Spirituality and Religion: The Shift From East to West and Beyond
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Abstract: The spiritual but not religious phenomena is receiving increasing attention. People are becoming more individually religious, some are spiritual and religious, and some describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. Historical trends toward a more individualistic religion and spirituality are investigated. Various parameters of the religious/spiritual divide are examined. An overview of the broad range of modern spirituality is given. The conclusion sets forth avenues the church might pursue to address the trend to a more individualistic view of religion and spirituality and the need for further study of these trends.

Introduction
In times past, religion was granted a favored status in Western culture and society. However, in the latter part of the twentieth century, organized religion came to be viewed more negatively, something to be tolerated rather than approved of. This change coincided with the greater secularization of Western society, a gradual movement caused by a number of factors. One factor was The Humanist Manifesto (1933). One of its signers, Paul Blanchard, wrote “We have an obligation to expose and attack the world of religious miracles, magic, Bible-worship, salvationism, heaven, hell, and all the mythical deities.”

Some have said that the West has now entered a post-Christian or secular age. Religious faith is waning and will be replaced by reason and science. These same people noted that, as societies and cultures become more modern and advanced, the primitive superstitions of the dark ages—religion and religious faith—will disappear. Auguste Comte and Max Weber, among others, theorized “that wherever modernity advanced, religion would fade.” In the 1930s, reform-minded social scientists brought forward the thesis that “Fundamentalists and others would disappear once education based on scientific principles was sufficiently widespread. John Dewey was the high priest of this faith.” However, this secularization hypothesis has proven not to be true. Though organized religions may be having some difficult times, new religions and spiritualities are appearing all the time—few of which are in any way rooted in historic religions like Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. Although
old established religions are not dying out, they are facing increasing competition from alternative spiritualities. A broad overview of this trend is set forth in this essay.

I. How Did We Arrive Here?

A. The Shift to the East: The major religious story of the 1960s and 1970s was the “extraordinary weakening of organized Christianity in the United States and a fundamental shift in America’s spiritual ecology—away from institutional religion and toward a more do-it-yourself and consumer-oriented spirituality—that endures to the present day.” That era saw the “emergence of a wholly new culture, based on a new spirituality” that flowed from Haight-Ashbury, communes, and Eastern belief systems.

The “significant cultural shift” to an Eastern, New Age “spiritual subculture . . . gave birth” to channeling, the use of crystals, and belief in reincarnation. At the end of the twentieth century, “one out of five Americans” believed in reincarnation, and 35% of the British population did so as well. Christian denominations also experienced the incursion of Eastern spiritual beliefs and practices like yoga, alternative healing practices, astrological guidance, as well as belief in reincarnation. Christians in mainline denominations began to see their faith more therapeutically, believing that faith had “to do with self-improvement” and self-actualization in the present. These ideas began to overshadow viewing faith as dealing with matters of sin and eternal salvation. Authority in mainline churches moved from the Word of God to what “lies within the self.” A significant number of American Christians began to practice a faith “entirely of their own manufacture.”

This Western turn to Eastern theology and a much more individualized spirituality has as one of its causes the historical-critical view of the Scriptures. Robert Bellah believed that the critical undermining of Scripture paved the way “for a positive response to Asian religions in a way different from any earlier period.” Herrick also saw that “systematic public criticism of the Bible . . . has had greater impact on scholarly and popular attitudes toward Christianity than has perhaps any other” thing. The historicity and facticity of the Bible having been undermined, new meanings and truths could be mined from the biblical texts. The spirit rather than the letter of the texts became important. Christ came to be viewed very differently. The biblical texts came to be viewed more as esoteric texts that are largely symbolic, mythic, and a-historical. This critical view of Scripture “shifted the very foundation of Western spirituality.” Scripture came to be viewed as one book among many that express matters spiritual. Scripture ceased being God’s Word and, for many, has become a record of human experiences and human actions and thoughts, such as the human invention of God. Thus many people began a process of exploring new spiritualities and began embracing a “new spiritual orientation.”
B. Individualization of Faith and Spirituality: Religious faith came to be seen as something private and internal—something that was practiced individually with no need for a group of fellow believers. Already in the late 1970s Sidney Mead wrote that the “internalization or privatization of religion is one of the most momentous changes that has ever taken place in Christendom.”

This more private spirituality was given evidence by a survey in 1978, revealing that 80% of Americans believed “an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any churches or synagogues.”

Another person in the 1980s said, “I feel religious in a way. I have no denomination or anything like that.”

This radical religious individualism is seen in a member of a Lutheran congregation who said, “I am a pantheist. I believe in the ‘holiness’ of the earth and all other living things. We are a product of this life system and are inextricably linked to all parts of it... Our very survival depends on the air ‘god,’ the water, the sun, etc... I don’t believe in evil.”

“A researcher asked a college graduate what her religious preference was. ‘Methodist, Taoist, Native American, Quaker, Russian Orthodox, and Jew,’ she replied. ... Traditional scholars describe this as ‘cafeteria-style’ or ‘supermarket’ spirituality. Others, better disposed to it, prefer the more dignified term ‘trans-religiosity.’... And it is not only on campuses that this mode of spirituality thrives.”

Lutherans need to be aware that these changes have been occurring in their own denominations for some time. “A survey done in the 1970s of the three largest Lutheran synods found that 75 percent of Lutherans agreed that belief in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation. But 75 percent also agreed that all roads lead to God and it does not matter which way one takes. Based on these numbers, at least half of the Lutherans polled hold two mutually exclusive theological positions at the same time. How is that possible?”

In a 1998 survey, 60.7% of the Lutherans surveyed said that they could worship God just “as well on their own as they can with others in a formal worship setting.” Nearly 70% said that being a “good Christian” has nothing to do with “church attendance.”

This shift away from religion to free individualistic spirituality has contributed to the inability of many people to understand their religious and spiritual “lostness.” Thus, they turn “to a thousand other equally” spiritual solutions found in “tailor-made Westernized Hinduism or Buddhism, to the religion of L.S.D. and psychedelic happenings, to myriad superstitions and even to the world of the occult... It is no accident that twentieth-century religious dialogue finds it so easy to pass from the bread and wine of an inter-denominational communion *agape* to marijuana and L.S.D. There are no distinctions, no alternatives, no choices for us to make... we
take them all... the language of the Bible, the philosophical speculation of ultimate concern, the Ground of Being, the reconciliation of opposites, the devil-god of Blake, the myriad deities of Hinduism, the experience of L.S.D.”

Though there is a problem in discerning lostness, there is a desire for something in the area of religion/spirituality. Thus, religious bookstores feature a wide variety of spiritual books encouraging people to embark on their own individualistic spiritual journeys. The books sell like hotcakes. Himmelfarb notes several: “The Celestine Prophecy; The Ecstatic Journey: the Transforming Power of Mystical Experience; Kything: the Art of Spiritual Presence; and, on a more mundane level, Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul.” In addition, there are the books by Carlos Castaneda, Deepak Chopra, Shirley MacLaine, and others which were often featured on Oprah’s book club.

C. This Shift Did Not Happen Overnight: This shift in the religious culture has been trending since the 1700s. The shaping of the “New Religious Synthesis” in Western culture began with a number of “gifted public advocates working in a number of genres and media” already three hundred years ago. This spiritual shift “has now successfully colonized Western religious consciousness.” Martin Marty traces the gradual secularization of the Western world and the resulting “spiritual changes” during “the years of the Modern Schism” beginning in 1830 and extending to the twentieth century. Already in the eighteenth century, religious individualism was growing in prominence. “Thomas Jefferson said, ‘I am a sect myself,’ and Thomas Paine, ‘My mind is my church’. . . Many of the nineteenth-century figures were attracted to a vague pantheistic mysticism that tended to identify the divine with a higher self.”

Many who favor an individualized spirituality reference William James and his book, The Varieties of Religious Experience. James summarized his concept of religion and religious life in this way: (1) “the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe,” (2) our harmonious union with that “higher universe is our true end,” (3) “prayer or inner communion with the spirit thereof”; whether that spirit be called “God or law” is immaterial. Prayer is “a process wherein work is really done and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects.” Spirituality includes a zest for life, lyrical enchantment, earnestness, and heroism, safety, a feeling of peace and “a preponderance of loving affections” toward others. James and President Teddy Roosevelt described their religion as “good works.”

James was a humanist, though not a signer of the Humanist Manifesto. By the end of his life, James came “to see God as a cosmic consciousness, a pooling or weaving together of all individual consciousness.” James’s view of religion was “a sophisticated example of the widespread combination of popular psychology and a vaguely spiritual religiosity that Americans from Mary Baker Eddy to Norman Vincent Peale have offered as the key to happiness and health.” The type of
individualized spirituality expounded by James is seen in most modern expressions of spirituality today. If James had written his book today, his title might have been “Varieties of Spiritual Experience.”

The issues and events of past days are similar to those leading to the lessening of the influence of religion today: questions about the authority and reliability of the Bible; questions about God (Is God within me or outside of me? Am I part of God or is He separate from me?); questions about science (Is science the only means for solving all human problems and for bringing us a better future?); the rise of non-religious philosophies and atheism; the influence of Marxist scientific atheism; the rise of new secular dogmas, such as positivism, humanism, and the rise of reason over faith; the individualization of spiritual reality; and the appearance of new spiritualities.37 In 1992 one individual wrote that “as many as 12 million Americans could be considered active participants” in alternative spiritual systems “and another 30 million are actively interested.”38

These trends through the years have given rise to “a transformation of American spirituality.” While many have retained membership in their faith communities (Christian, Muslim, Jewish, etc.), “their practice of spirituality from Monday to Friday bears little resemblance” to the major teachings of their faith systems.39 Though this move from religion to spirituality is true of all religious faiths, this essay focuses primarily on the effects this change has had on Western Christianity.

**D. Who Do People Say that I Am?:** In the midst of these shifting religious sands, Jesus has come to be viewed in many different ways: as a “Master, Guru, Yogi, Adept, Avatar, Shaman, Way-show-er,” the “Cosmic Christ,” a “Gnostic Revealer,” a “mystical magus, an Essene initiate, and a Christ-conscious master,” as well as a flawed and sinful human being. The personal and historic Christ has been turned into a universal spiritual Christ consciousness, which many others may also have. Jesus’ atoning death is not seen as having “any ethical significance for salvation,” and His resurrection is not treated as a real historical fact but is often turned into something like a spiritual triumph that other human beings, as “Ascended Masters,” may also experience.40 Jesus is often described as the one who came to ignite the spiritual divine spark within human beings in this life.41

The teaching that human beings become divine is found in portions of Christianity that have drunk at the well of the same kind of spirituality. As one TV evangelist put it, “Spiritually we are born of God and partake of His nature. . . .You are as much the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ was.”42

A significant number of books have set forth a view of Jesus far different from the biblical orthodox view of Jesus as the Son of God clothed in human flesh—the one who is the Savior of the world as revealed in Holy Scripture. Christ’s life and the texts of the Bible are seen as “esoteric” texts with hidden spiritual meanings, claimed to be the true meaning of the biblical texts as opposed to the stale, ossified shell of...
dogma put forth by centuries of formal Christian teaching and religiosity. Most often these works attempt to set forth the “truth” about the lost years of Jesus, lost documents about His life, and about His supposed marriage.\textsuperscript{43}

This recasting of Jesus has also manifested itself in female depictions of Jesus and God. “For a period lasting from 100,000 to 60,000 years, a united sexuality and spirituality were represented by the body of the Great Mother, with her sacred vulva as the source of life. The masculine gods, making their entrance only six thousand or seven thousand years ago, moved into a preeminence which split the body from the soul, emphasizing intellect over instinct and dominance over cooperation, and subjugating the feminine to an inferior role. . . . Only a female goddess from the East can deliver humanity from the authoritarianism of the oppressive patriarchal style of religion that had dominated in the West.”\textsuperscript{44} The image of the goddess is influenced by political and social agendas, the Western esoteric tradition, the modern esoteric tradition, and the Theosophy of Madam Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Elizabeth Clare Prophet, one of her disciples.\textsuperscript{45}

E. The Bare Square: During the latter part of the twentieth century, American culture saw the desire on the part of some to remove religion from the public square because it was considered to be a “bane” on American public life.\textsuperscript{46} Richard John Neuhaus responded to this movement with his classic work, \textit{The Naked Public Square}.\textsuperscript{47} Some consider religion, especially Christianity, as “offensive and perhaps even dangerous.”\textsuperscript{48}

Toward the end of the twentieth century, Western culture came to be heavily influenced by the idea that religion is “something that should be believed in privacy” and not visible in the public realm, thus the movement to remove religious symbols (crosses, manger scenes, prayer in school, etc.) from public view. This same perspective on religion “says that anyone who believes that God can heal diseases is stupid or fanatical” and that faith is a “mystical flight” from truth. This view says that religious faith “has nothing to do with the real world.” Religious believers are told in no uncertain terms that the things “they know to be true are wrong or irrelevant.” This same perspective militates against allowing religious ideas to “be debated in the forum of public dialogue.” Many see religion as something “like building model airplanes, just another hobby, something quiet, something private, something trivial,” something that is not “a fit activity for intelligent” rational adults.\textsuperscript{49}

F. The Role of Religious Education in the Shift: These trends were also accompanied by a downturn in the dissemination of religious knowledge, i.e., catechization, in various church denominations. \textit{The Good Society} noted that in the late twentieth century, America’s mainline Christian churches encountered a “deconfessionalizing”—“a decline in doctrinal religious education” which led to a
“de-emphasis on the central beliefs” held by these church bodies.50 These factors have produced a nation with a significant number of religious people who are religiously illiterate. Biblical illiteracy was evident already at the beginning of the 1990s, as noted in this statement from that era. “Most people in the mainline churches are theologically illiterate.”51

Lutherans should not assume that they are immune to this trend. The 1998 Lutheran Brotherhood survey on Lutheran beliefs reached this conclusion: “Our survey finds that many Lutherans are no longer anchored to a core set of beliefs. On topics ranging from original sin, to the Trinity, to justification, to the Gospel, to the place of Scripture in one’s life, many Lutherans tend to either misunderstand or disagree with the historic teachings of the Lutheran Church.”52

The survey editors inquired as to the cause of disagreement with historic teachings. Its conclusion was that “it appears for many Lutherans, little or no worship, little or no Bible study, and little or no faith discussion all contribute to a rudderless Lutheran faith.”53

By the end of the twentieth century, the shift toward viewing religion in a bad light led to having many young people outside of Christianity losing “much of their respect for the Christian faith.”54

G. The Rise of Militant Atheism: In addition, our culture has experienced the rise of militant atheism, which sees all religion as a poison needing to be eradicated from culture and society.55 The teaching of religious faith to children is described as evil and abuse. “Faith is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument. . . . Faith can be very dangerous and deliberately to implant it into the vulnerable mind of an innocent child is a grievous wrong.”56

Militant atheists believe that theirs is a valiant crusade against bigoted parents who indoctrinate their children with evil superstitious religious views. Nicholas Humphrey argued that the task of liberating children “from the damaging influence of their parent’s religious instruction” is the same noble task as liberating “political prisoners” from their captivity. Parents have no right to limit their children’s perspective on life by bringing “them up in an atmosphere of dogma and superstition” or to insist that they follow it.57 Richard Rorty argued that secular atheistic professors should see their task as “nothing less than an exercise in conversion.” They should “arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like” their atheistic professors. These students will thus have “escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents.” Rorty stated that such professors “are going to go right on trying to discredit you [parents] in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable.”58
II. Spiritual, but not Religious (SBNR)

This growing negative estimation of religion has been accompanied by a rise in the positive estimation of generic spirituality. More and more people are saying “I’m spiritual but not religious,” or “I’m not religious, but I’m very spiritual.”

A. Religion and Spirituality: One might ask: What is the difference between “religion” and “spirituality”? Religion generally has referred to “the public realm of institutions, denominations, official doctrines, and formal rituals” enacted and lived out with one’s fellow religionists. In this new dichotomy, spirituality is generally viewed as having to do “with the private realm of personal experience,” of belief and actions with no need for sharing them with an organized group of fellow believers.

Another author writes: “Religion is public, a fact of society and culture” rather than being private. Religion involves public activity that people of the same beliefs do together. “Spirituality refers to attitudes, experiences, and feelings that are private and individual.” Spirituality speaks of my private individual beliefs—not necessarily with much formal doctrinal content—and my personal individual actions, whereas religion speaks of specific beliefs or doctrines that are publicly shared and enacted with others. In essence, religion is something you believe and live out with others, while spirituality is something one believes and puts into practice privately and individualistically, often without a formal organized group of others.

Examples of shared religious beliefs would be the Christian teaching of the trinitarian nature of God. Lutherans believe that the central doctrine of the Christian faith is justification. Lutherans gather with other Lutherans for Sunday worship. Spiritual people in this dichotomy do not necessarily express their spirituality with a group, nor is there a formal set of shared doctrinal beliefs. However, individual spiritual beliefs do have certain broad characteristics, as shall be seen below.

It is important to note the broad range of the relationship or lack thereof between religion and spirituality. Some studies indicate that the gulf between religion and modern spirituality is hardly as wide as supposed. Nancy Ammerman sets forth four broad, but not exclusive, categories of spirituality: the “Theistic Package,” an “Extra-Theistic Package,” an “Ethical Spirituality,” and “Belief and Belonging Spirituality.”

The Theistic group consists of those who have belief in a personal deity. Their spirituality is about this deity, about practices that are intended to develop a deeper relationship with that deity, and about mysterious spiritual encounters. This type of religious spirituality includes beliefs and practices that are institutionalized and the experiences that rise from them. The group is open to miraculous happenings in their lives. Seventy-one percent of the individuals in this group tied religion and spirituality together. Spirituality is a natural part of their religious faith. For most in this group, doctrine was of low interest; but living a virtuous life, helping others, and going beyond serving self were seen to be the essence of spirituality and religiosity.
Ammerman earlier had identified Christians with this type of religious spirituality as “Golden Rule Christians.” The emphasis on doing good permeates all groups. This type of spiritual discourse is more often found among Christians than any other group surveyed. Interestingly Neo-Pagans are also in this category, for they also have a theistic spiritual discourse, talk about gods and goddesses, speak about spiritual practices, a spiritual world, and spiritual mysteries.

The Extra-Theistic group includes those who speak about spirituality in naturalistic concepts without God or a supreme being. Their spirituality not linked to any theistic image or organized religious participation. Spirituality in this category is located in the self, in being individualistically connected to a wider community, in a non-dualistic (monistic) view of the world, in a sense of awe that comes from nature, good books, music, art, and plays, and to seeking philosophically the meaning of one’s life. The seat of authority here is in the self and in one’s experiences. This kind of spirituality can include finding in one’s self a spark of the divine, however that might be defined. There is also a sense of immanence that flows from interaction with the community, the world, or in seeing meaningful patterns in one’s life. Those who are religiously nonaffiliated, as well as many in the Neo-Pagan group, were most likely to speak of spirituality in these terms. (To emphasize the porous nature of these groups, the Neo-Pagans are in both the Theistic and Extra-Theistic groups.)

The Ethical Spirituality group is made up of three-quarters of those in the Theistic and Extra-Theistic groups. This Ethical Spirituality group focuses on living a virtuous life, on acts of compassion and kindness that help others, on actions that go beyond self-interest to do what is right because a spiritual life must include the doing of good deeds. It is spirituality described in moral terms. The emphasis on doing good includes a relative disinterest in doctrine. Those outside of religious faith systems desire to see spiritual and religious people put their faith into action in their daily lives. Ethical Spirituality exists in every segment of society—within religious groups and outside of them.

There is also a fourth category, which is somewhat disputed: the “Belief and Belonging” group. Roughly half of the participants in this study understood spirituality to be about belief in God and teachings about God. More than three-fourths of the participants stated that spirituality has to do with being part of a religious tradition. About half of these participants saw this union of religion and spirituality as a good thing, and about half of them saw it as a negative. Those who see believing and belonging as a good thing see spiritual authenticity in religion. Those who see believing and belonging negatively see this union as something that lacks any spiritual authenticity. This portion of the “Belief and Belonging” group reject the spirituality of the Theistic group and see religious spirituality as empty, lacking in authenticity, as just going through the motions of inauthentic religious rituals, as checking the boxes, as simply logging one’s time to get brownie points with God that will possibly gain them a good afterlife.
Those who see belief and belonging negatively are those most predisposed to espousing a spiritual but not religious perspective. Most participants who expressed this perspective were non-affiliated religiously. However, this group also includes very religious persons. The Christians in this group describe mere religion as empty and insufficient. They desire a true spiritual life—an intense deep personal spiritual relationship with Jesus. For these individuals, church membership is not very important—what matters is me and Jesus. These individuals would be in the category of those who say, “Don’t give me doctrine, just give me Jesus.”

Ammerman’s studies lead to the conclusion that the spiritual-but-not-religious category is more like a moral and political boundary than an empirical category. It represents the boundary between good or godly people and bad or ungodly ones. The disaffiliated tend to see organized religion as an oppressive power that deprives people of their rights and freedoms and inhibits the use of reason. Often what passes for the religion they are rejecting has little relationship to real religious beliefs and practices. One other interesting aspect of this study’s conclusions is that the rise in the visibility and influence of the spiritual-but-not-religious phenomena emerges from the old secularization theory, that is, as societies become more modern, organized religion will vanish. What will replace it is “a certain form of individual-consciousness . . . individual worldviews and values.” Empirical studies indicate that religion and spirituality are still intimately bound together. Further diligent study needs to be done on the spiritual-but-not-religious phenomena.

Factors driving those who are strongly committed to a definite dichotomy between religion and spirituality are a deep distrust of religious orthodoxy and its authority and of its ties (in their view) to conservative politics, as well as a condemnation of the emptiness of organized religion. These individuals generally view religion in psychological and therapeutic terms. Though religion is generally viewed in a negative light, some of these individuals also believe that pearls of wisdom can be mined from all traditional religions. They are highly individualistic and piece together their non-theistic spirituality with practices and teachings from many different sources.

The results of the studies done by Ammerman’s group and others emphasizes that the term “spirituality” is difficult to define, that the boundary lines between religion and spirituality are quite porous, and that the categories used to describe religion and spirituality are porous as well. The remainder of this essay examines some of the characteristics of the spiritual-but-not-religious phenomena.

B. Actions, not Words: As noted above, those in organized religion, as well as those who view organized religion negatively and individual non-religious spirituality positively, have a similar view of spirituality: “twenty-first-century spiritual folk believe that authentic piety is fundamentally a matter of practice” rather than being associated with a specific set of organized and codified dogmatic beliefs,
because “dogma is always stolid and ritual always empty.” Spirituality is related to actions and to experience. This kind of spirituality “denies” having a connection to established religious “institutions, stories, and doctrines.” Rather, it finds its common ground in the experiential and moral dimensions of religion. World religion gatherings affirmed Golden Rule ethical practices but offered little theology.65

Organized religion has also experienced a change: “Evangelicals, no less than the Liberals before them . . . have now abandoned doctrine in favor of ‘life.’ . . . For evangelicals today, this life is also an ‘essence’ detached from a cognitive structure . . . and it really does not require a theological view of life. . . . Evangelicals today . . . have lost interest . . . in . . . the doctrines of creation, common grace, and providence . . . justification, redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation.”66

Those who identify themselves as spiritual rather than religious have been attracted to centering prayer, Eastern types of meditation, and non-dualistic Asian religions. Here again the trend seen is “religion . . . confined almost entirely to the experiential or moral dimensions.”67 Prothero found that most Christians in the United States are in one of two camps68: They are either moralists, who are concerned with ethical questions like abortion and homosexuality (“For Nan, the church’s value is primarily an ethical one.”),69 or experientialists, who encounter God via emotions or feelings and who make statements like, How did this service make you feel? or I really felt the Spirit during that Bible study or “I felt my relationship with God was O.K. when I wasn’t with the church.”70

Historically, a Western understanding of spirituality has been associated with Christianity. Those who sharply separate spirituality from religion do so because they generally view religion as an external, institutional, and often harmful entity rather than something personal, individualistic, and good. Many also view religion as a bad (more stridently conservative on social issues) political organization.71 But such a view impoverishes spirituality and religion and is not helpful for our culture. Why?

Ammerson’s studies found that political action was “rarely the subject of overtly religious or spiritual reflection.” The participants did not desire that “their religious communities” be “dominated by politics.” Those who linked their spiritual or religious commitments to political action were rare.72 Political action “was rarely the subject of overtly religious or spiritual reflection.”73 The exceptions to this perspective are people like Robin Mitchell, who sees that “political action is her spiritual passion.”74

**C. Modern Spirituality’s Reach:** Currently, spirituality has become a global entity that references “all religions and cultures.” Spirituality has become a code word for a holistic, positive, and supportive view of life. There now is “Eastern and Western spirituality, women’s spirituality, New Age spirituality, secular and esoteric spirituality, interfaith and ecumenical spirituality, children’s spirituality, even
spirituality and aging, spirituality and health, spirituality and gender spirituality and human well-being. There is also talk of spirituality in management, business, sociology, economics, and geography, even of spiritual capital in analogy to social and cultural capital. . . . This . . . points to the undeniable fact that, in its most inclusive sense, spirituality is so all-embracing that it does indeed touch everything."75 Thus, it might be better to speak of spiritualities rather than of spirituality.

Broadly speaking, being spiritual now describes—in addition to the categories above—the individual and communal spiritual experiences of Christianity76, sex77, science78, New Age spirituality79, science fiction80, technology81, humanism82, transhumanism83, drugs84, tattoos85, and atheism.86

If it seems strange to cite sex, science, and atheism as spiritual experiences, one must remember that being spiritual is now more of an individualistic exercise that embraces almost all aspects of life. As can be seen from the above, spirituality—separated from religion—has become “an ill-defined, amorphous entity” covering “all kinds of phenomena,” those that are traditionally classified as religious and many more that in past times would have been considered heathen or pagan.87 One other author has described this amorphous spirituality as “The God Within.”88 The emphasis on God’s dwelling within and the understanding of the divine-human easily lends itself to the non-dual understanding in much of modern spirituality that mingles the divine and the human so that human beings become little gods (divine) in ways contrary to Scripture.

In matters of faith, there has been an invasion: Christianity and religion are, at times, being replaced or overtaken by a broad amorphous spirituality.89 Some Christians believe that because all religions worship the same God that they can incorporate varied spiritualities into their faith system; thus, there exist Christian witches, as well as the notations of the mixed spirituality noted above.90

D. Non-Duality/Monism: Many forms of modern spirituality express a non-dualistic view of the world—one which downplays a proper separation or distinction between God and human beings, as well as between God and all else in the universe. The most dramatic exposition of this perspective is found in the Interspirituality movement.

This non-dualistic/monistic view of life that teaches the unity of all things has flowed into Western circles from Eastern religions. For adherents of Eastern religions, there is no real difference between me and the river next to which I am standing. There is no real distinction between human beings and God.

Thus, in the monistic view, the ultimate reality is one, the indivisible One. It transcends definition and description. That One is everyone and that One surrounds everyone. When the individual self (Atman) comes to the
conscious awareness that it and the It (world soul) are one, there is celebration, ecstasy, liminality, and ultimate bliss. One has arrived. All is one. This is the essence of monism. . . . This monistic view is so inherent in Hinduism that a creator/creation distinction similar to that in the Christian faith is impossible to make.91

This monistic/non-dualistic perspective conflicts not only with a Christian theological view but also with the theology of Judaism and Islam, which teach that there is an essential distinction between God and human beings—between the Creator and the creation.

This non-dualistic view sees no difference between the many beliefs and religious symbols that exist, since they are all one—merely different pathways to the same divine being and to the whole of spiritual truth. Each religion has part of the truth, but not all of it. To find all the truth, all religious truths must be combined. A non-dualistic view also places greater emphasis on experience and feelings rather than on abstract logically reasoned intellectual or doctrinal arguments. It is believed that human experiences can be scientifically examined and validated, while abstract arguments cannot.92 The concept of non-duality is often an integral part of an atheistic view of the world.93

Sam Harris, one of the militant new atheists, has great praise for the Eastern religious emphasis on non-duality and faults Christianity, Islam, and the Jewish faith, which are dualistic (God is other than human beings), for the vast spiritual difference between Eastern and Western spirituality. This non-duality is “a fundamental insight of most Eastern schools of spirituality,” and the removal of the lines between self and other breaks the “duality of subject and object.” This duality leads to “feelings of separateness” that need to be corrected.94 In his book on spirituality, Harris makes extensive use of non-dualistic Eastern thought.95 Richard Dawkins is an advocate of the position that “children have a natural tendency towards a dualistic theory of mind,” and he sees that religious belief is a “by-product of such instinctive dualism.”96 In the atheistic view, dualism is tied to religiosity, Christianity, feelings of separation, and almost all of the world’s problems. These things must be eliminated.

Almost every problem we have can be ascribed to the fact that human beings are utterly beguiled by their feelings of separateness. It would seem that a spirituality that undermined such dualism, through the mere contemplation of consciousness, could not help but improve our situation. . . . There is clearly no greater obstacle to a truly empirical approach to spiritual experience than our current beliefs about God [i.e., that He is totally other—a dualistic view].97

E. Interspirituality: Non-duality is at the heart of another aspect of modern spirituality: Interspirituality. This movement began in earnest in 1999. It espouses Copyright 2015 Lutheran Society for Missiology. Used by permission.
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interconnectedness, oneness, and unity that transcend boundaries in all parts of life: politics, ethics, social planning, culture, history, and religion. It is an attempt at religious globalization, for it desires to produce a universal spirituality that would be either added to or replace the world’s religions. Some of the authors espousing this movement are Wayne Teasdale, Bede Griffiths, Thomas Keating, Eckhart Tolle, Richard Rohr, and Matthew Fox. The tenets of Interspirituality have also been disseminated via *A Course in Miracles*.

Interspirituality appears as popular as the spiritualities promoted by Castaneda, Chopra, and Redfield; for it has its own seminary, sponsors seminars, conferences, the Universal Order of Sannyasa, and many other avenues for sharing its teachings. Interspirituality affirms the expression of spirituality in multiple faith traditions at the same time. For example, one could at the same time be both a practicing Christian and a practicing Buddhist.

Perhaps the popularity of Interspirituality comes from the cement-like divisions seen in the world today. Our world today seems constantly to divide into ever smaller groups or tribes dedicated to this or that cause, political view, or subject. One of Interspirituality’s goals is to break down such rigid divisions and promote greater peace and harmony in the world.

**III: Conclusion: How Should the Church Respond?**

Christians should be engaged in bridge building, working toward greater respect and understanding with others.

Christians should realize that many who are spiritual but not religious are desirous of living good, moral lives. They aspire to be good citizens, to help others, feed the hungry, care for the environment, engage in honest work, be faithful spouses, good parents, and many other exemplary things. Lutheran theology describes this kind of good living as “civic righteousness,” and it should be commended whenever it is seen and practiced.

Christians should be putting their faith into action in sanctified spirituality in the church and in the world. God’s Word encourages Christians to let their light so shine by being, loving, kind, forgiving, meek, humble, penitent, serving and helping others (Mt 5:16; 25:31–49; Eph 4:32; 6:1–9). This kind of godly spirituality exhibits both civic righteousness and the righteousness of faith and is a positive witness to the world of God’s love in Christ.

The Christian’s spiritual calling or vocation in life is not just something extraordinary—like being a missionary in a foreign country—but is seen and expressed in the ordinariness of everyday living. Parents having daily devotions with their children, helping their children with their homework, holding them when they are sick, cleaning the house, paying their taxes, going to work joyfully, seeing that...
they are serving God and their fellow human beings, all of this and more is godly Christian spirituality—being moved by God’s Holy Spirit to serve where God has planted us. This godly spiritual piety is lived out in church and in the world. Luther reminds us that the mother changing her baby’s dirty diaper and the father plowing his fields is doing just as godly and spiritual a work—if not more so—as the priest or the nun. The understanding of the Christian’s vocation is tied to the priesthood of all believers and the doctrine of the two kingdoms or realms. This ordinary religious spirituality of God’s priests must be diligently taught and preached in our churches today.102

Christians need to be studying the various types of spirituality seen in this article, and they need to learn how to discuss lovingly and respectfully matters of faith and spirituality with those following different spiritual pathways. Such action also necessitates being a diligent student of one’s own faith. Daily Christians should be reading their Bibles, Catechism, the Lutheran Confessions, and other apologetic books103 so that they are better able to give a winsome defense of the hope that lies within them. Christians should always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks of a reason for the hope that is in us, and to do so with meekness and love (1 Pt 3:15). Christians need to be trained in sound and carefully reasoned apologetic argumentation about the truths and doctrines of the Christian faith.

Lutheran Christians have a vibrant religious message to share with the world—a message of hope, of love, of salvation, of freedom, of comfort, of forgiveness and grace which fuels a vibrant meaningful spiritual life that is engaged with the world—a message of God’s help and blessings in this life and in the next. We need to be sharing our faith in love just as diligently as the “spiritual but not religious” are sharing their faith and beliefs. It is what Christ has called us to do. Go therefore and share the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Mt 28:16–20; Mk 16:15–16; Lk 24:44–49; Jn 20:21–23; Acts 1:8).

A valuable study of this trend away from religion to spirituality would include a study of the relationship between the rejection of forensic justification and the acceptance of salvation by works—or Golden Rule theology—the turn-away from doctrine and the greater acceptance of deeds. What prompts this suggestion are studies of Lutheran beliefs that have noted that Lutherans who know and believe justification by grace through faith have a greater tendency to be religious rather than material, desire the sacred rather than the secular, and the supernatural rather than the natural.104

Since so much of modern spirituality is connected with Golden Rule theology, there is great need for the Christian church to be clearly teaching and preaching the doctrine of justification. It is God’s grace in Christ which fuels godly spirituality: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:8–10, NKJV).

Endnotes

i This is an exhaustively annotated essay. For that reason, we have posted these valuable resources on the Lutheran Society for Missiology’s Web site (http://lsfm.global).
Spirituality and Religion: The Shift From East to West and Beyond

Endnotes

Armand J. Boehme

These endnotes accompany the article in *Missio Apostolica* 23, no. 1 (2015), 21–36.


“In the last half of the twentieth century, it had become a commonplace in American culture to claim spiritual privilege for the individual. . . . Roman Catholic monastics such as Thomas Merton had led the way in transforming ancient practices of mysticism into something that began to be called ‘spirituality’ (rather than piety or spiritual exercises) and began to spread more broadly in American culture. That openness paved the way for the sixties fascination with Eastern religions and the ‘New Age’ (largely borrowed from nineteenth-century Theosophical and New Thought sources).” Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 40.


knowledge” is a tragedy for historic Christianity. It has also given the church a “choose-your-own Jesus mentality” which “encourages spiritual seekers” to grasp a “Christ they find most congenial,” for the only Jesus that matters “is the one you invent for yourself.” Douthat, Bad Religion, 176–178.


13. Herrick, The Making of the New Spirituality, 57–58; also 49–74. Hanegraaff wrote about his concern that in this postmodern age Christianity has experienced “a shift from faith to feelings, from fact to fantasy, and from reason to esoteric revelation.” Hank Hanegraaff, Counterfeit Revival: Looking for God in All the Wrong Places (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2011), 286.


15. Bellah, et. al., Habits of the Heart, 228.


17. Bellah, et. al., Habits of the Heart, 234.

18. Himmelfarb, One Nation, Two Cultures, 97.

19. Pearcey, Total Truth, 118. For the original study, see Merton P. Strommen, Milo L. Brekke, Ralph C. Underwater, Arthur L. Johnson, A Study of Generations: Report of a Two-Year Study of 5,000 Lutherans Between the Ages of 15–65: Their Beliefs, Values, Attitudes, Behavior (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 169–172. The results of a later study of Lutheran beliefs indicate more of the same: 67% said responded positively to the statement: “Although there are many religions in the
world, most of them lead to the same God.” Lutheran Brotherhood’s Survey of Lutheran Beliefs & Practices—Summer 1998 (np: Lutheran Brotherhood, 1998), 3. This same study revealed that 43% of the Lutherans surveyed disagreed with or were not sure of this statement: “Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their savior can go to heaven.” Lutheran Brotherhood’s Survey, 3. In a study of ELCA congregational leaders, seventy percent agreed with this statement: “It is possible for a faithful follower of any religion, including Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, to find the truth about God through that religion.” “Lutherans Say . . . No. 6 - The Religious Beliefs and Practices of Lutheran Lay Leaders in the ELCA,” June 2008, 36. This document can be found at the site below by the title above under the category Popular Reports: http://www.elca.org/WhoWeAre/OurThreeExpressions/ChurchwideOrganization/ResearchandEvaluation.aspx.

20. Lutheran Brotherhood’s Survey, 8.


22. Himmelfarb, One Nation, Two Cultures, 97.


Scholars have established that the content of Castaneda’s books were not real events but fiction shared as though it was non-fiction. Robert Marshall, “The Dark Legacy of Carlos Castaneda” [http://nhne-pulse.org/the-dark-side-of-carlos-castaneda/](http://nhne-pulse.org/the-dark-side-of-carlos-castaneda/). This link also contains the *Time* cover story about this—“Carlos Castaneda: Magic and Reality.” (March 5, 1973).


34. Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 100. “In his *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James attempts to distance himself from the philosophical dualism that sees physical reality (bodies) and spiritual reality (minds) as essentially distinct. He claims that the ‘philosophy of pure experience’ is more consonant with the theory of novelty, indeterminism, moralism, and humanism that he advocates, though it is less than clear why. We never experience mind in separation from body, and he dismisses as an illusion the notion of consciousness as substantial; however, he does not want to reject the reality of mind as a materialist might do. So after years of opposing monism, he adopts an admittedly vague sort of neutral (neither materialistic nor idealistic) monism that sees thoughts and things as fundamentally the same stuff, the further definition of which eludes us (*Empiricism*, pp. 48, 115–117, 120).” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy —Wayne P. Pomerleau, “William James (1842–1910)” [http://www.iep.utm.edu/james-o/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/james-o/).


39. Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 14 & 13. Smith and Denton noted that “only a minority of U. S. teenagers” were following the “content and character” of their faith systems (Christian, Jewish, Muslim). Content was being displaced by Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, which in Christian circles had displaced the language and experience of “Trinity, holiness, sin, grace, justification, sanctification, church, Eucharist, and heaven and hell.” They noted that Christianity was effectively being displaced and colonized by Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 171.


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Thomas Allen Publishers, 2005)—the fourth chapter is entitled “The Greatest Cover Up of All Time: How a Spiritual Christianity Became a Literalist Christianism”; Frederick E. Franklin, Jesus Was Not Crucified When as Has Been Taught: Easter Is Not When Jesus Was Resurrected (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013)—this is not an Islamic book.


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48. Tammy Bruce, *The Death of Right and Wrong: Exposing the Left’s Assault on Our Culture and Values* (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2003), 57.


“The modernists’ goal was to adapt Christianity to the new scientific and historical consensus, and to maintain the relevance of faith in an intellectual climate suddenly grown dismissive of the authority of Scripture. To this end they stressed ethics rather than eschatology; social reform rather than confessional debate; symbolic and allegorical interpretations of the Bible rather than more literal readings.” Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 27.


52. *Lutheran Brotherhood’s Survey*, 22. For similarities between these findings and Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, see Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162–171.


Myths From the Secular and Christian Media (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2010), esp. 181–207.


56. Dawkins, The God Delusion, 308—see also 279–344. Some other quotes from Dawkins book: “Children have a right not to have their minds addled by [religious] nonsense, and we as a society have a duty to protect them from it. . . . we should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for example, in the literal truth of the Bible,” 326. “Isn’t it always a form of child abuse to label children as possessors of beliefs that they are too young to have thought about?” 315; “Our society, including the non-religious sector, has accepted the preposterous idea that it is normal and right to indoctrinate tiny children in the religion of their parents, and to slap religious labels on them,” 339. See also Sam Harris, Letters to a Christian Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Sam Harris, The End of Faith: Terror and the Future of Reason (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004).

Using the same logic noted above, the question also needs to be asked whether it is also improper to refuse to teach small children about another faith system—anti-religion.


60. Pearcey, Total Truth, 117.


62. The material in these paragraphs has been collected from Ammerman, Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, 25–62, and Nancy T. Ammerman, “Spiritual but Not Religious? Beyond Binary Choices in the Study of Religion,” Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion Vol. 52, Issue 2 (June 2013), 258–278. For further examination of the above, see Nancy T. Ammerman, ed., Everyday Religion: Observing Everyday Modern Religious Lives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Mark Chaves, American Religion: Contemporary Trends (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 12–15, 38–41. The large numbers of those responding in 2000 to being both religious and spiritual (they overlap but are dissimilar) was noted by Marler and Hadaway, “‘Being Religious’ or ‘Being Spiritual’ in America,” 291, 293, 279–280. More study needs to be done as to whether the two categories are more overlapping or whether more people are beginning to classify themselves as one or the other and would see “being religious” as very different from “being spiritual.”

The reference to “Golden Rule Christians” is from Nancy T. Ammerman, “Golden Rule Christianity: Lived Religion in the American Mainstream,” in David D. Hall, ed., Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 196–216. For Golden Rule theology, see also Ammerman, Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, 2–3, 25, 44–46, 207–225, 249, 297. Golden Rule theology is parallel to the basic outlook of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism—be a good person. Sociological studies have indicated that 73% of the respondents spoke of spirituality in terms of morality. Ammerman, Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, 25. The 1970s study of Lutheran beliefs found that two out of five Lutherans believed in salvation by works and one out of four Lutherans saw Christianity as social gospel, saw no need for mission work, saw church as the medium through which the physical needs of people were met. Strommen, et. al., A Study of Generations: 289–290. The results of a later study of Lutheran beliefs indicated more of the same: 48% of the Lutherans surveyed believed that one was “justified before God by loving others,” sixty percent of the Lutherans surveyed believed that the “main emphasis of the gospel is God’s rules for right living,” and 56% believed that “God is satisfied if a person lives the best life one can.” Lutheran


70. Bellah, et. al., *Habits of the Heart*, 228.

71. Kinnaman, *unChristian*, 153–180, also 91–119. “Seen from a wider historical and comparative perspective, spirituality is clearly connected with religion, but not exclusively contained by it. When people separate religion and spirituality sharply from each other or even oppose them . . . this represents an impoverished view of both religion and spirituality. . . . Such a sharp separation between spirituality and religion is not helpful for the development of the personal and social transformations so urgently needed if greater flourishing of humans and the earth is to be achieved around the globe.” Ursula King, *The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life* (Katonah, NYU: BlueBridge/United Tribes Media Inc., 2008), 2.


77. Books on sacred sexuality tout the spiritual dimensions of sexual intercourse. Jenny Wade’s book, Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil (New York: Paraview/Pocket Books, 2004) is one example. This book catalogues the transcendent sexual experiences of 91 people. Transcendent sex is defined as “participation in an altered state,” and “the felt experience of a cosmic force engaging one or both lovers in the context of their lovemaking.” This cosmic force was described as “God, the Divine, the Oversoul, the Void” and by other terms. Wade, 270 & 271. The broad range of experiences included merging with one’s partner, the experience of energy fields causing sensations of light, heat, liquefaction and glossolalia; the presence of a Third; unio mystica, telepathy, the Void, shapeshifting, channeling, transports, and deity possession. Wade, 272–278. Forty-four percent of the subjects in this study “reported a radical shift in their religious or spiritual beliefs as a result of their sexual experiences.” They also experienced personal growth and healing. Wade, 278–280.


Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood wrote, “Remove the constraints and prohibitions which now hinder” free and unrestrained sexual expression, and “most of the larger evils of society will perish.” Margaret Sanger, The Pivot of Civilization (New York: Brentano’s, 1922), 232. She also wrote, “Through sex,
mankind will attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world, and light up the only path to an earthly paradise.” Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization*, 271. She believed that should all sexual restraints be lifted from human beings, they would become geniuses and that this lifting of restraints would enable release of the human being’s inner energies and vault the human being “into full and divine expression.” Sanger, *Pivot of Civilization*, 232–233.


The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) project, which searches for alien life forms, has been described as constituting “the basis of a new religion, perhaps the new religion . . . . It may be that religion in a universal sense is determined by the never-ending search of each civilization for others more superior than itself. If this is true, then SETI may be science in search of religion.” James A. Herrick, *Scientific Mythologies: How Science and Science Fiction Forge New Religious Beliefs* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 18. See also Herrick, *The Making of the


83. Transhumanism is “a futuristic social movement that offers a worldly transcendence through faith in technology. Why consider ourselves made in the image of God when we can recreate ourselves in our own individually designed, ‘post-human’ image? Why worry about heaven, hell, or the karmic conditions in which we will be reincarnated when we can instead enjoy radical life extension, perhaps even attain immortality by uploading our minds into computers. Indeed, transhumanist prophets, such as Google’s Ray Kurzweil and University of Oxford’s Nick Bostrom, assure believers that science will soon wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, for through technology, the former things will all pass away.” Smith, “New-Time Religion,” 19. See also Herrick, Scientific Mythologies, 99–101.


Atheists are among those who sharply separate religion from spirituality.

Daniel Dennett writes that he, like William James, cannot deny the existence of “the lone communicants of what we might call private religions.” Dennett call these individuals “spiritual people, but not religious” to distinguish privately religious people from “the typical religious people who identify themselves with a particular creed or church” that has many members. Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006), 11.

Sam Harris also sharply separates spirituality from religion. He wrote his spirituality book to further separate spirituality from religion. “Spirituality must be distinguished from religion—because people of every faith and of none, have had some sort of spiritual experiences.” He notes that “Twenty percent of Americans describe themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious.’” Harris, *Waking Up*, 8 & 6. Also Harris, *The End of Faith*, 39–45.


The Soviet “God-builders” saw Marxism as a “scientific and human religion” which was believed to be helpful to provide “a crucial spiritual bond” among the people of the Soviet Union. This movement “deified man.” Its advocates stated that “Man does not need God, he himself is God. Man is a God to man.” Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *Red Apocalypse: The Religious Evolution of Soviet Communism* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), 50—also 57–63, 114–115. This secular god-building was influenced by Feuerbach’s religion of man and by the ideas of Nietzsche. Michael Palmer, *The Atheist’s Primer* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2012), 88–99, 132–135.

these individuals, see Hanegraff, *Christianity in Crisis*, 29–39, 103–120.

89. “Christianity is either degenerating into a pathetic version of itself or, more significantly, Christianity is actively being colonized and displaced by a quite different religious faith”: Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. Smith & Denton, *Soul Searching*, 171, also 118–170. “At the center of the New Religious Synthesis is the striving human will seeking desperately to launch itself into minor godhood in an evolving cosmos through the mechanisms of directed spiritual evolution, spiritualized science and spirit contact. This Other Spirituality” claims to be the replacement of old organized religions—especially Christianity—and the replacement of Christ as Savior with other gods or Golden Rule theology. Herrick, *The Making of the New Spirituality*, 279. Hunt & McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity*, 91–104, 149–169.


95. Harris, *Waking Up*, 21–22, 124–148,


Oprah Winfrey’s empire offers “a description of religion in modern society.” Her likes, dislikes, and promotion of certain views and products are “also proposals for a mass spiritual revolution, supplying forms of religious practice that fuse consumer behavior, celebrity ambition, and religious idioms.” Kathryn Lofton, Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 2; Winfrey said, “I am talking about each individual coming to the awareness that, ‘I am Creation’s son. I am Creation’s daughter. I am more than my physical self. I am more than this job that I do . . . ultimately I am Spirit come from the greatest Spirit. I am Spirit.’” Lofton, Oprah, 4


102. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); Gustav Wingren, Luther on Vocation (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004); Harold Senkeil, Sanctification: Christ in Action—Evangelical Challenge and Lutheran Response (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House,


An excellent apologetic book is Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos?* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1995—originally published in 1949). The essays in this book were written over a period of time in the last century, but they read like they were written very recently.


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