, teachings, and world views adapted to globalization. …

---

[48] Quinn (2007). Reprinted in the <u>San Antonio Express-News</u>, 1 July, 2007, page 1K..

[49] Levitt (2001; 2007). Mira Nair's film <u>Monsoon Wedding</u> (2002) portrays such transnational movements in the life of an Indian family.

[50] E.g., Warner and Wittner (1998); Ebaugh and Chafetz (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). I provide an overview and critique in Spickard (2005).

[51] McAlister (1998)

[52] Roy (2006:102).

Regional, ethnic, or religious identities take precedence over citizen-ship and pristine nationalities, according to choices made by the indi-vidual (an Iraqi Kurd in exile can decide whether he is first an Iraqi, a Kurd, or a Muslim).[53]

The third of these has been most significant, given the events of the last dec-ade. In Roy's view, it is no surprise that radical Islam has found its most loyal cadres in the West. The 9/11 terrorists (except the Saudis), for exam-ple, became born-again Muslims in Western lands. Roy writes,

Far from representing a traditional religious community or culture, on the margins of which they lived, and even rejecting traditional Islam, most of these militants broke with their own past and experienced an individual re-Islamisation in a small cell of uprooted fellows. Here they forged their own Islam, as shown by Muhammad Atta's will. They are not disciples of anybody in Islam, and paradoxically often live according to non-Muslim standards.[54]

Roy also points out that "no Al Qaeda members (or radical Islamic activists) left Europe or the United States to fight for Islam in his (or his family's) country of origin, except for some Pakistanis. … Most of the *jihadi* websites are based in the West or in Malaysia,"[55] not because of censorship elsewhere but because their authors live in such places. With the exceptions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Islamist violence against Westerners has decreased in the last ten years. In country after country, Roy shows, local forces have abandoned political Islamism in favor of other identities. Only deterritorialized migrants now carry the banner of universal Islamism. Those who live in Muslim countries are more concerned with local matters.[56]

This makes radical Islamism an odd sort of 'revitalization move-ment'. Despite some scholars' attempt to portray it as a sign of civilization

conflict – Samuel Huntington being the most famouos of them[57] – Islamism is weakest in precisely those places where it should be strong. The standard model predicts that religious revitalizations will arise where traditional socie-ties are most disrupted – which would, in this case, be in the contemporary Middle East. Such movements allow the members of these societies to rebel against this disruption while simultaneously adapting to it. From the Hand-some Lake and Peyotist religions of Native America to 20th century Ameri-can fundamentalism,[58] such religious revivals have been seen as protests against modernity. According to Roy, political Islamism was stronger a gen-eration ago in most Middle Eastern countries than it is now. Why is it now strongest among deterritorialized migrants, who have personally adapted rather well to hypermodern rootlessness – and, indeed, who recreate it in their terror cells?

Roy argues that Islamic radicalism accomplishes two things for these people. First, it gives them an identity by connecting them to a deep reli-gious tradition. Borrowing Danièle Hervieu-Léger's concept, he says that they attach themselves to "religion as a chain of memory"[59], around which they can order their lives. They do not attach themselves to real religion – embedded as it is in concrete locations, practices, and established social rela-tionships. Instead, they attach themselves to a religious ideology that creates for them a sense of purpose in the world. This ideology corresponds to their rootless condition. They see themselves as heirs to a world-historical tradi-tion, one rooted in the 1st century of the *hijiri* calendar. The task of early Is-lam was the expansion of the *ummah* through *jihad*. In those days, the Dar al-Islam (the house of peace) confronted the Dar al-Harb (the house of war) – and did so violently. It makes sense, Roy says, that "the recommunalised Muslims of the West are fighting at the frontiers of their imaginary *um-mah*"[60] – in New York, London, and Madrid instead of Cairo or Karachi – because they model themselves on the first Muslim fighters, who did like-wise. Moreover, "what agitates them most are the consequences of their own westernization"[61]. Their external *jihad* thus also defeats an internal enemy. Their chain of memory rejects most of the intervening Muslim centuries, which were more Sufist than Salafi or Wahabi. It picks and chooses among the *hadith*, discards several traditional schools of jurisprudence, and other-wise creates a monotonic Islam, with no colors and even few shades of grey.

---

[53] Roy (2006:104-5).

[54] Roy (2006:52).

[55] Roy (2006:52, 53).

[56] Roy (2006) lists many examples. Egypt's Islamic Jihad has rejected ties with Al Qaeda and has worked out a *modus vivendi* with the Egyptian state (p73). Alge-ria's 'Islamo-naitonalist' FIS "has lost most of its roots inside Algeria" (p73-4). Dagestanis fought on the Russian side against fellow-Muslim Chechens (p71). Kosovars aligned according to ethnicity, not religion, with Catholic Albanians join-ing Muslims against the Orthodox Serbs and Muslim 'Slavs' (p71). Pashtun tribes supported the U.S. against the Taliban, as they were unwilling to lose their lives and property for "an uncertain worldwide *jihad*" (p56). Even the conflict in Pales-tine is more nationalist than religious though, like Northern Ireland, religion has formed a handy – if inaccurate – symbolic dividing line (cf. McGuire 2002: 220-234).

[57] Huntington (1996).

[58] Wallace (1970); Aberle (1966); Marsden (1980); Antoun (2001).

[59] Hervieu-Léger (2000).

[60] Roy (2006:312).

[61] Roy (2006:312).

Its similarity to other ideologically driven efforts at social change is striking; Mao's and Stalin's come to mind.

All this is not, however, just an individual matter. Roy's second point is that this imagined tradition involves the creation of an imagined community. This imagination is not nationalist, like the one that Benedict Anderson so ably charted two decades ago.[62] It is a instead universal imagination, one that defends a universal community under one rule – and one God. Islamic radicals seek a universal *ummah* that transcends all nationalisms. Christian theocrats similarly seek God's universal rulership through the medium of a Christian state – or at least a state that recognizes Christianity as a superior source of virtue. The vision here is not restoration, though its rhetoric may sometimes take that form. Christian radicalism looks forward to the coming of the Kingdom, as Islamic radicalism looks forward to Islam's triumph. In both cases, the goal is a universal (and united) community.

These are the extremes, of course, but extremes often reveal patterns that more moderate elements hide. The extremes do not, I think, look much like a nativist or traditionalist resistance to a modernity that has severed old ties. They remind me much more of the leftist proto-revolutionaries of the 1960s and 70s – at the far pole of which stood the Bader-Meinhof gang and the Red Army Faction, at the nearer pole the miscellaneous communards and cooperatives that sought to build a new society, as they used to put it, "in the belly of the beast." Both poles imagined themselves to be working for 'the people'. Islamic radicals and Christian theocrats also imagine they are working for 'the people', if only to save the people as directed by their God.

Let me put this another way: modern rootlessness generates a <u>community</u> of memory as well as a <u>chain</u> of memory. Not only do deterritorialized migrants identify themselves with long-standing, if shallowly understood, traditions, they also identify themselves with imagined communities. It matters not that neither the traditions nor the communities exist, in any real sense, prior to their imagining. Human beings are notoriously able to create castles in the air and then to live in them.

Back to Healing

What does all this have to do with healing? My point in introducing you to Roy's work is not to focus on Islam but to draw attention to an important social pattern: the deterritorialization and decontextualization of late-modern social life. Our world does not contain a privileged few who have liberated themselves from tradition, and (as a result) now find themselves forced to seek individual meaning for their lives. And the rest of the world is not still

sunk in that tradition, with meaning handed them on a platter. Globalization changes everything. Transnational flows of goods, ideas, and people have created a new world for everyone. That world's core dimension is not 'tradition' versus 'modernity' (with the meaning that the standard model gives these terms). Instead it is the decontextualization of life for everyone, and the need for everyone to create a sensible context anew.[63]

If Roy is right, and radical Islamism is a response to this situation, what about other so-called 'fundamentalisms'? Are any of these anti-modern revitalization movements? Are they perhaps better seen as a response on the part of those who participate in modernity but find something missing? This would explain the demographics of the new American megachurches, which appeal to the newly middle-class more than to those whom modernity has left behind. It would also explain the demographics of African and Latin American Pentecostalism, which appeal to the socially and geographically mobile.[64] These demographics look a lot like those of the people who find help in individualistic spirituality. And they, too, integrate healing into their core religious practices.

Andrew Chesnut, for example, notes that "in some [Brazilian Pentecostal] churches, faith healing so dominates the liturgy that the sanctuary resembles a hospital."[65] Converts seek both mental and physical aid, including relief from alcoholism. This is more than just a lack of access to medical alternatives, however; it is also a matter of survival in the religious marketplace. Philip Jenkins notes that Brazilian Pentecostals "find their most intense competition from African-derived spiritist movements like Umbanda,

---

[62] Anderson (1983).

[63] One is reminded of those two early critics of bourgeois capitalism, Marx and Engels (1848), who wrote presciently:

> The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors", and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment". It has drowned out the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom -- Free Trade.

How aptly this describes globalization! And how interestingly the repressed returns!

[64] Corten and Marshall-Fratani (2001); Miller and Yamomori (2007).

[65] Chesnut (1997:81).

which promises cures and exorcisms."[66] Both religions work in the *favelas*, shanty-towns filled with Brazil's internal migrants. Though far less privileged than the transnational Muslims of whom Roy writes, their lives are no less decontextualized.

Korean Protestants are a step up the socio-economic scale, but they are no less oriented toward healing. Andrew Kim reports, for example, that some 37 percent report personal experiences of faith-healing.[67] This includes members of the new Korean mega-churches, which have hundreds of thousands of members.[68] Kim notes the continuities between Christian religious healing and traditional Korean shamanism, and argues that Protestantism's willingness to adapt to the Korean worldview is largely responsible for its recent rapid growth. The result, however, is an energetic combination of conservative Christian orthodoxy and a rather unorthodox prosperity theology that is oriented toward health and wealth in this world. This is not exactly the resurgence of tradition that revitalization theorists had in mind.

I have already noted that African Christianity similarly integrates healing into a this-worldly religious orientation. In the Church of the Lord (Aladura), for example, "a healing ritual involves confession, followed by the exorcising or expulsion of evil spirits, priestly blessings, and administration of holy words." Jenkins notes that "the Aladura churches have debated for years whether believers should use any modern or Western medicine, or else rely entirely on spiritual assistance."[69] Many of the African areas hit hardest by AIDS are strongholds of such churches. These are also the areas with the highest number of internal migrants; migration, African HIV infection and prosperity Christianity seem to go hand in hand.

Jenkins also notes that "the fastest-growing [Chinese] religious movement of recent years has been the Falun Gong sect, which owes its appeal to claims of miraculous healing."[70] I have found no firm evidence about the social characteristics of Falun Gong members, however, and so cannot tell whether they fit this pattern.

If both left-wing and right-wing healing appeal to similarly decontextualized social strata, perhaps they are more similar than we imagined. I read Roy's answer to you some moments ago. Muslim integration into Europe, he wrote,

> was achieved through the recasting of pristine identities into new variable sets of identity patterns, which evade any attempt to 'substantial-

ise' them. Identities are less a given fact than an individual choice, and can change over time or in relation to social circumstances, and overlap with other identities (p102)

This applies to 'spiritual' identities as much as it does to 'religious' ones – to use the categories that Orsi has taught us to use only with care.

Globalization requires people to create new identities, especially to the degree that it removes them from meaningful contexts. The standard model argued that this was true of individualized elites, those 'freed from the dead hand of tradition', to use the stock phrase. Roy points out that it is true of everyone, and he further points out that its religious result is not necessarily a liberal, tolerant one.   In this sense, both 'the spiritual' (good guys) and 'the religious' (bad guys) are engaged in the same quest: they are both inventing traditions for their lives.

These may be healing traditions, the *reikis*, *qi-gongs*, or chakra studies, on the left end of the spectrum, or the Pentecostal faith-healings on the right. (All trace themselves back centuries, though in different traditions.) They may claim to defend threatened orthodoxies, as do radical Islamists and the New Christian Right. Or they may revive ethnic traditions, as was so dangerously the case in the 1990s Balkan wars, before religious conflict took center stage.[71]

Sometimes they are all three. I once taught with a colleague who described herself as a "Basque Shamaness", who claimed descent from a long and hidden line of Basque spiritual masters, closeted in the Pyrenees, whose rituals she claimed sustained the world. She also started every lecture with the phrase "All traditional peoples of the world teach that …", filling in the blank with whatever anti-modern saying she wished to emphasize that day. It did not help our relationship that I could tick off counter-examples from so-called 'traditional people's almost *ad infinitum*. That's one of the dangers of having an anthropologist loose on the premises.

So individuals have to create identities, attaching themselves in the process to imagined traditions. The standard model says as much, though it limits this task to elites, not to everyone. But there is a second invention going on here: the invention of communities. Placing oneself in a spiritual-religious "chain of memory"[72] is only part of the task. One has to place oneself in 'community of memory' as well.

Nancy Ammerman, Steve Warner, and other American sociologists of religion have lately celebrated the strength of local religious congregations as places where people find connection with each other and learn the tools of

---

[66] Jenkins (2002:126).

[67] Kim (2000).

[68] Jenkins (2002:126).

[69] Jenkins (2002:125).

[70] Jenkins (2002:126).

[71] See, *inter alia*, Bauman (1992); Berberoglu (1995); Calhoun (1993); Ignatieff (1993); Llobera (1994).

[72] Hervieu-Léger (2000).

democratic interaction.[73] Participants gain more than an individual religious identity; they also align themselves with a community, thereby overcoming some of the disconnectedness of late-modern life. Other scholars have hoped that such connections will revive the public sphere, which that same modernity supposedly erodes.[74]

I previously saw this process as a purely American one, at least in the religious sphere. The decline of national denominations and their replacement by local religious loyalties seemed to me to be a peculiar to American religion, for ours is a culture that has always celebrated 'joiners'. Observers from de Tocqueville to Greeley have commented on Americans' tendency to do things in groups;[75] the post-War organizational restructuring of American religion seemed a part of this longer trend.[76]

I now see this creation of community as part of a wider process. Roland Robertson has long argued that globalization creates an intimate connection between the global and the local.[77] Though I still think his approach too abstract, I find it significant that Roy's radical Muslims create floating terror cells in the process of imagining a world-wide *ummah*, and that Koreans and West Africans join mega-churches while imagining themselves part of a world-wide Christian prosperity movement. The decontextualization of late-modern life seems to call forth imagined communities, but ones that link together actual people. These are not traditional communities in any meaningful sense of the word. But they are communities, nonetheless.

And they do not just encompass the religious right-wing. Some years ago, I did a short ethnographic study of an Episcopal congregation that was as liberal as they come. Highly individualistic in its orientation, it supported the spiritual growth of each of its members – whether or not that growth happened to correspond to Episcopal doctrine. The Rector routinely answered questions about dogma with, "And what makes sense to you?" Members studied everything from Celtic spirituality to Cursillo to labyrinth-walking and Taizé medication. One Sunday, a rabbi came to deliver the sermon. At the close of the service, a member of the church's governing board said to me that he now realized that he, the Episcopalian, was also really a Jew – and how wonderful it was to be able to be both at once.

This rampant religious individualism, however, was joined to a firm sense of community. Members interacted with one another regularly. They

---

[73] Ammerman (1996; 2005); Ammerman and Farnsley (1997); Warner (1988; 2005).

[74] Putnam (2000; 2002); Paul Litchterman (2006) is not so sanguine about religion's ability to create such connections between people.

[75] De Tocqueville (1835, 1840); Greeley (1990).

[76] Wuthnow (1988).

[77] Robertson (1992).

cared about and for one another. They celebrated each other's participation and grieved over their inevitable splits. Community, to their way of thinking, was not only as important as individual spiritual life; it was inseparable from it. And it was something that had to be created through conscious effort, not something that grew all on its own.

The Late-Modern Task

This, I think, is what is missing from the standard model of the relationship between modernity, individual meaning, and healing. That model – and the accounts based on it – tells us that, once upon a time, there was 'community' and there was 'tradition', both of which stifled the individual. Individuals were told what to think, whom to interact with, and how to behave, and were punished if they stepped out of line. Modernity, according to this story, freed us from all that, but at the cost of social isolation. We now have to make our way in the world, making meaning for ourselves.

The story also suggests that only some of us – the good, spiritual people – are able to do so; the rest of us are still trapped in an authoritarian past.

In a world typified by transnational migration, by multiple life-possibilities, in which – to use the words of Salman Rushdie "you can live upstairs from Khomeini" even if he has promised to kill you[78] – we still suffer from social isolation, from 'decontextualization' and 'deterritorialization', to use Roy's terms. We still have to create meaning. But we do not do so completely on our own. With others, we invent not only traditions but communities, around which we orient our lives. Religion plays a part in this; at least it can play a part, by presenting us with both traditions and communities to embrace. But we, with others, must do the embracing.

Most importantly there is no single set of people who suffer this need, no enlightened ones who create their own meanings and communities while others, less enlightened, accept what their institutions and leaders tell them. Left-wing and right-wing spirituality both accomplish the same task. They both create identity and community, in tandem, in a world that tears them apart. Moreover, they accomplish it by the same means. The standard model's opposition between 'modernity' and 'tradition', along with the facile, value-laden opposition between 'spirituality' and 'religion', is so much hot air.

Healing can be a part of either quest. Some people seek it in neo-traditional religious settings, where they have hands laid on their illnesses,

---

[78] "There are things that seem not to belong together, except that it is part of the metropolitan experience that such things do not belong together and do live side by side – that you can live upstairs from Khomeini." Quoted by Beyer (1994:1).

are prayed over, are 'slain in the spirit', or have their demons expelled. Here, they find both meaning and community. Others seek it in more individualistic settings, in meditation groups, energy therapies, and the like. They, too, find meaning and community – though their communities think of themselves as congeries of individuals rather than as formal organizations. These answers are more alike than they are different.

Coming Full Circle

I want to leave you with two final theoretical points, both of them brief. First, I urge you to distrust any approach to healing that puts 'spirituality' in one box and 'religion' in another. For reasons that I hope are now apparent, such approaches fail to grasp either 'spirituality' or 'religion' accurately. They create caricatures of both. Though I have no difficulty entertaining distinctions, I think it important to use concepts that can recognize likeness as well as difference, and can determine the relative significance of the two.

Second, I think it important to recognize what we are doing when we rethink our standard models. For Niklas Luhmann, the communicative subsystems that make up our globalized world are themselves standard models of their relative spheres. The Westphalian state system is the standard model of politics; legitimate state governance operates through a legal system, in which all people are (supposedly) treated equally; the medical system is largely allopathic, albeit with an alternative fringe; and so on. As noted before, these models have a history: what was once standard is not now so; what is now standard will shift in turn.

We are, it seems, in an era that is rethinking many of these systems, including the boundaries between them. The state system is being challenged from two directions; from above by the growth of international institutions that claim to supersede state sovereignty, and from below by political movements – Islamism among them – that no longer recognize state authority. The medical establishment accepts more alternatives than before, and people similarly explore more religious alternatives – though they may avoid speaking about these when threatened. In short, the standard models are breaking down, and the lines between the world's subsystems are shifting.

Is it any wonder that our standard model of modernity should likewise change?

REFERENCES

Aberle, David F. 1966. The Peyote Religion Among the Navajo. Publications in Anthropology, vol. 42. New York: Viking Fund.

Adorno, Theodor W., Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford. 1950. The Authoritarian Personallity. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers.

Almond, Gabriel A., R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan. 2003. Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ammerman, Nancy T. 1996. "Organized Religion in a Voluntaristic Society." Sociology of Religion 58(3):203-15.

———. 2005. Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ammerman, Nancy T. and Arthur Emery Farnsley. 1997. Congregation and Community. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.

Antoun, Richard T. 2001. Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Movements. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Arendt, Hannah. [1951] 1973. The Origins of Totalitarianism. Reprint, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Barber, Benjamin R. 1995. Jihad Vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World. New York: Times Books.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1992. "Soil, Blood and Identity." Sociological Review 40:675-701.

Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash. 1994. Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition, and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Benor, Daniel J., MD. 2007. Wholistic Healing Research. *(wwwwholistichealingresearch.com)*. Retrieved 27 June 2007.

Berberoglu, Berch, ed. 1995. The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Twentieth Century. Rutgers University Press.

Beyer, Peter F. 1994. Religion and Globalization. London: Sage Publications.

———. 1995. "The Religious System of Global Society: Binary Codings, Elements, and Internal Differentiation." Presented at the International Societyfor the Sociology of Religion (SISR), July, Quebec, Canada.

———. 2006. Religions in Global Society. New York: Routledge.

Calhoun, Craig. 1993. "Nationalism and Ethnicity." Annual Review of Sociology 19:2111-39.

Chesnut, R. Andrew. 1997. Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Chirot, Daniel. 1977. Social Change in the Twentieth Century. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Corten, André and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, eds. 2001. Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in West Africa and Latin America. London: C. Hurst & Co, Ltd.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. [1835, 1840] 1961. Democracy in America. Unabridged, in two volumes. Translated by H. Reeve. Reprint, New York: Schocken Books.

Dixon, Tomas. 2000. "A Glimmer of Hope in Denmark." Charisma and Christian Life, April. *(http://www.charismamag.com/display.php?id=163)* Retrieved 28 June, 2007.

Douglas, Mary. 1975. Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ebaugh, Helen Rose and Janet Chafetz, eds. 2000. Religion and the New Immigrants. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Fowler, James W. 1981. Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development. New York: Harper & Row.

———. 1986. "Stages of Faith." Pp. 226-32 in Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development, edited by J. W. Conn. New York: Paulist Press.

———. 1999. Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Frank, Andre Gunder. 1998. ReOrient : Global Economy in the Asian Age. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Freund, Peter, Meredith B. McGuire, and Linda Podhurst. 2003. Health, Illness, and the Social Body: A Critical Sociology. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Friedman, Thomas L. 2006. The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century. Expanded and updated edition. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Fuller, Robert C. 2001. Spiritual, but not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America. New York: Oxford University Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 1990. The Consequences of Modernity. London: Polity Press.

———. 1991. Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Greeley, Andrew M. 1990. The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Harrell, David Edwin, Jr. 1985. Oral Roberts: An American Life. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Harrison, Milmon. 2005. Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion. New York: Oxford University Press.

Heelas, Paul and Linda Woodhead. 2005. The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. 2000. Religion as a Chain of Memory. Translated by S. Lee. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. [1944] 1972. Dialectic of Enlightenment. Translated by J. Cumming. Reprint, New York: Herder & Herder.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ignatieff, Michael. 1993. Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Inkeles, Alex and David Smith. 1974. Becoming Modern. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jenkins, Philip. 2002. The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kim, Andrew E. 2000. "Korean Religious Culture and Its Affinity to Christianity: The Rise of Protestant Christianity in South Korea." Sociology of Religion 61(2, Summer):117-33.

Lechner, Frank J. 2000. "Systems Theory and Functionalism." Pp. 112-32 in The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory, 2nd Edition, edited by B. S. Turner. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Levine, Stephen. 1978. A Gradual Awakening. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

———. 1982. Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

———. 1987. Healing Into Life and Death. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Levitt, Peggy. 2001. The Transnational Villagers. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2007. God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape. New York: The New Press.

Lichterman, Paul. 2006. Elusive Togetherness : Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 06/03/29.

Llobera, Josep R. 1994. The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe. Oxford: Berg Publications, Ltd.

Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. The Invisible Religion: The Problem of Religion in Modern Society. New York: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

———. 1990. "Shrinking Transcendence, Expanding Religion?" Sociological Analysis 50(2):127-38.

Luhmann, Niklas. 1982. The Differentiation of Society. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 1998. Observations on Modernity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Marsden, George M. 1980. Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925. New York: Oxford University Press.

Marty, Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby, eds. 1991. Fundamentalisms Observed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1992. The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World. Boston: Beacon Press.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. [1848] 1967. Manifesto of the Communist Party. Translated by S. Moore. Reprint, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

McAlister, Elizabeth. 1998. "The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism." Pp. 123-60 in Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration, edited by R. S. Warner and J. G. Wittmer. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

McGuire, Meredith B. 2002. Religion: The Social Context. 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

———. 2003. "Contested Meanings and Definitional Boundaries: Historicizing the Sociology of Religion." Pp. 127-38 in Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between Sacred and Secular, edited by A. L. Greil and D. Bromley. Religion and the Social Order, vol. 10. JAI/Elsevier.

———. 2008. Lived Religion: Spirituality and Materiality in Individuals' Religious Lives. New York: Oxford University Press.

McGuire, Meredith B. and James V. Spickard. 2003. "Narratives of Commitment: Social Activism and Radical Catholic Identity." Temenos: Studies in Comparative Religion 37-38:131-49.

Miller, Donald E. and Tetsunao Yamamori. 2007. Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Moore, Barrington. [1966] 1993. The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World. Reprint, Boston: Beacon Press.

Neumann, Franz Leopold. 1944. Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933 - 1944. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nisbet, Robert A. 1953. The Quest for Community. New York: Oxford University Press.

Orsi, Robert A. 2005. "Snakes Alive: Religious Studies Between Heaven and Earth." Pp. 177-204 in Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them, edited by R. A. Orsi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Poloma, Margaret M. 2003. Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

Poloma, Margaret M. and Lynette F. Hoelter. 1998. "The 'Toronto Blessing': A Wholistic Model of Healing." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 37(2):257-72.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster.

———, ed. 2002. Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

Quinn, Michelle. 2007. "Working Around the Clock." Los Angeles Times, 19 June. Retrieved 3 July, 2007. reprinted in the San Antonio Express-News, 1 July, 2007, p 1K (http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-timezone19jun19,0,6156970.story?coll=la-home-business). Retrieved 4 July, 2007.

Randi, James. 1989. The Faith Healers. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

Rieff, Philip. 1987. The Triumph of the Therapeutic. London: Chatto and Windus.

Robertson, Roland. 1992. Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture. London: Sage Publications.

Rostow, Walter W. [1960] 1971. The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto. Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roy, Olivier. 1996. The Failure of Political Islam. Translated by C. Volk. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———. 2006. Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rue, Loyal. 2005. Religion is not About God: How Spiritual Traditions Nurture Our Biological Nature and What to Expect When They Fail. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Smart, Barry. 2000. "Postmodern Social Theory." Pp. 447-80 in The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory, 2nd Edition, edited by B. S. Turner. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Spickard, James V. 1991a. "Spiritual Healing Among the American Followers of a Japanese New Religion: Experience as a Factor in Religious Motivation." Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion 3:135-56.

———. 1991b. "Experiencing Religious Rituals: A Schutzian Analysis of Navajo Ceremonies." Sociological Analysis 52(2):191-204.

———. 1992. "For a Sociology of Religious Experience." Pp. 109-28 in A Future for Religion? New Paradigms for Social Analysis, edited by W. H. Swatos, Jr. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

———. 2003. "Slow Journalism? Ethnography as a Means of Understanding Religious Social Activism." PPRES Working Papers 36. (http://www.wcfiareligionproject.org/rsrchpapsum.asp?ID=721). Retrieved 28/10/2003

———. 2004a. "Charting the Inward Journey: Applying Blackmore's Model to Meditative Religions." Archiv Für Religionpsychologie 26.

———. 2004b. "Globalization and Religious Organizations: Rethinking the Relationship Between Church, Culture, and Market." International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society 18(1):47-63.

———. 2005. "Networks, Homes, or Congregations? Exploring the Locus of Immigrant Religiosity." Pp. 23-41 in Religion in the Context of African Migration, vol. 75, edited by A. Adogame and Weissköppel. African Studies Series. Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth.

———. 2006a. "What is Happening to Religion? Six Visions of Religion's Future". Nordic Journal of Religion and Society 19(1): 13-28.

———. 2006b. "Narrative Versus Theory in the Sociology of Religion: Five Stories of Religion's Place in the Late Modern World." Pp. 163-75 in Religion and Social Theory: Classical and Con-temporary Debates, edited by J. A. Beckford and J. Walliss. London: Ashgate Publishers.

Stone, Lawrence. 1977. The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallace, Anthony F.C. 1956. "Revitalization Movements." American Anthropologist 58:264-81.

———. 1957. "Mazeway Disintegration: The Individual's Perception of Socio-Cultural Disorganization." Human Organization 16:23-27.

———. 1970. The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2004. World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Walls, Andrew F. 1996. "African Christianity in the History of Religions." Pp. 1-15 in <u>Christianity in Africa in the 1990s</u>, edited by C. Fyfe and A. F. Walls. Edinburgh (Scotland): Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Warner, R. Stephen. 1988. <u>New Wine in Old Wineskins: Evangelicals and Liberals in a Small-Town Church</u>. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2005. <u>A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment & Diversity in American Religion</u>. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Warner, R. Stephen and Judith G. Wittner, eds. 1998. <u>Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration</u>. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1988. <u>The Restructuring of American Religion</u>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.