sects, cults and mainstream religion

a cultural interpretation of new religious movements in america

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Few aspects of American religious life have called forth more comment than the proliferation of new religious groups, the so-called sects and cults of both learned and popular discussion. But defining what is meant by sect and cult and relating them to some of the broad streams of American cultural life have proved difficult, not least because so many students of the subject have emphasized the formal (usually sociological) characteristics of these groups rather than the specific nature of their teachings.

Some scholars, however, have countered that trend. One such person is A. Leland Jamison, who attempted to define and distinguish sect and cult on the basis of content, the cult claiming a new revelation while the sect defined itself by a selective emphasis that protested the apostasy of some parent body.[1] Jamison's distinction has been useful in the classification of groups by the content of their teachings, but is less useful for relating these groups to the wider cultural context.

We will bypass some large problems in this essay through a simplified definition: whatever else may be meant by the terms "sect" and "cult" (and the term "cult" is becoming increasingly difficult to use in a neutral sense), they are certainly small religious groups that are generally perceived as being outside the mainstreams of the religious life of a community and that hold views which the larger society finds unusual. Proceeding from that definition, the present essay is an effort, mainly through

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examining secondary literature, to analyze the teachings of some of the new religious groups in America in relation to the American mainstream.

Americans are generally aware of something that can be considered "mainstream" religion: through much of American history, and certainly until nearly the end of the last century, that mainstream could be designated as Protestant Christianity and, even more specifically, as a basically British evangelical Protestantism, though to be sure it underwent various liberalizing transmutations in the course of the nineteenth century. With the twentieth century that mainstream has been broadened to encompass, as in the title of Will Herberg's seminal book on American religion, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1955; rev. ed. 1960). References to something vaguely identified as the "Judeo-Christian" tradition have come to be fairly common. Often this Judeo-Christian tradition is thought of as providing certain broad and mainstream religious and ethical themes which harmonize rather comfortably with the central motifs of our common culture, sometimes so comfortably that observers of the American religious scene have depicted an American "civil religion," consisting of certain national ideals held as sacred and given sanction by the particular religions.

But there are other American religionists commonly seen as outside the mainstream, and who sometimes perceive themselves as outside of it, though such perceptions are often related to how recently the group has arisen: no group could have been seen as more deviant from the mainstream both inwardly and outwardly than the Mormons in their first years, yet now they are widely considered an American group. (From dissenting sect to accepted church is an old story in the sociological analysis of religious groups.) In spite of the increasing respectability of earlier "new religious groups," it is clear that today there is public concern about recently arisen groups such as the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon and the Church of Scientology. This concern was heightened in the 1970s by the grisly mass suicide episode in Guyana by Jim Jones' followers. Parents have become increasingly alarmed over the appeal of such groups to their children, and professional religious "deprogramming" has appeared. There even have been calls for congressional investigation of putatively dangerous cults.

Such concern is not new. Cotton Mather, in upholding the traditions of Puritanism in colonial New England, devoted considerable attention as an historian to what were for him dangerous deviations from gospel truth. He particularly identified such deviation with the settlers of Rhode Island, the followers of Anne Hutchinson and the Quakers. The latter he dubbed "the worst of hereticks that this age has produced," while of Anne Hutchinson he commented, "It is the mark of seducers that they lead captive silly women; but what will you say when you hear of subtil women becoming the most remarkable of the seducers?"[2] Mather was not the last to blame women in particular for the flourishing of sectarian folly. Nor did Mather lack a general causal interpretation for sectarian religion: sects had been stirred up by the devil to undo the glorious work of New England in

restoring pure religion. Yet Mather's approach is valuable to the historian. He paid more careful attention to the specific ideas of the sectarians than do some modern social scientists, and recognized that part of their *raison d'être* was the appeal of their ideas, unlike modern students who reduce new religions entirely to a function of social marginality or some other sociological factor. Though evaluating it differently from Mather, a modern historian of some such groups has regarded much of their appeal as having to do with their frank abandonment of what is perceived as the strict views on morality, hell and damnation held in orthodox Christianity.[3]

Robert Baird, an American Presbyterian trying to explain to Europeans the religious situation in the United States in 1856, related the growth of sects not to the devil but to "an excess of human zeal in a largely unstructured environment," as a modern commentator on Baird has phrased it.[4] The later Turnerian emphasis on the frontier as the formative force in American life strengthened such an approach; sects and cults flourished as part of the unsettledness of moving into an ever expanding frontier. But when Baird listed his "out of the mainstream" and "non-evangelical" groups, he included Unitarians, Shakers, Swedenborgians, Campbellites, Mormons, Jews and Roman Catholics! Whatever one might make of the specifics of his list, Baird's point that religious enthusiasm in a free environment led to sectarian multiplicity is well taken: however much an observer might dislike certain new groups, they must be acknowledged as part of the consequence of religious freedom in a relatively traditionless new land.

Alarm over sects and cults often takes new forms. A series of pamphlets published a generation ago by the Catholic Truth Society undertook to expose the falsehood of such groups as Spiritualism and Christian Science. A book bearing the title *The Chaos of Cults* has long been popular among Protestant fundamentalists as a storehouse of ammunition against heretical cults. There have been numerous exposés of individual groups, often written by former adherents, such as *Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave.* A recent book by Lowell Streiker, previously the director of a California county mental health association, is entitled *The Cults are Coming,* and evinces alarm over cults.[5] Some of the most agitated things being written about cults come not from the religiously orthodox but from non-religious persons fearful about the appeal of cults.

All of these less-than-objective observers from Mather on have treated the "cults" as out of the mainstream. Social scientists attempting a more objective view have also discussed such groups. The frequency with which the term "marginal" is applied to them in social scientific literature leads to the conclusion that sociologists too have generally acceded to the view that these groups are "on the fringe."[6]

But the conclusion that such groups are outside the mainstream is in some ways questionable. Do these groups hold ideas utterly alien to and unconnected with the religious ideas of the majority, or are their principal ideas possibly variations of certain central themes of American religious

life which have been given a peculiar or surprising twist? This second possibility should be explored.

The longstanding American Protestant mainstream looked to the Puritan settlement of New England as its fountainhead. Those Massachusetts Bay settlers regarded themselves as the vanguard of the Protestant Reformation, traversing an ocean in order to find a spot where they could set up the true church of Christ as God intended it to be, thus restoring the primitive face of the church. Further, they regarded their work of *restoration* in an eschatological frame of reference, that is, they saw themselves as living in the "last days" when God was shaking the nations and establishing his kingdom, and thus as living in a glorious *millennial* age. That millennial age was a time when God's Spirit would be poured out upon humankind, as the prophet Joel had declared to ancient Israel—"the day shall come when I will pour out my spirit on all mankind; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions"[7]—it would be a new *spiritual* age. Such a new age of the spirit would be a time of true community in which all would live in harmony. These ideas appeared in New England in more or less diluted form, depending on the degree to which the hard facts of New England life tempered the enthusiasm of those fervent Puritan colonists, but in one form or another the ideas of restoration, the millennium, a spiritual age and *a perfect community* were staple commodities in the collective consciousness of New England. They were also, however, exciting and disturbing ideas, and to a considerable extent they underlaid, stimulated and informed many new religious groups founded by Americans in succeeding ages.

Moreover, these were themes of long standing in the biblical and Christian tradition. The Protestant Reformation was itself an exercise in restoration, succeeding many medieval efforts at getting back to original Christianity. Millennialism was a prominent characteristic of earliest Christianity and never died out even in the medieval catholic synthesis of faith and society—it was always there, a vein of ore ready to be mined by those whose more radical proclivities it could serve so readily. That a new spiritual age had dawned was the promise of Pentecost, while centuries later the medieval monk Joachim of Fiore proclaimed that a new age of the Holy Spirit was at hand. The ideal of community had taken one form in medieval monasticism and another in the social transformationism of Protestant Reformers such as Martin Bucer and John Calvin. But the point is that in the new American land all these ancient themes found a special opportunity. Here people really did seem to be beginning all over again, creating a restored church, a new humanity and a new society; restorationism, millennialism, spiritualism and communitarianism took on new life and urgency in a new world.

The New England Puritan use of these themes appears almost muted in contrast with the ardent enthusiasm of later American Protestants. Alexander Campbell, a founder of the now respectable Protestant denomination the Disciples of Christ, declared in the early nineteenth century that

the true church of Christ would never be a reality until a thorough effort of restoration, following the Bible alone as the rule in all things, had been carried out. Earlier, Jonathan Edwards had considered the Great Awakening as a foretaste of the millennial age, and was associated with the notion that the millennium would dawn in the new world. Edwards had also proclaimed true religion to be that more fully spiritual religion in which one had an inner delectation of spiritual things. "I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul," Edwards wrote. "God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul."[8] Moreover, the second great awakening spawned numerous communitarian hopes and schemes among American Protestants.

The same themes in a more secularized form came to be characteristic of the way Americans thought about themselves as a people and as a nation. Perhaps they are best seen as expressions of the civil religion of a sacred nation. Thus America itself was seen as a restoration of human society and the realization of the millennial dream, and this animated the feelings of Americans about their future (and manifest) destiny. Civil religion made less use of spiritualism, but its emphasis on ideal community fit very well with American attitudes. The notion of civil religion allows us to recognize that Jews and Roman Catholics could add their contributions to a common celebration of the nation's restorative power, millennial significance and ideal community.[9]

With such themes current in the Protestant mainstream and also in a civil religion wider than Protestantism, it is no wonder that they were readily available for more specialized uses by the founders of new religious groups. Even the radical sectarians of colonial New England took up these ideas and carried them to certain extremes: Quaker religion revolved around the idea of direct access to God's Spirit; Rhode Island Seekers believed that the true church was soon to be restored to earth; the radical Puritans in England known as Fifth Monarchists proclaimed the millennium to be at hand; and the New England Baptist dissenters sought to realize true community in their "believer's" churches. Later in the United States the restorationist theme resulted in the founding of the Christian Connection, the Republican Methodists and scattered groups which simply took the name "Christian" churches or churches of Christ. The millennial motif predominated in the Millerite movement, which quickened expectations of Christ's second coming in 1843 and 1844, and then eventuated in a number of smaller sects, such as the Advent Christians, Life and Advent Union and Seventh-Day Adventists. The Jehovah's Witnesses and related groups turned the millennial theme to yet other uses. The spiritualist theme surfaced in all those movements which stressed the primacy of spirit over matter and the control of the material through the spiritual, almost invariably deriving some sustenance from the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Among such were the Sweden-

borgians, the Spiritualists (in the narrower sense of those who communicated with departed spirits at seances or communicated with spirits through rappings and mechanical writing) and mental healers like Phineas Quimby. The Shakers also emphasized living in a new spiritual age. They adopted celibacy and were communitarian, as were the Rappites and John Humphrey Noyes' Oneida Community.

Two groups founded in the nineteenth century illustrate well these themes: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Church of Christ, Scientist. Several of the more recent arrivals to the American religious scene also demonstrate the broad appeal of these themes in American culture.

The Mormons represent all four themes. Restorationism and communitarianism predominate, while the importance of millennialism was most marked in the early years of Mormonism; "spiritualizing" motifs are less prominent.

Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, spent his youth in a situation ripe for the appeal of restorationism. When he was a child, his family moved to western New York when that region was known as the "burnt over district" because of the frequency and intensity of its revivals. He was deeply disturbed by church rivalry and wondered which was the true one. While in turmoil, he encountered angelic personages who revealed that the existing churches were to be avoided. In later revelations he received directions which would enable him to restore the original form of the church proper for God's people. These directions carried him beyond the Campbellite restoration motif of getting back to the New Testament by returning to the condition of the original people of God, the Jews. Thus the Book of Mormon deals with many events which preceded the coming of Christ. It also identifies the ancestors of the American Indians with ancient Israelites who, according to Mormon belief, found their way to North America. Christ too came to North America and appeared among these wandering children of Israel. Surely in all of this there was basis enough for the restoration of true religion. The high priesthood of Melchizedek was to be reestablished (in addition to the Aaronic priesthood), as was the temple with its special rites. That factor which brought forth so much contemporary hostility, the practice of polygamy, must be seen in this same light: it was the restoration of the marriage pattern which prevailed among the ancient people of God. A recent Mormon historian has stressed the importance of this restoration theme in early Mormon history as that which gave Mormonism its appeal: here was a religious group which by a claim of prophecy could speak with absolute certainty about the restoration of true religion. Not surprisingly, the Mormons revived language which had been heard earlier from the lips of New England Puritans about restoring Zion, and came to regard themselves as the true children of Israel, even adopting the custom of referring to nonmormons as gentiles.[10]

If they were the true children of Israel, then Mormons (like Israelites of old) must have their own community in which true harmony could be

realized. Like New England Puritans before them, they would "raise a holy city to the Lord,"[11] though instead of being built on Massachusetts Bay, it would take shape in the deserts of western North America. To be sure, the persecution they received from their neighbors had something to do with that choice, but "[e]arly in the church's history the concept of a Zion, a gathering place for God's people, gained a place in the Mormon mind."[12] Thus the idea of a Zion came before the location; only the circumstances which drove Joseph Smith's followers from Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois, led to the choice of Utah as Zion. There the Mormons tried to build a perfect community.

In earliest Mormonism there was also a strong millennial strain. The work of restoration and community-building in which they were engaged was an aspect of this strain. Millennial concern had been especially prominent in western New York during Joseph Smith's early years, and was a powerful impetus for him and the first adherents of his teaching. Later Brigham Young spoke of life in Nauvoo as "a foretaste of celestial enjoyment and Millennial glory,"[13] and the first settlers of Mormon Utah felt the same way about their kingdom in the Great Basin of the west.

The pentecostal aspect of spiritualism was present in early Mormon experience: the gifts of the spirit characteristic in New Testament times were believed to be operative again, most notably miraculous healing and speaking in tongues. In the long run, however, this belief faded away, and the rather literal and concrete ways in which Mormons thought (for example, the peculiar Mormon doctrine that God has a material body, or their denial that God created the world out of nothing, making matter as eternal as God)[14] led in the opposite direction from that being taken by those who developed new groups in which the spiritual theme predominated.

Christian Science is a doctrinally precise and organizationally rigid version of the "spiritualist" tendency in American sectarian religion of which a large host of other religious bodies in the United States are similarly representative. A widely influential essay by Perry Miller entitled "From Edwards to Emerson" provided a link between earlier American Calvinism and later spiritualizing religion by arguing that mystical and pantheistic tendencies in Edwards, which that Puritan theologian held in check by his vigorous Calvinism, were later exploited by Emerson in his doctrine of the "over-soul" and in his appeal to a direct intuition of the divine, thereby becoming a seedbed for any number of spiritualist theologies.[15] Interestingly, a recent Christian Scientist writer has stressed the importance of some of Jonathan Edwards' ideas as background to Mary Baker Eddy's.[16] In any case, Emersonian pantheism and spiritualism mingled with many currents (Swedenborgianism, Oriental mysticism, mental healing, idealistic metaphysics and communication with spirits) thus contributing to the formation of many new groups: Spiritualists, New Thought, Divine Science, Unity School of Christianity, the Vedanta Society, Theosophy, Psychiana, The Great I Am and many others. In Christian Science there was much less interest in esoteric and

Eastern elements than in many of these, and it differed from many New Thought and mental healing groups by the more precise and exclusive form that its teachings took. The connection with Emersonian transcendentalism can be seen quite directly in the case of Bronson Alcott. Alcott had apparently long believed that Emerson's doctrines should find their completion in a direct application to the mind's control of matter, especially in healing, so when he heard of the work of Mary Baker Eddy, he called on her in order to verify whether or not she was the true prophet of a new dispensation of the spirit.[17] Not entirely satisfied on that point, he nonetheless typified what was a pretty wide interest in her work taken by those who had known Emerson; William James, into whose boyhood home Emerson had come as an acquaintance of James' Swedenborgian father was another.[18] This whole tradition of spiritualizing religion has recently been identified by an historian of the incursion of newer, mainly oriental religions into the United States, as an "Alternative Reality" tradition in opposition to the mainstream of Judeo-Christian religious conceptions.[19]

Mary Baker Eddy, to whom the doctrines of Christian Science came as revelation, had previous contacts with the world of spiritualizing religion. She was aware of popularized transcendentalism which swirled around in the New England of her formative years; she had had direct experience with Spiritualist seances;[20] and she may have been influenced by the mental healer Phineas Quimby.[21] Certainly the theme of spiritualizing religion was present in her doctrine, with its pantheistic tendencies, its abandonment of personal theism in favor of an abstract monism and its system of healing by a realization of the true spiritual nature of reality. She identified her revelation with the Johannine image of the coming of the "Comforter," or the Holy Spirit,[22] and this identification of Christian Science with the coming of the age of the spirit is the ultimate accentuation of the point that the spiritual theme predominates in her religion.

The other themes being pursued in this essay are also present to some degree. Mary Baker Eddy clearly understood her teaching to be a restoration of the original intention of true Christianity, and as a variation of millennial interest, Christian Science, like other spiritualistic movements, regarded the kingdom of God as having arrived already.[23] The advent of Christian Science *was* the Second Coming. The communitarian theme, on the other hand, was muted in Christian Science, as in late nineteenth century American spiritualizing religion generally: only the Spiritualists who communicated with the departed tried to establish Utopias,[24] while Christian Science, New Thought and related movements accepted the social order as it was, aiming to equip their adherents for well-being within it.

Other groups with variations on these four themes have continued to spring up in the United States. The so-called counterculture of the late 1960s became a breeding ground for many new religions, a large number of them importations from the Orient. But appearing to a surprising degree in all these groups, whether "Jesus Freaks," flying-saucer religionists or devotees of Eastern mystical practices, have been the themes of

restorationism, millennialism, spiritualism and communitarianism. Some drew apart into communes while others proclaimed a new world community; the dawning of a new age, whether the Second Coming or the age of Aquarius, was announced by others. Implicit in these religions was an ideal of restoration, and spiritualizing was current especially in those of mystical or Eastern character.

An examination of four such groups will illustrate this point. The Divine Light Mission revolves around the leadership of the guru Maharaj Ji, who had only a few American followers when he came to the United States as a teenager in 1971. The Mission grew very rapidly for about two years, set up headquarters in Denver, Colorado, drew some of its followers into retreat centers known as Ashrams and then gradually retrenched as a movement stressing devotion to the guru and various meditative practices, in which form it continues.

The four motifs we have discovered threading their way through sect and cult religions in the United States reappear in the Divine Light Mission. Like other groups of Eastern derivation, the spiritual theme is dominant: God, understood pantheistically, is a universal Spirit revealed through spiritual persons such as the guru Maharaj Ji (in the early phase of his American career he was considered a divine being); meditation and devotion will lead to a mystical experience of absorption into this divine spirit. In spiritualizing fashion, materialism is strongly condemned and the group is regarded as the means to spiritual rediscovery. The millennial aspect was extremely important for a time: followers gathered in the Astrodome in Houston, Texas, for Millennium 73 to announce the coming of a new age of peace and spirituality over which Maharaj Ji would be "Lord." There was a good deal of disappointment among the following when nothing very spectacular happened, and the millennial theme was thereafter minimized. The restoration motif surfaced in the claim that the guru was the embodiment of the same love Christ had earlier represented, but that now its truth would finally be recognized. The theme of community was apparent in the movement's hopes for a renewed world, as well as in the life of the Ashrams, which was to be a life of harmonial togetherness.[25] With such themes, its appeal to Americans should not be surprising.

The Unification Church of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon is a better known presence on the American scene than the Divine Light Mission; its appeal also illustrates the prominence of the cultural themes traced in this essay. A concept of restoration is at the very heart of Unification theology: human history is a process whereby divine providence seeks to restore humankind to its original and perfect condition before the fall; the first coming of Christ was an attempt at this restoration and the messianic age will bring a more complete restoration. This theme of restoration blends into the eschatological theme of the millennium in Unification theology.[26] That millennial age is not understood in apocalyptic terms but as the emergence of an ideal world society made possible by the triumph of Divine Principle. That new age is even now being entered, and though

there is a certain reticence about declaring Sun Myung Moon to be the new messiah, that is clearly the implication of Unification teaching.[27] The new age for Unification theology is also an age of the spirit, in which there will again be direct communication with God and the spiritual world. The inauguration of this age will be accompanied by a release of special spiritual and psychic powers and phenomena.[28] The Unification Church is a communal movement,[29] and that characteristic is rooted in the belief that this is the last age and that a core group of devotees must proclaim the message to bring about this final redemption.

Both the Unification Church and the Divine Light Mission represent new religious groups which began outside of the United States but underwent success and alteration when they transferred to it. Scientology, founded in America as a scientific form of mind cure by L. Ron Hubbard, who had earlier been a successful science fiction writer, displays many of the same themes as the others, with the spiritualist element strongest and communitarianism absent. Restorationism is present in an individual and personal rather than ecclesiastical or social dimension, with the notion that those who have gone through the scientological mind cure process have been "cleared," by a removal of negative influences called "engrams" which built up in early life and possibly even in previous lives. There is thus a restoration to a kind of pristine condition of self.[30] Perhaps there is a kind of millennialism in the hope that as all persons are "cleared" and come into a full understanding of reality there will be a golden age in which present societal evils—crime, war and so on—will pass away.[31] The spiritualist theme is present in the belief that the scientological therapeutic process brings a rapid spiritual advancement and an awareness of one's true spiritual capacities. It is also present in the Scientological notion of an evolution through the ages of "thetans," or disembodied spiritual essences. Moreover, as a therapy, Scientology has the conviction that what one takes as reality is a matter of thoughts, so that a change in thoughts means a change in reality.[32]

The Children of God, or Family of Love, grew out of the American counterculture Jesus movement, under the leadership of David Berg. In its beginnings it shared much with evangelical fundamentalism (Berg had begun as a minister in the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination), but under Berg's increasingly autocratic leadership it took on many features which sharply separated it from the broad currents of American pentecostal evangelicalism and fundamentalism. (One such feature was the use of sexual seduction to gain converts.) The group is communal in its lifestyle and fervently millennial, or more precisely premillennial, in its eschatology. Its doctrine predicted that a time of great confusion would arrive in the late 1970s and early 1980s and that after many very specific events, the "rapture" of the saints would occur as they were taken into heaven. The small remnant of faithful believers (it is felt that the Christian churches are generally apostate) represent the restoration of the remnant of Israel as "the children of God." This new age of restoration is also an age of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the belief in baptism by the Holy Spirit

and the practice of glossalalia (speaking in tongues) by the Children of God.[33]

The four themes that have been identified in American sect and cult religions are all rooted in earlier American Protestantism and firmly embedded in general American cultural attitudes. In such groups as the Mormons, Christian Scientists, the Divine Light Mission, the Unification Church and Scientology, they take on highly specialized meanings and have very particular applications, but are nonetheless recognizable. This recognition is significant for the study of small religious groups in America by enabling a better integration of these groups with the sweep of American cultural and religious history as a whole. They may be out of the mainstream, but they are not so distant as they appear to be at first glance. Even some of the apparently very strange religious ideas and groups present in American culture teach what are highly particularized variations on some of the principal themes that predominate in American religious culture as a whole. This means not only that many of the later-blooming religious groups have repeated themes prominent in the earlier ones, but also that these religions will in time seem far closer to the mainstream than they did at first. As exotic as the Divine Light Mission seems to many Americans, a recent study concluded that this group functions to take persons out of aimlessness and drug abuse and to restore them to the mainstream of American life.[34] A similar observation has been noted in studies of the effect of other groups.[35] But such a conclusion is not so ironic as it at first appears, if these groups actually pass on themes familiar to American religion and culture as a whole.

Such a conclusion contributes perspective to the contemporary discussion of cults, a discussion that is shaped both by the seemingly greater proliferation of new groups than ever before and the relative decline in cultural importance of many mainstream groups. It is also testimony to the power that the American cultural milieu has had in shaping religion, and to the continuing vitality of religious improvisation in the context of American religious liberty. And at least one element of what seems to be the cultural confusion and uncertainty of our time, the religious, may have more consistency with the past than is at first apparent.

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notes

1. "Religions on the Christian Perimeter," in James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds., *The Shaping of American Religion* (Princeton, 1961), 180-182.
2. Quoted by John F. Wilson, "The Historical Study of Marginal Religions," in Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone, eds., *Religious Movements in Contemporary America* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1974), 597-598.
3. J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America* (Philadelphia, 1967), 13.
4. Wilson, in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements,* 600.
5. Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1938); W. J. Schnell, *Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave* (London, 1956); Streiker, *The Cults are Coming* (Nashville, 1978), 7.
6. E.g., Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements*, xff.
7. Joel 2:28.

8. Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (rpt. New York, 1959), 317-318; C. H. Faust and T. H. Johnson, eds. *Jonathan Edwards, Representative Selections,* (New York, 1962), 69.

9. Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel, Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), 218ff, 278ff.

10. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York, 1979), 27; Janet L. Dolgin, "Latter-Day Sense and Substance," in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements,* 530-533.

11. Arrington and Bitton, 127.

12. *Ibid.,* 66.

13. *Ibid.,* 65.

14. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago, 1957), 120, 124-125.

15. In Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), 195-197; see also Gail Thain Parker, *Mind Cure in New England from the Civil War to World War I* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1973), 58: "It is hard to find anything in the New Thought Creed which Emerson did not say first."

16. Stephen Gottschalk, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life* (Berkeley, California, 1973), 88.

17. Robert Peel, *Christian Science: Its Encounter with American Culture* (New York, 1965), 22, 35, 43ff., 54-55, 59-60, 98.

18. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1961), 89-92.

19. Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *Religions and Spiritual Groups in Modern America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973), 42ff.

20. R. Lawrence Moore, "Spiritualism," in Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., *The Rise of Adventism, Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (New York, 1974), 81.

21. Gottschalk, 30, 129-30, 167.

22. *Ibid.,* 24-25; Judah, 270.

23. Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *Alternative Altars, Unconventional and Eastern Spirituality in America* (Chicago, 1979), 87; Gottschalk, 96-97.

24. Ellwood, *Alternative Altars,* 99, 101.

25. James V. Downton, Jr., *Sacred Journeys: The Conversion of Young Americans to Divine Light Mission* (New York, 1979).

26. Young Oon Kim, *Unification Theology* (New York, 1980), 229; David G. Bromley and Anson D. Shupe, Jr., *Moonies in America: Cult, Church, and Crusade* (Beverly Hills, 1979), 97-102; Thomas McGowan, "Horace Bushnell and the Unification Movement: A Comparison of Theologies," in Herbert Richardson, ed., *Ten Theologians Respond to the Unification Church* (New York, 1981), 34; Frederick Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church* (Nashville, 1977), 104.

27. Kim, 266-267, 277, 293-294; Sontag, 110-112.

28. Sontag, 113; Kim, 269-271; Sun Myung Moon, *Divine Principle* (New York, 1977), 177.

29. David G. Bromley and Anson D. Shupe, Jr., *Strange Gods: The Great American Cult Scare* (Boston, 1981), 35-36.

30. *Ibid.,* 49-50; Omar V. Garrison, *The Hidden Story of Scientology* (Seacaucus, New Jersey, 1974), 29-30.

31. Garrison, 25.

32. *Ibid.,* 38, 46-47; Roy Wallis, *The Road to Total Freedom: A Sociological Analysis of Scientology* (New York, 1977), 106, 112-113, 115.

33. Bromley and Shupe, *Strange Gods,* 26-31; Lowell Streiker, *The Jesus Trip: Advent to the Jesus Freaks* (Nashville, 1971), 51; James T. Richardson and Rex Davis, "Experiential Fundamentalism: Revisions of Orthodoxy in the Jesus Movement," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* 51 (September, 1983), 405-421; Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *One Way: The Jesus Movement and Its Meaning* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973), 97-111; Roy Wallis, *Salvation and Protest: Studies of Social and Religious Movements* (New York, 1979), 69-71, 74-80.

34. Downton, 118, *passim.*

35. E.g., Raymond Prince, "Concern of Youth with the Mystical," in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements,* 269-270; Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, "The Meher Baba Movement: Its Affect on Post-Adolescent Social Alienation," in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements,* 479, 505.