Chapter 67
The Camel and the Eye of the Needle: Religion, Moral Exchange and Social Impacts

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67.1 Introduction

Jesus of Nazareth reportedly said (to paraphrase) that the chance of a rich man getting to heaven was about the same as the chance that a camel could fit through the eye of the needle—in other words, highly improbable.[1] But as historian Donald Worster put it, "Apparently, in America, however, our camels were smaller and our needles larger" (1993: 14). Religious production is typically most intense and diverse at the peripheries, the "ecotones" between cultural, ethnic or religious groups. North America, a space once defined by its expanding frontiers (Turner 1893 [1956]: 3) and a variety of cultural backgrounds and modes of exchange, provided a unique breeding ground for innovative religious communities and practices. These novel religious forms were forged in the fires of capitalism as it spread across the continent, consuming resources and promoting cultural homogenization.[2] But in many cases religious groups which were born in these diverse and highly productive peripheries have, through command of financial and thus political power, moved into the mainstream.

[1] See Matthew 19:24 in the Christian Bible: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." See also Mark 10:24–25, Luke 18:24–25.

[2] Examples are legion, but one illustration from North America is the widespread removal of American Indian children from their homes and their involuntary enrollment in schools where they were forbidden to speak their languages, or participate in traditional spiritual practices.

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Taking as qualitative data analyses of the ways in which exchange relations and their theological justifications impacted various efforts to map, classify, and conquer (Chidester 2004), this analysis focuses on the nexus of economic activity, specifically investments, colonialist expansion, and contested spaces. First, discussion of the historical relationship between capital investment and a capitalist-democratic society will be illustrative. The intention here is not to provide an exhaustive history, but rather a representative analysis of theological and social developments related to money and investment, and how they in turn were shaped by heterotopic geographies wherever they unfolded. Second, we will review some specific examples of how religious individuals and organizations have highlighted the supposed authenticity of their religious identity for personal or community gain. It will become clear that currency, property and investments are not doing *only* God's work. Rather, their accrual and exchange have long provided material expressions of the authenticating discourses deployed by various religious authorities.

The decimation of native populations in North America, the Australian continent, and beyond is sufficient reminder that relationships between money, political power, and social efficacy always also have significant moral import. In some cases religious aims were achieved through economic means, and economic need sometimes shaped theological interpretations. The so-called gospel of prosperity is perhaps the quintessential example of a theology which reflects the materialistic tenor of its cultural context. The focus here is on such rich terrain, where theological justifications and explanations relate to exchange relations and investment placements, which in North America at least, have taken a multitude of guises.

Ultimately religions are ecological patterns of psychological and biological expressions (Sperber 1985). For instance, televangelism—the use of television as a medium for growing a ministry—was peculiar to the global north, where conspicuous consumption was considered by some to be a virtue. Such a narrative presupposes a class society, specifically one in which the upper classes are set apart by their command and procurement of capital.

Take for example the Methodist-Pentecostal-Evangelical pastor Oral Roberts, who in January of 1987 declared on television that if he did not raise four and a half million dollars by the end of March, God would "call him home."[3] Presumably, Roberts' God did not intend to send him back to Ada, Oklahoma, but rather to his eternal heavenly abode. When the deadline passed, Roberts emerged from his immense "prayer tower" on the university campus which bore his name, and

[3] This identification acknowledges that he was raised in a nominally Methodist home, and gravitated toward Pentecostal and charismatic forms of practice early in his public career. Broadly speaking evangelicalism is a movement not limited to a specific denomination. It is characterized primarily by belief in the Bible as the authoritative source for understanding how to live on earth, and the belief that the "good news" of salvation must be actively proclaimed (for a more detailed definition and description of evangelicalism see Marsden 1991, especially pp. 1–3 for definitions).

announced that he had raised the funds required to delay his heavenly journey.[4] But his pilgrimage toward the prosperity gospel began much earlier, at the age of 29, when the then poor, itinerant preacher picked up his Bible, and it fell open to the third letter of John. Verse two caught his eye: "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."[5] Roberts concluded that this was a sign that God intended him to be rich. So the next day Roberts purchased a Buick, and afterward perceived that God spoke to him and told him to heal people (Reed 2009). Taking full advantage of radio and television to promote his novel interpretation of the gospel, his ministry began to grow, reaching its height in the 1980s. Ultimately, both Roberts and his son Richard were implicated in lawsuits over their lavish and fraudulent use of funds. Neither was convicted of any wrongdoing, though Oral was forced to sell some of his vacation properties and luxury automobiles to pay debts (Lobdell 2009; Reed 2009).

Roberts pioneered both televangelism and the popularization of the Gospel of Prosperity (Schneider 2009). Yet with regard to the latter, Roberts has been overshadowed by pastor personalities that dwarf his ample income, and who surpass Roberts in the savvy with which they have invested the spoils from spreading God's word for politically beneficial outcomes. For instance Kenneth Copeland, one of these prosperity preachers, in conversation with self-styled historian David Barton, has argued on television that only certain forms of taxation are appropriate. The existing tax system (under U.S. President Obama) was labeled "extortion," while taxation for the purpose of national defense (that is, military spending) was viewed as biblically mandated (KCM 2012). Copeland announced that:

> They [liberals/socialists] didn't say a lot against Christians until the last fifty years, [when] we began to preach prosperity. [Then,] here they came! Because we began to prosper, and it's the ministries that are doing the work prospering.[6]

The fruits of such supposedly sacred labors can be better grasped when the material causes and consequences of such movements are analyzed. The success of the presently dominant mode of capitalism owes much to its amenability to religious anthropologies and sentiments.

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[4] Roberts founded Oral Roberts University in 1963 (see www.oru.edu, accessed 23 July 2012).

[5] This version of the text is from the King James Version (KJV) of the Christian Bible, considered authoritative by most Pentecostals and many evangelicals. The translation of the KJV, however, is considered to be highly problematic by many biblical scholars. Interestingly, not all translations of the verse include the term "prosperity." The New Revised Standard translation, for instance, reads: "I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul." For more on the problematic King James translation, see Ehrman (2007).

[6] See http://www.kcm.org/media/webcast/kenneth-copeland-and-david-barto/120830-gods-way-to-increase. The program originally aired 30 August 2012. It should be noted that there was no recognition that today's Republicans and Democrats (the two currently dominant political parties in the United States) have different platforms than they have historically. "Liberalism," in this episode, was equated with "socialism," "communism," and godlessness, and even referred to as "pagan," which of course illustrates a rather obvious muddling and misuse of these terms.

67.2 A Case in Point: The Spirit of Capitalism and the Gospel of Prosperity

An introductory religious studies text by scholar of religion and multiculturalism Malory Nye suggests that what he refers to as the "Faith and Prosperity movement" ultimately emerged from Pentecostal roots (Nye [2009] (2007)). In some Pentecostal communities, evidence of divine favor supposedly manifests in publicly visible material practices. For instance, speaking in tongues, or in a small number of Pentecostal churches, practices such as dancing with venomous snakes without injury, demonstrate that an individual is "under the anointment of God."[7] In charismatic churches, born from Pentecostal movements, the visible signs of divine favor or grace were imagined to be related to financial gain. Ultimately these Pentecostal and charismatic forms of Christianity have even deeper roots which reach back to the emergence of evangelical and Pietist movements in Europe in the 1700s. Interestingly, although evangelical, Pietist and Pentecostal movements were typically viewed—at least in the cultural milieus from which they sprang—as counter-hegemonic groups, they would become, in the form of people like Oral Roberts, decidedly mainstream.

Although the celebration of financial wealth as a manifestation of divine grace came to its most obvious fruition among twentieth century televangelists, the stage was set for capital accumulation and investment at least as early as the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Protestant movements began in part because of a widespread perception that the Catholic Church was economically exploiting its constituents, amassing significant wealth often displayed in ornately decorated churches, and demanding payment for salvation (that is, the selling of "indulgences," which ensured forgiveness of sins). Thus, the first Protestant movements, such as the one spearheaded by John Hus in the late fourteenth century, or Martin Luther's later protestations, frowned upon ostentatious public displays of wealth. Hussites (as followers of Hus were known) and later Anabaptists from central Europe retained a community-minded ethos, but rejected the rigid hierarchy and lavishness of the Catholic Church. Others, such as those who followed more closely on Luther's heels, endorsed a more radically individualist (as opposed to community-based) ethos. To divest priests of their power over citizens, some of these early Protestants emphasized the soteriological importance of grace over works (reversing the Catholic Church's position), and focused on a personal relationship with God (rather than one mediated by a priest).[8] The personal and affective relationship with the divine was the theological seed that, when exposed to the vast and largely rural

[7] This is a quote from a young preacher in a Pentecostal snake-handling church in Eastern Tennessee, which was featured on CNN (see www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_c3#/video/bestoftv/2012/07/05/dnt-snakehandling-church.wmc, accessed 5 July 2012).

[8] The notion that grace is more important than works was related to the idea of predestination, discussed below. If God is indeed omnipotent and knows before an individual's birth the fate of her soul, then one cannot simply earn her way to heaven by doing good deeds. Only divine grace, so the logic went, could be responsible for saving a person's soul.

populations of the expanding United States, would flower into the highly emotional religious movements associated with the First and Second Great Awakenings in North America, including Pentecostalism.

It was this latter religious form associated with individualism which the sociologist Max Weber analyzed in what might be termed a sociology of rationalization (Weber [1930] 2005).[9] Weber noted the above historical trends, and highlighted how one particularly strong mode of Christianity—Calvinism—as well as those manifestations of Christianity which were particularly important in the development of the United States (for example, Puritanism), provided the widespread psychological conditions for capital accumulation. Calvinism and Puritanism both emphasized the notion of an omnipotent, omniscient deity who knew, prior to each individual's birth, whether that soul was destined for heaven. Though God might know who was destined for heaven, such theologies fueled a pervasive anxiety among Christians about the individual soul's ultimate abode. This *anomie*, Weber believed, combined with a capitalist ethos which promoted rationalization, modernization, and individualization, and which resulted in the cultural homogenization of Europe and North America.[10] From a theological perspective, the only way to tell if one was "favored" was to see the fruits of godliness manifested in personal success or well-being. From a capitalist perspective, the measure of success was the same—personal wealth and well-being. This was what Weber referred to as an "elective affinity" between the Protestant ethos and the spirit of capitalism (Weber 2002).[11] Importantly, however, while wealth was considered evidence of divine favor, displaying this wealth was frowned upon. As Weber put it:

> asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing. And even more important: the religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life…called the spirit of capitalism. ([1930] 2005: 116)

Investment and re-investment of the profits from business ventures—the process of capital accumulation—demonstrated God's grace *and* provided an avenue by which capital could be collected without overtly celebrating what was imagined as an ultimately fallen material world. The emergence of modern capitalism was thus driven by, or at least buttressed by, theological developments.

[9] Weber believed that the result of the Protestant ethic was evidence of the loss of a sense of enchantment in the profane world and of the rise of modernism.

[10] The term anomie describes the dissolution of social bonds and resultant feelings of existential crisis. The term is often attributed to the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who popularized the term (though he did not coin it). Although Weber's work has explanatory power, it is clear that the continent was certainly not homogenous. Those who wielded increasing economic power through the colonial period, though, did share some theological and practical commitments.

[11] The translation by Talcott Parsons, cited below, translates the term "wahlverwandtschaften" as "correlations" rather than "elective affinity," which appears in the translation from Baehr and Wells. Thanks to Bernie Zaleha, who pointed out to us this difference in translations, and who buttressed our interpretation of Weber's work throughout.

As a further illustration, consider the Moravians, who ultimately trace their theological genealogy back to John Hus. The Moravians funded their extensive missionary work across the globe by exploiting exchange networks in North America, the West Indies and Europe. In the late 1750s, the Moravians created the Commercial Society, which combined private and church capital, and effectively "structurally and legally connected religious work and transatlantic commerce" (Engel 2007: 120). This group provides a provocative illustration of Weber's thesis that religious ideologies could play the role of a switchman (Weber [1948] (1958)), displaying elective affinities with economic ideologies, and actualizing particular historical outcomes and foreclosing others. It also challenges, however, Weber's assumption that rationalization, bureaucratization, and individualization resulted in pervasive cultural homogeneity. For the Moravians founded their important colonial-era settlements in Europe and the United States on distinctly communitarian and collectivist values, in some ways radically opposed to the individualistic ethos of other mainstream Christian groups. But they also participated as much, if not more fully, in the transatlantic economy than many of their contemporaries. They thus contributed to the spirit of capitalism without embracing all of the features of Weber's Protestant ethic. The story, then, is more nuanced than Weber imagined, though it is clear that despite different values and motivations, there were many constituencies (including but not limited to mainstream Protestant groups) who shaped the ways in which capitalism and capital accumulation proceeded in the modern period.

While Weber's work is helpful in illuminating the relationships between ideologies and social developments, it is clear that these variables are also subject to geographic and demographic pressures that were largely outside his purview. The European Renaissance, indirectly and perhaps ironically spurred by several attempts to capture an important sacred space (Jerusalem), generated an increasingly wide-reaching series of exchange routes, and fueled European cultural elites' appetites for Asian goods. Political and religious leaders shepherded the search for luxury goods and cheap resources to feed the growing political economy of Europe.

Even earlier demographic changes provided a foundation for the later spread and success of Christian colonialism. For instance, by the turn of the Common Era both Europe and Asia had developed densely populated urban areas, and in Europe burgeoning populations often lived in close proximity to domesticated animals. Such dense population centers facilitated the rapid mutation and transmission of pathogens (many of which were first transmitted from non-human to human animals), which significantly impacted Europeans. Their most visible and widespread effects, however, were among the indigenous cultures that were the victims of colonization. As soldiers, priests and bureaucrats were unleashed across the oceans (Axtell 1992: 72) in large vessels drawn from budding European industrial areas, they mapped, named and then transformed the landscapes they encountered. The first zoos and botanical gardens appeared in Europe to showcase the creatures (human and non-human) gathered from far-away lands (Chidester 2004). Bureaucrats laid claim to lands by cataloguing and re-naming the world, a process which reflected the "encyclopedia" mentality of Renaissance Europe. To illustrate, Queen Isabella of Spain supposedly asked the royal historiographer Elio Antonio de Nebrija about the purpose of the first published grammar of the Castilian language in the vernacular, to which he reportedly replied: "Your Majesty, language has always been the companion of Empire" (Sale 1991: 18). Indeed, the geographic expansion of European cultures during the age of colonization provided not only metals and riches, but also important food sources, trade goods, raw materials and medicines (Sale 1991: 46), changing the world's religious landscape in significant ways.

Thus, the capitalist mode of production (including the global expansion of capitalist markets, and significant increases in manufacturing efficiency, consumption, and wealth disparity) was constrained by geographic and biological features of habitats, and in turn shaped the theology and practice of religious individuals and groups. For instance, the unique communitarian ethos of the Moravian church weakened and eventually dissolved as their settlements transformed from utopian frontier communities into centers of commerce and industry. The group grew into a relatively mainstream denomination that in some ways is virtually indistinguishable theologically from other mainstream Christian groups. It is clear, then, that the affinity between the individualistic Protestant ethos and a form of capitalism which maximized rational pursuit of self-interest and promoted bureaucratization sometimes eroded the counter-hegemonic energies of evangelical and charismatic groups, bending them toward the political and social center. Likewise, the gospel of prosperity, birthed in movements that were primarily rural and non-hierarchical, spread through populations like a contagious cultural virus, and moved into the mainstream as capitalistic individualism became its own global religion (Loy 2000).

The relationship between religion, money, and investments, then, is complex and multi-faceted, as Weber himself insisted. Religious ideologies were often related to, or grew from, specific social and economic relations. And in many cases, such ideologies were used to authenticate these social and economic relations. As the religion scholar David Chidester has argued, ideologies perform religious work to the extent that they channel economic relations in particular directions, focus community desire, and bind communities of people together with reference to sacred values (2005: 8). The jargon of authenticity, cloaked in religious concepts, metaphors and justifications, has always been the handmaiden of cultural changes which shift power from center to periphery, or draw power to the center. Authenticating discourses have been deployed by those in power to solidify and expand their exploitation of resources (human and natural), as well as exercised by marginalized constituencies to challenge the values at play in economic, social and imaginary worlds. So when Oral Roberts (and others in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries) drew on religious concepts to make normative claims about why their deities wanted them to be rich, they were drawing on a long history of religious justifications for exchange relations which have oscillated between preserving the status quo, and challenging it.

When anyone from Terry Jones (of "World Koran Burning Day" fame) to Fred Phelps (founder of www.godhatesfags.com) to Rick Santorum (U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania and former U.S. Presidential candidate) can all claim the legitimacy of their own distinctive interpretation of Christianity, it is important to analyze the financial and social impacts of such claims to authenticity. To provide further texture to the varied relationships between religious individuals and groups and their financial management, some specific examples will be illustrative. In some instances religious groups have invested human and financial resources in social activism. At other times, religious justifications (both explicit and implicit) have been utilized to undermine or restrict the rights of particular constituencies. This raises questions about the relationship between religious groups and individuals' investments and the ongoing relationships between missionary work and economic expansion. What follows is a description of some contemporary examples of these multifarious relationships.

67.3 A Moral Market? Religion-Resembling Economic Discourse and Responsible Investing

Economic markets and investment strategies have always been used to exercise power over others, and the exercise of such power is often related to specific sacred places. But there have been a variety of religious or religion-resembling responses to the coupling of economic well-being and religion. Relating the market and morality, some economists have suggested that the sort of valuation endorsed by prevailing economic and political powers (using Gross Domestic Product, for example, as a measure of social success) is misguided. In other cases, religious organizations have helped to pioneer socially responsible investing (SRI), a rapidly growing area of interest and an increasingly potent force for social change.

Examples of the former arguments include a response by the editors of the well-known journal *The Ecologist* to Donnella Meadows et al.'s classic *Limits to Growth* (1972). Their response, titled *Blueprint for Survival*, aimed to promote what they referred to as "a new philosophy of life" which might bring on "the dawn of a new age in which Man (*sic*) will learn to live with the rest of nature rather than against it" (Goldsmith et al. 1972: vi). The authors approvingly cite a lecture given by Bishop of Kingston in which the Bishop[12] provides a new set of commandments:

> … there must be a fusion between our religion and the rest of our culture, since there is no valid distinction between the laws of God and Nature, and Man must live by them no less than any other creature. Such a belief must be central to the philosophy of the stable society, and must permeate all our thinking. (Meadows 1972:165)

In this interesting passage, the journal editors used religion in a broad sense to refer to core values and deep beliefs, and to claim that appropriate investments reflect such values, rather than aiming for mere accumulation of wealth. Former World Bank economist Herman Daly (1996: 218) has argued that:

> we need a new central organizing principle—a fundamental ethic that will guide our actions in a way more in harmony with both basic religious insight and the scientifically verifiable limits of the natural world. This ethic is suggested by the terms "sustainability," "sufficiency," "equity," "efficiency."

[12] The reader is introduced to the bishop quite suddenly, with no real explanation of who he is, or why he is important to the authors.

Like the Bishop, Daly provided an "11th commandment": "Thou shalt not allow unlimited inequality in the distribution of private property" (1996: 206).[13]

It is not unusual for scientists and economists to use highly affective and often religious language to describe alternative economic priorities. In some cases religious individuals and groups have also used their social visibility and financial muscle to invest in companies and corporations that are aligned with their values. The Quakers were perhaps the first to engage in SRI in the 1700s, when they channeled their resources into investment opportunities that were perceived to be nonviolent. They retain their interest in SRI today, and in fact, now most of the so-called "world religions" have targeted equity or mutual funds which seek to maximize these alternative, life-affirming values.[14] Some Catholic and conservative Protestant Christian SRI funds, for instance, avoid investments which directly or indirectly support organizations engaged in family planning or termination of pregnancy. Muslim investment groups may avoid supporting corporations engaged in the manufacture of alcohol, pork, or tobacco.

Do such faith-based investment sacrifice financial returns by limiting their stock options? There is some debate here, but some scholars suggest that faith-based investments generally perform better than the market average, and in some cases better than combined SRI funds (see, for example, Lyn and Zychowicz 2010). Interestingly, the stated values of such faith-based investment firms seem to be directed primarily at investment prohibitions, rather than providing positive guidance about what businesses should be supported.

67.4 Render unto Caesar

Unique to the United States, one important area in which religion intersects with finance and investment is in the realm of taxation, namely, the status of religious organizations under federal tax laws. Since the ratification of the Bill of Rights and the specific prohibition against establishment of a state sanctioned belief systems or state impediments to the free exercise of religion, religious organizations in the United States have existed in a realm in which oversight by taxing and regulatory authorities has been in flux—a sort of tax purgatory, where neither the higher (governmental) power nor the adherent are bound by a clear set of guidelines.

Historically, religious organizations have been governed by their own set of rules within a broad framework of federal and state laws and regulating authorities. Disputes in the U.S. between governing authorities and religious organizations predate the passage of the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913, out of which arose the

[13] Daly grounds his argument on what he calls a biblical basis, which provides a particularly cutting commentary on the ideas of equity and economics.

[14] For examples, see Friends Fiduciary (Quaker), www.friendsfiduciary.org/socially-responsible-investing/; Amana Mutual Funds Trust (Islamic), www.amanafunds.com/; the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' SRI guidelines, www.usccb.org/about/financial-reporting/socially-responsible-investment-guidelines.cfm; Guidestone Financial (Baptist), www.guidestone.org/; Everence (Mennonite), www.everence.com/, accessed 24 July 2012.

income tax. But the number of disputes between taxing authorities and religious organizations has increased dramatically since that time, particularly in the last 40 years.

As churches and religious organizations have evolved into stewards of material wealth, taxing authorities have reacted with oversight, while ever-aware of the limitations set forth by the First Amendment. Religious organizations are not explicitly required to seek tax-exempt status under federal law—such a requirement would be a potential violation of the Establishment Clause. In the event that adherents of a religious organization seek to receive the tax benefit of tithes, offerings and donations to a particular religious organization, however, said organization must establish that it has a religious purpose pursuant to federal law. Presently, federal tax law defines neither "church" nor "religious organization," lest it violate the broad brush of First Amendment protections. Under its regulatory authority, however, the Department of the Treasury attempts to more narrowly define "Church" through questions on its form for exemption regarding matters of "religious creed," "hierarchy," "members," and "ecclesiastical government" (see Internal Revenue Service Form 1023, Schedule A).

Religious organizations have consistently sought status as "churches" for federal tax purposes to take full advantage of the tax exemption afforded churches for unrelated business taxable income. The Internal Revenue Code does not define the term "church;" however, the term is defined in Treasury Regulation § 1.511-2(a)(3)(ii), pertaining to organizations exempt from taxes on unrelated business income. The regulation provides in part:

> (ii) The term 'church' includes … a religious organization if such … organization
>
> ((a)) is an integral part of a church, and
>
> ((b)) is engaged in carrying out the functions of a church, whether as a civil law corporation or otherwise.
>
> In determining whether a religious … organization is an integral part of a church, consideration will be given to the degree to which it is connected with, and controlled by, such church. A religious … organization shall be considered to be … carrying out the functions of a church if its duties include the ministration of sacerdotal functions and the conduct of religious worship … [which is to be determined based upon] the tenets and practices of a particular religious body constituting a church.

Original jurisdiction for cases involving a determination or revocation of tax-exempt status of religious organizations lies with the Court of Federal Claims and not typically with the federal district court in which the organization is based. Located in Washington, D.C., the Court of Federal Claims is unattainable for many religious organizations simply due to its centralized location. Interestingly, this Court has noted as recently as 2009 "that it is, and believes it should be, uncomfortable with the criteria used by the IRS for determination of the church status of religious organizations." Foundation of Human Understanding v. U.S., 88 Fed. Cl. 203 (2009). In dicta unrelated to the ruling of the case, the Court strongly suggested that the government failed to address significant First Amendment problems as they relate to taxation of churches and the property of churches. In declining to address the Constitutional issues related to the definition of "church," the Court went on to state:

The criteria used by the IRS to determine church status for tax purposes… bear a striking similarity to the topics of the questions contained in the 1906 Census of Religious Bodies. This resemblance strongly suggests that defendant's criteria are time-conditioned and reflect institutional characteristics that no longer capture the variety of American religions and religious institutions in the twenty-first century. The regime appears to favor some forms of religious expression over others in a manner in which, if not inconsistent with the letter of the Constitution, the court finds troubling when considered in light of the constitutional protections of the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses.

While the language of the Court is not conclusive, it certainly provides some insight into why the government and the Internal Revenue Service may be hesitant to seek further determinative and binding rulings pertaining to the government taxing authority over religious organizations.

As the Court noted, what counts as a religious organization is, despite the Constitutional limitations, undoubtedly restricted to a Judeo-Christian worldview. In the Islamic tradition, for example, mosques and Islamic Centers maintain no membership rolls to substantiate that an adherent is a member or a participant in activities of the center. Similarly, most Buddhist sects lack what would properly be deemed to be an ecclesiastical government.

With the advantages that come with recognition of tax-exemption under federal guidelines, so too come the restrictions. Within the restrictions of federal tax law exists the regulatory framework that shapes many of the investments of modern religious organizations. Religious organizations, like all "charitable" organizations, avoid paying taxes on items of income that are related to the religious purpose of the organization. Like other similarly situated tax-exempt organizations, religious organizations are subject to a tax on unrelated trade or business income. The major question raised by these restrictions is what may qualify as being "related to" the religious purpose of the organization? Additionally, the taxing authorities have to closely examine whether the activities in question are in direct competition for revenue with other non-religious, for-profit ventures. Under most circumstances, these questions are answered either through the legal system or by the Internal Revenue Service. For instance, an organization that utilizes a commercial broadcasting license to broadcast religious television programs for substantially all of its broadcast time is subject to the exemption. Any revenue derived from programs broadcast for purely commercial purposes, however, is unrelated business and is thus subject to unrelated business income tax (see Revenue Ruling 78–385, 1978–2 CB 174). An organization that provides religious-based travel, which also includes social and recreational activities, however, is not operated exclusively for exempt religious purposes (see Revenue Ruling 77–366, 1977–2 CB 192).

Generally, investment income, in its broadest scope, is expressly excluded from taxation when those investments are owned by religious entities. Dividends, interest, annuities and other similar investments are exempt from taxation. In certain circumstances, including debt financing and utilization of corporations under the control of the religious organization, such income may be included as taxable by the religious organization. Likewise, royalties, rents, gains from the sale of property, income from the lending of securities, and income from the lapse of options is generally excluded from taxation. On a much smaller scale, sales of donated merchandise and commercial sale of farm products produced by a farm on which labor was derived from members who had taken a vow of poverty were related to the religious purpose of the organization (see St. Joseph Farm 85 TC 9, 1985).

In addition to legal issues of unrelated business taxable income, legal issues dominating the intersection of churches, investments and taxes primarily arise as they relate to state and local tax issues, property ownership, and private inurement. Very rarely do these topics rise to the level of a Constitutional dispute worth of certiorari by the United States Supreme Court; however, the modern Court has opined on tax issues related to federal unemployment taxes levied against religious organizations due to employment. St. Martin Evangelical Lutheran Church v. South Dakota, 451 U.S. 772, 780–85 (1981). The Court has, however, declined to render opinions on many of the issues related to taxation and investments simply because very few cases involving religious organizations continue through the legal process to such a result. That is, either the government or the organization is hesitant or can afford to press the matter to that conclusion.

All 50 states have some sort of property tax exemption for religious organizations and churches. State laws generally provide generous property tax exemptions for personal property and real property used for religious purposes; however, several states narrowly tailor property tax exemptions to only provide relief for designated "houses of worship." These narrowly construed rules have given rise to a number of disputes between state revenue authorities and religious organizations as to the religious purpose of the property at issue. *Holy Spirit Association v. Tax Commission*, 55 N.Y.2d 512, 518 (1982). The Supreme Court has, however, ruled that government administration of the property tax exemption does not violate the Establishment Clause because although it involves the government in religious institutions, it does not involve "judicial inquiry into dogma and belief" *Walz v. Commissioner*, 397 US 664 (1970).

Most recently, states have seen challenges in which groups litigating against property tax exemptions for religious organizations have argued that state property tax exemptions are constitutionally prohibited under the Establishment Clause. Specifically, a current ongoing legal dispute has been allowed to proceed against the California Department of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service challenging parsonage exemptions under 26 U.S.C. § 107 and the corresponding California revenue statute. *Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. v. Geithner*, 715F. Supp. 2d 1051 (DC Ca 2010).

Churches, much as all charitable organizations, are specifically forbidden to benefit private individuals through financial gain or benefit. As discussed above, with the rise of certain evangelical movements related to God ordained material blessing on those in whom He finds favor, an increasing area in which churches and the tax system have clashed pertains to the benefit of individuals involved in religious organizations, and who derive significant benefit therefrom. Recent cases have involved the Internal Revenue Service criminally prosecuting a couple who served as pastors in a large evangelical church in Charlotte, North Carolina for underreporting taxable income by accepting what they deemed to be gifts from congregants, and not including them on their income tax returns. *US v. Jinwright*, 683 F3d 471 (CA 4 2012). In yet other cases, the Internal Revenue Service has been hampered in its examinations of these types of transactions by procedural rules and restrictions on investigating churches that have been put in place by Congress. *US v. Living Word Christian Center*, 102 AFTR 2d 2008–7220 (DC Mn 2008).

Thus far, Internal Revenue Service investigations into the financial benefit of individuals associated with various religious movements have not produced a significant shift in the legal positions of many of the most prevalent evangelical movements. Recent activity by congressional committees, however, has brought to light potential changes in the legal ramifications of such religious beliefs. In February 2009, Senator Charles Grassley, a Republican from Iowa, and ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, launched a Senate investigation of six of the highest paid media savvy evangelists. Senator Grassley openly investigated Paula White, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, Eddie Long, Kenneth Copeland, and Benny Hinn. To date, no conclusive findings have been released by the committee. Interestingly, at the time of the inquiry, three of the individuals under investigation—Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, and Kenneth Copeland—served in some capacity, in leadership roles at Oral Roberts University (CBS News 2012).

Another possible legislative challenge emerged during the 2012 election cycle when several U.S. pastors declared October 7 to be "Pulpit Freedom Sunday" (Fox Insider 2012). Organized by a group called the Alliance Defending Freedom, which is itself a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt ministry, the goal of the event is to encourage pastors to discuss the policy platforms of the two presidential candidates (Barack Obama and Mitt Romney), and then make a specific recommendation to their congregants regarding their vote (Alliance 2012). Event organizers have specifically stated that their goal is to challenge a 1954 amendment to the IRS tax code which prohibits tax exempt organizations from participating in a political campaign on behalf of a specific candidate. Their claim is that the tax code violates both their right to free speech and violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment of the US Constitution.[15] The argument is that if a particular religious group perceives that they have a religious obligation to participate in politics, then it is discriminatory to forbid that group to do so. In a sense, such argumentation pits the Free Exercise Clause against the Establishment Clause. If it is ultimately determined that the tax system discriminates against political speech in a religious setting, the entire tax code related to religious organizations would be delegitimated. While the complexity of these rules and tax codes have provided cause for great concern among both elected officials and religious organizations seeking guidance for rule compliance, the emergence of the evangelical movements of the last half of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century and the events noted above indicate that religious organizations have grown more aggressive in their pursuit of the accumulation of wealth at the expense of taxing authorities. Interestingly, however, the federal government and the Internal Revenue Service have specifically restricted themselves in the further examination of the religious activities of religious organizations as it relates to the business interests of the organization (see 26 C.F.R. §301.7605-1(i)(4)). So although Jesus suggested that his followers ought to "render

[15] The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion [the Establishment Clause], or prohibiting the free exercise thereof [the Free Exercise Clause])

unto Caesar those things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's" (Matthew 22:21), in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, some Christians have been more inclined to find that money and investments are "God's things."

67.5 Missionary Investment and the Colonial Impulse

Missionary work has been one of the most obvious and large expenditures from religious organizations historically. Missionizing was both a financial investment, and in some sense also an investment in the future of the church. Most often, from the age of European colonization through the nineteenth century, missionaries were accompanied by military units and bureaucrats. These colonizers operated in two ways (sometimes concurrently, sometimes sequentially). In some cases, the aim was to exploit natural resources which had been held under traditional or indigenous land tenure. Religious conversion was often either a catalyst for this transfer of resources, or a product of it. For instance, in some cases high level actors in traditional societies were converted (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not), and with their significant sway over land management decisions, they ceded power to colonizers. In other cases, traditional cultures' inability to halt rapid destruction of natural resources and the spread of disease prompted them to search for religious explanations for their plight. Prophets often appeared who adopted and adapted the Christian message and its salvific concepts as a salve for their cultural disruption (see, for example, Wright 2009). In still other instances saving "savage" souls was the explicit motivation for colonial endeavors, even if the most immediate gains were manifest in financial prosperity of the colonizers.

Colonial administrators in Bali, for instance, replaced remarkably complex water management systems that had developed over thousands of years with bureaucratic, Westernized modes of management. The result was ecologically disastrous, but the negative effects went unnoticed until the 1970s (Lansing 1991). The anthropologist Michael Taussig noted the ways in which traditional devil-focused religious practices in Columbia morphed as indigenous communities were exposed to capitalist modes of production. For the natives, capitalism masked the violent and dehumanizing lifeways which fueled its expansion, and was thus the most obvious way in which the devil manifested in the real world (1980). Robin Wright, an anthropologist who lived and worked in Brazil for decades, noted that religious non-governmental organizations (NGOs) disrupted traditional social relations, resulting in an increase in both evangelism, prophetic zeal, and assault sorcery (2009). While the NGOs intended to provide avenues for indigenous populations to engage in the global market, in this case by selling their traditional basketry, they contributed to the erosion of social bonds and the rise of interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

Such cultural disruptions have often proceeded under the guise of co-called "sustainable development" projects, intended to raise the standard of living of particular constituencies by including these marginalized characters in the global economy. As often as not, however, the result has been a transformation that fixes socioeconomic relations into a self-perpetuating rationalized, efficiency-maximizing state—something

Max Weber predicted would necessarily follow from a truly global form of capitalism. Drawing on Richard Baxter, an expert in Puritan ethics, Weber noted that

> in Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.' But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage. (2005 [1930]: 123)

This iron cage, the cultural inertia of capital accumulation through investment in a system that maximizes individualization and bureaucratic development, is where we find Oral Roberts and his ilk, utilizing the levers of economic and social power to increase their possessions in the name of God.

67.6 Conclusion

The developments noted above illustrate the ways in which the global distribution of religious beliefs and practices has shifted significantly over time. In addition to shifting religious allegiances, the physical map of the world has changed, as capitalism, "discovery" and colonization, and more recently, corporatism (what has been called the "McDonaldization" of the globe) have been exported from North America, and resources (both human and non-human) have been more efficiently exploited. What remains to be seen is how these developments will play out. Economic globalization has also resulted in the exportation of peculiarly western ideals, such as multiculturalism, religious tolerance, and democracy. This raises and important question: do concepts related to democratic participation and life-affirming values (however defined), packaged for the developing world in terms of "freedom and democracy" or "global ethics," act as evangelists for a global faith that merely perpetuates the central values of Western colonialist cultures (Chua 2003)? At the very least, they seem to reinvigorate the emergence of strong religious groups who respond to cultural pluralism and tolerance with heightened rhetoric, intensified proselytization, and occasionally violent reactions (Jurgensmeyer 2008). The future is uncertain, but past and current impacts are clear—the globe has been religiously and physically re-shaped by capital accumulation, investment, and expansion.

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