

# PRAYING ACROSS BORDERS: HOW IMMIGRANTS ARE CHANGING THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE



PEGGY LEVITT\*

ABSTRACT  
KEYWORD  
????????

The suburb of expensive homes with neatly-trimmed lawns and SUVs seems like any other well-to-do American community, but the mailboxes reveal a twist: almost all are labeled “Patel” or “Bhaghat.” Over the past twenty years, these Indian immigrants have moved from the villages and small towns of central Gujarat State on the west coast of India, initially to rental apartment complexes in northeastern Massachusetts, and then to their own homes in subdivisions outside Boston. Watching these suburban dwellers work, attend school, and build religious congregations here, casual observers might conclude that yet another wave of immigrants has succeeded at the American dream. A closer look, however, reveals they are achieving Gujarati dreams as well. They send money back to India to open businesses and improve family farms. They support the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and The Indian American Political Forum. The temples and religious schools they build are changing the Gujarati as well as the American religious landscape. And their influence is not lost on Indian politicians who energetically encourage their involvement in Indian political and economic life.

Dipa Patel and her husband, Pratik, exemplify two such immigrants who keep their feet in the U.S. and in their homelands at the same time. Nearly six years ago, Pratik left Bodeli, a town of approximately 10,000, to marry Dipa. He had a Bachelor of Arts Degree in computer science from an Indian university, and he and his cousin were partners in a computer school franchise. When he first moved to America, Pratik found a job on the assembly line of a large telecommunications firm. Rewarded for his hard work, he moved back to the engineering

\* Wellesley College and Harvard University. January 20, 2007.



track and has ascended the corporate ladder steadily ever since. The company, which packed over 8,000 cars into its parking lot each morning in its heyday, now employs less than a thousand workers, but Pratik is still among them.

Nothing has deterred Pratik and Dipa from their pursuit of the American dream. As soon as he completed the mandatory five-year residency requirement, Pratik filed for citizenship. He and Dipa now have two young daughters who are more conversant in American children's songs and folktales than they are in Indian stories. Pratik takes classes toward his Master's at a Boston University satellite campus in the evenings. Dipa works as a quality insurance supervisor at a computer manufacturing company. Each month, they go to *BJs Warehouse* to purchase pieces of American middle class life. And last fall, they finally achieved the *pièce de résistance*— their own home in a new subdivision in southern New Hampshire.

But Pratik and Dipa steadfastly pursue Gujarati dreams as well. They are the primary source of financial support for Pratik's parents, and Pratik continues to be a partner in the computer school. He sends money back to buy new equipment when he has funds to spare. And before buying their home in America, the family's first project was to build a second story onto the house in Bodeli, including a separate bedroom suite and western-style bathroom, which sit empty except during their visits.

One of the principal ways that Pratik and Dipa's lives transcend national borders is through religion. They belong to the International Swaminarayan Satsang Organization (ISSO), a Hindu denomination based in Ahmedabad in Gujarat State that has interconnected chapters all over the world. They spend most of their weekends at the Temple in Lowell, Massachusetts, an old Episcopalian church where the altar now houses Hindu deities rather than a statue of Jesus. On Saturday evenings, there are *sabhas* or prayer sessions followed by large communal vegetarian meals. Pratik and Dipa's children attend religious school classes and youth group meetings each Sunday. Most of their friends are fellow Swaminarayan members who stand in for the extended family they so sorely miss. The community is an important font of social support when a new baby is born, a family moves into a new home, or there is an illness or death. By being Swaminarayan, Pratik and Dipa make a place for themselves in the United States.

At the same time, belonging to the ISSO is very much about maintaining a home in India. Pratik constantly consults with religious leaders there, not only about temple business, but about difficult decisions he faces in his personal life. When he was deciding whether he should invest in a small grocery store, he called India. When the community was unsure about whether to participate in a city-wide relief drive for Asian tsunami victims, he called to discuss the pros and cons. The directors of the temple always consult their leaders back home about important decisions. They host a steady stream of visiting dignitaries from India and from other ISSO communities around the world. By being Swaminarayan, then,



Pratik and Dipa also carve out an enduring place for themselves in their ancestral home.

Evidence of America's increasing religious diversity, brought about by Pratik, Dipa, and others like them, is at every corner. The sign at the local Protestant Church now includes a line in Korean or Chinese to attract newcomers to the ethnic congregations that worship there. In between the *Subway* and *Dunkin Donuts* at the strip mall is a new Swaminarayan meeting hall. Religious groups that were once tightly connected to one immigrant community have become "disengaged," abandoning their commitment to that particular group in favor of a more universal and inclusive approach. The Catholic Church has backed away from its national parish strategy toward multi-ethnic congregations. Pentecostals proselytize among all groups, regardless of race and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> The White House hosts *Divali* and *Eid*<sup>2</sup> celebrations each year, sending a clear signal to the country that the American religious rainbow has added more colors.

Commentators like Diana Eck, Martin Marty, Robert Wuthnow, and Alan Wolfe,<sup>3</sup> applaud the country's increasing religious diversity, but tend to explain this pluralism as the result of forces operating inside the United States. They argue that America's sacred texts, such as the Constitution, laid the groundwork for religious diversity to flourish. In the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights and anti-war movements transformed this "culture of pluralism" into something mainstream.

We need to broaden our lens and see religious pluralism in America as an integral piece of the larger global religious puzzle.<sup>4</sup> Just as the corporate CEO would be out on the street in a heartbeat if she did not see her company as part of the global economy, so we miss the boat by continuing to insist that religion and culture are nationally bounded. Just as we recognize the U.S. economy is made up of various, worldwide production and distribution networks, so we must see the local mosque or Pentecostal church as part of multi-layered webs of connection where religious "goods" are produced and exchanged around the globe.

Undeniably, many religious institutions were founded on universal claims and, in many cases, have always been global.<sup>5</sup> In this era of the nation-state,

<sup>1</sup> Peter Dobkin Hall notes that the history of evangelism has been characterized by both inclusive and exclusive phases, but asserts, "In the United States...evangelical identity, has over time, proved remarkably elastic, enabling distinctions based on creed, class, politics, and geography to wax and wane in significance (2000: 33).

<sup>2</sup> *Divali* is the Hindu New Year, often celebrated with a Festival of Lights, and the Muslim *Eid Al-Fitr* is a celebration marking the end of the fast during Ramadan.

<sup>3</sup> Eck (2001), Marty (1997), Wuthnow (1998; 2005), and Wolfe 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Hagan and Ebaugh (2003), Ebaugh and Chafetz (2002), Yang (2001), (Kurien 2001) Yang and Ebaugh (2001), Wellmeier (1998) Menjívar (1999) Levitt (2001), Carnes and Yang (2004), Hagan and Ebaugh (2003), Rudolph and Piscatori (1997), and the January 2005 Latin American Perspectives special volume on the American hemisphere, edited by Manuel A. Vázquez and Philip J. Williams.

<sup>5</sup> Juergensmeyer (2000).



however, religion's universality and globalism is often seen as taking a back seat to national legal and political regimes. But religion, like Capitalism, is no longer embedded in a particular territory or legal regime, nor is it as encumbered by external political, cultural, or moral principles.<sup>6</sup> Cultural referents, once bounded by ethnicity, language, and nation-state borders, are being disconnected or lifted out of national territories, rendering discussions of national religious practice off the mark.

A growing body of work has begun to use a broader optic and provides important insights about the role of religion in today's global world and how it differs from prior incarnations. Theorists such as Peter Beyer and Roland Robertson emphasize the need to use the global system as the primary unit of analysis to understand contemporary social life. As Christopher Queen (2002: 327) points out, Buddhism, like Judaism and Christianity, has been an "international" religion from early on, but its local variations remained largely isolated from one another. Manuel Vásquez (2003) calls this the "thin" globalization of world empires, in which interdependence was horizontal and constant, and any cultural or religious syncretism was limited to cosmopolitan urban centers and port towns.

What are the cultural and religious consequences of "thick" contemporary globalization, with its increasing velocity? First, many religions have become *multi-centered*, which differs from their *multi-sitedness* of the past (Beyer 2001). Buddhist ideas and practices, for example, now move with unprecedented speed to non-Asian countries, but it's not simply a move from the religion's center to periphery – it's about the emergence of multiple new centers, with regionalized Buddhist interpretations and practices. Because the centers are constantly in communication with each other, East and West, the "old country" and the new, infuse and transform one another.

Second, if globalization is the ever-changing state of "mutability," (note, Beyer) and we no longer have the security of an ascribed or fixed sense of self, this leads to several problems which religion may be able to solve. Robertson and Chirico define two problems as the "legitimacy of the world order of societies (nations)" and "the meaning of what mankind 'really is'." Peter Beyer reminds us that in this state of mutability, it is not only the speed with which rapid changes occur that can be problematic, but who ends up holding the power. He proposes two responses that religious groups offer in the wake of globalization. The first is "conservative," and fundamentalist in nature. In this case, religion is a vehicle for asserting particularistic identities that are threatened by changing global conditions. The second, or "liberal" response, is for religions to re-orient toward the global whole and take up the values of the emerging culture. Beyer emphasizes that these are "pure types" and points out the many hybrid forms fall between these two extremes.

<sup>6</sup> Casanova 1994; Held, et al. 1999, Vásquez and Marquardt 2003.



Jose Casanova (2001) suggests that the changes that occur in religion happen because the secular (political) realm has infiltrated the two arenas religion once fulfilled—a monopoly on salvation and the function of “community cult,” or the solidarity offered by collective representation of an imagined community. Accordingly, we need to view religion as a cultural system, one that in a globalized world, has been disembedded. This represents both a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, the “old” world civilizations and religions can free themselves from the territoriality of the nation-state, resuming their transnational dimensions and regaining a leading role on global stage. On the other hand, they may be plagued by the dissolution of the intrinsic link between sacred time and sacred space, or the bonds of shared histories, peoples and territories that have always defined civilizations and religion.

Though helpful, these largely theoretical accounts tell us little about how religion is actually lived.<sup>7</sup> Much of this work overlooks the people actually doing

<sup>7</sup> This book builds on this important literature by arguing for a move beyond a cross-cultural or comparative lens where the unit of analysis is generally the national society or a “world” religion. For example, Demerath (2001) compares the relationship between religion and politics in a variety of countries, but doesn’t necessarily look at how those relationships interact with each other. Others report on different manifestation of the same world religion around the globe but not the connections between them.

Since the worldwide and often parallel “resurgence” of religion and nationalism in the 1980s (the Islamic revolution in Iran, religious and counter-nationalist movements in the former Soviet bloc, etc.), there was been a revival of interest in religion and nationalism. Much of this work is based on an implicit surprise—“modern” nationalism should have been secular, thus presenting a theoretical dilemma for mainstream political and social sciences married to a modernization paradigm (Spohn 2003: 265-6). Here again, these are often parallel but not interconnected narratives. For example, a recent article seeking to “address the absence of religion in the literature on nationalism” discusses two of the countries in this study, India and Ireland, without mentioning the relationship of their diasporas to the national conflicts (Rieffer 2003). Chapters Two and Seven of this book make the case for the importance of taking emigrants’ transnational political activities into account.

A growing body of work has begun to use a broader optic and provides important insights about the role of religion in today’s global world and how it differs from prior incarnations. These theorists emphasize the need to use the global system as the primary unit of analysis to understand contemporary social life (Beyer 2001; cf. Robertson 2001). As Christopher Queen (2002: 327) points out, Buddhism, like Judaism and Christianity, has been an “international” religion from early on, but its local variations remained largely isolated from one another. Manuel Vásquez (2003) calls this the “thin” globalization of world empires, in which interdependence was horizontal and constant, and any cultural or religious syncretism was limited to cosmopolitan urban centers and port towns.

What are the cultural and religious consequences of “thick” contemporary globalization, with its increasing velocity? First, many religions have become *multi-centered*, which differs from their *multi-sitedness* of the past (Beyer 2001). Buddhist ideas and practices, for example, now move with unprecedented speed to non-Asian countries, but it’s not simply a move from the religion’s center to periphery – it’s about the emergence of multiple new centers, with regionalized Buddhist interpretations and practices, that are socioculturally particularized (Baumann and Prebish 2002: 7). Because the centers are constantly in communication with each other, East and West and old and new infuse and transform one another. “These changes in the Buddhist worldview, from mutual encounters between Asia and the West, represent an example of a “profound mutual assimilation,” displaying “hybridity all the way down” (Queen 2002: 331).

Second, if globalization is the ever-changing state of “mutability” (Beyer 2001) and we no longer have the security of an ascribed or fixed sense of self (Robertson and Chirico 1985), then several



the globalizing. Further, as Spohn (2003) asserts, globalization theories are macro-paradigms that are not unlike modernization paradigms in some respects. One essentializes the global system, the other the nation-state system. Both tend to “correlate the political, socioeconomic and cultural phenomena and dimensions, instead of considering the local, national and transnational macro-micro linkages, relations and interactions” (Spohn 2003: 266). Vásquez and Marquardt (2003: 3) warn similarly about the danger of “glossing over the contested, uneven, and situated impact of globalization.” They prefer to talk about “anchored” or “grounded” globalization.” Moreover, they use case studies, as I do, to emphasize the importance of local places and “thick” descriptions.

problems arise which religion may be able to solve. Robertson and Chirico (1985) define two of them – the “legitimacy of the world order of societies (nations)” and “the meaning of what mankind 'really is'.” These are essentially problems of definition, both at the universal level (what is happening to my society/nation in this globalizing world?) as well as at the level of the self (who am I as a member of this society/nation and as a member of humanity at large?). These concerns engender a paradoxical response –we search not only for particularistic identities (the local) but also for the meaning of the universal whole (the global): thus, globalization is about universalization of particularisms and the particularization of universalisms (Robertson 2001).

Peter Beyer reminds us that in this state of mutability, it is not only the speed with which rapid changes occur, but who ends up holding the power, “The global system corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities; yet it also encourages the creation and revitalization of particular identities as a way of gaining control over systemic power” (Beyer 2001: PAGE). He proposes two responses that religious groups offer in the wake of globalization. The first is “conservative,” and fundamentalist in nature. In this case, religion is a vehicle for asserting particularistic identities that are threatened by changing global conditions. The second, or “liberal” response, is for religions to re-orient toward the global whole and take up the values of the emerging culture. He emphasizes that these are “pure types” and points out the many hybrid forms fall between these two extremes.

Other scholars direct our attention toward spatial and temporal considerations in a world where space is boundless and time is simultaneous. Jose Casanova (2001) believes that while globalization frees capitalism from territorial bonds, we cannot look at “church” without looking at “state.” The changes that occur in religion happen because the secular (political) realm has infiltrated the two arenas religion once fulfilled –a monopoly on salvation and the function of “community cult,” or the solidarity offered by collective representation of an imagined community (2001: 427). Accordingly, we need to view religion as a cultural system, one that in a globalized world, has been disembedded. This represents both a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, the “old” world civilizations and religions can free themselves from the territoriality of the nation-state, resuming their transnational dimensions and regaining a leading role on global stage. On the other hand, they may be plagued by the dissolution of the intrinsic link between sacred time and sacred space, or the bonds of shared histories, peoples and territories that have always defined civilizations and religions (Casanova 2001: 430).

These largely theoretical accounts tell us little about how religion is actually lived. Further, as Spohn (2003) asserts, globalization theories are macro-paradigms that are not unlike modernization paradigms in some respects. One essentializes the global system, the other the nation-state system. Both tend to “correlate the political, socioeconomic and cultural phenomena and dimensions, instead of considering the local, national and transnational macro-micro linkages, relations and interactions” (Spohn 2003: 266). Vásquez and Marquardt (2003: 3) warn similarly, “There is a danger of “glossing over the contested, uneven, and situated impact of globalization. Abstract readings of globalization risks obscuring the conflict-laden relations among global, regional, national, local and individual actors and processes. That is why we prefer to talk about “anchored” or “grounded” globalization” (cf. Fox and Starn 1997/1997; Burawoy et al 2000). They use case studies, as I do, to emphasize the importance of local places and thick descriptions.



It is precisely this nexus between global religious norms and institutions and lived religion –the actual religious practices, discourses, and organizations that are the stuff of daily religious life<sup>8</sup>– that my research and book try to capture. By paying attention to everyday lived religious experience, it is possible to see where and how religious globalization is really happening. Such a focus is needed if we are to bring conventional wisdom about religion, migration, and the nation-state more in-sync with reality. Let me suggest some new ways of thinking about categories we tend to take for granted.

### *Thinking outside the nation-state container<sup>9</sup>*

Grasping that people earn their livings, participate in elections campaigns, or raise children across borders can be challenging. Most people take for granted that the world has always been and always will be organized into sovereign nation-states. They are more likely to compare family life in different countries than to think of households as networks of people living in several countries who pool their income.<sup>10</sup> Most governments locate the causes and solutions to their problems inside their borders rather than thinking of health or educational status as produced by people living in several places at one time.

But such a view is short on history. Capitalism, imperial and colonial regimes, anti-slavery and workers' rights campaigns, illegal pirating networks, and, of course, religions have always crossed borders. The modern nation-state system did not even exist until after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. In the early 1900s, there were barely 130 sovereign states; the remaining 65 percent of the world's political entities were colonies and protectorates. Three quarters (150) of the more than 200 countries recognized today came into existence in the last century.<sup>11</sup>

Assuming that social life automatically takes place within a national container blinds us to the way the world actually works. Assuming that political outcomes are decided nationally doesn't give enough credit to political and social

<sup>8</sup> Robert Orsi writes that (2003:172), "The study of lived religion situates all religious creativity within culture and approaches all religion as lived experience, theology no less than lighting a candle for a troubled loved one, spirituality as well as other, less culturally sanctioned forms of religious expression. Rethinking religion as a form of cultural work, the study of lived religion directs attention to institutions and persons, texts and rituals, practice and theology, things and ideas – as media of making and unmaking worlds. The key questions concern what people do with religious idioms, how they use them, what they make of themselves and their worlds with them, and how, in turn, men, women and children are shaped by the worlds they are making as they make these worlds. See also Hall 1997.

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, Khagram and Levitt 2005.

<sup>10</sup>For work on transnational families, see Bryceson and Vuorela 2000; Chamberlin 2002; Nyberg Sorenson and Fog Olwig 2002; Parrenas, R. S. 2001; Pessar and Mahler 2003.

<sup>11</sup>In 1900, there were 43 generally recognized nation-states; by 1998, there were 193 – today the number is over 200 (Martin 2003). The number doubled (90 to 180) from 1960 to the mid-1990s (Held et al 1999).



movements involving activists from around the world. Taking literally the label, “Made in the U.S.A.” ignores the fact that some piece of that garment was probably made in Latin America or Asia.<sup>12</sup> Eberhard Sandschneider, the Research Director at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin, got it right when he told the 2005 Davos delegates, “What we are increasingly seeing is a multidimensional system in which states and state-based multilateral organizations work with businesses and civil society through a dense web of international and interdisciplinary networks.”<sup>13</sup>

To pick up on these dynamics, one has to trade in a national lens for a transnational one. This is not to deny the continuing importance of nation-states nor the fact that states continue to regulate many aspects of life. Nor it is to argue that everything is produced by factors operating outside national borders. Indeed, in many cases, they play only a small supporting role in the story. It is to say that to understand today’s world, one has to ask how individuals and groups actually organize themselves, without assuming, a priori, that they fit neatly within a national box.

### *Using a transnational lens to understand immigration*

Understanding that migration is a transnational process, and that people will simultaneously belong to this country and their homelands for the long haul, reveals several important things. For one, sometimes migration is as much about the people who stay behind as it is about people who move. In some cases, the ties between migrants and non-migrants are so strong and widespread that migration also radically transforms the lives of individuals who stay home.<sup>14</sup> People don’t have to move to participate across borders. People, money, and what I have called social remittances<sup>15</sup>—the ideas, practices, social capital, and identities that migrants send back into their communities of origin—permeate their daily lives, changing how they act and challenging their ideas about gender, right and wrong, and what states should and should not do. The religious, social, and political groups they belong to also begin to operate across borders.

<sup>12</sup>In the last decade, the idea that a “value chain,” has taken hold. This is the range of activities carrying a product from its conception to its ultimate consumer that has taken a “global” turn, especially with respect to the “governance.” In the contemporary era of globalization, buyers, sellers, and producers at various points in the chain, are more likely than ever to come from multiple firms and/or from opposite ends of the globe. The link to economic and political development is self-evident. See, for example, Gereffi and Korzeniewicz (1994); Humphrey and Schmitz (2000); Kaplinsky (2000); and Schmitz (2004).

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Bennhold 2005.

<sup>14</sup>Throughout this book, I used the term migrant, rather than immigrant or emigrant, to capture this in-between status.

<sup>15</sup>Levitt 2001.





Non-migrants hear enough stories, look at enough photographs, and watch enough videos of birthday parties and weddings filmed in the United States to begin imagining their own lives elsewhere. They covet clothes and accessories that become a standard part of their dress code. They want to play by the rules they imagine are at work in the United States, which they learn about each time they talk on the phone, receive e-mail, or someone comes to visit. In such cases, migrants and non-migrants, though separated by physical distance, still occupy the same social space. Although laws and political borders limit movement and formal citizenship, their lives are strongly connected by the myriad economic, political, and religious activities that cross borders. What happens to those in the U.S. cannot be separated from what happens to those who remain in the homeland because their fates are inextricably linked. When a small group is regularly involved in their sending country, and others participate periodically, their combined efforts add up. Taken together and over time, they are a social force that can transform the economy, the values, and the everyday lives of entire regions.

One factor propelling these changes is the enormous amount of money that migrants send home. According to the World Bank, official remittance numbers (\$93 billion) in 2003 may represent only half the funds people actually send. The global remittance market may actually be as large as \$200-300 billion annually.<sup>16</sup> Countries like Albania, Croatia, El Salvador, Samoa, Yemen, and Jordan are among a growing number of countries in which remittances exceed private and official capital inflows and are the primary source of foreign currency.<sup>17</sup> These nations depend so heavily on remittances that their economies might collapse if they declined. To prevent that from happening, numerous governments now offer emigrants some form of long-distance, long-term membership. States as diverse as France, Ireland, Greece, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Italy, Portugal, and China give emigrants and their descendants full rights when they return to their homelands, even if they are passport holders of another country. Colombia even grants political rights to migrants who are abroad by allowing expatriates to elect representatives to the Colombian legislature.<sup>18</sup>

Looking at migrants and nonmigrants transnationally also acknowledges that their lives are influenced by people and organizations in many other places and at many other levels of social experience. The relationship between Salvadoran villagers and their migrant family members in Los Angeles is not just a function of the specific ties between these two local settings. It also results from ties between the Salvadoran and U.S. governments and the Salvadoran and U.S. Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, understanding the religious lives of Brazilians in

<sup>16</sup>Hussain 2005.

<sup>17</sup>Buch and Kuckulenz 2004.

<sup>18</sup>Glick Schiller and Levitt 2005.

<sup>19</sup>See Menjivar 2003 and Chinchilla and Hamilton (2001).



Massachusetts requires looking beyond the connections between specific congregations in Boston and Brazil and placing them in the context of the thick, multi-layered web of denominational connections linking the two countries.

Finally, seeing migrants and nonmigrants as occupying the same social space also drives home the dramatic changes that have occurred in the meaning of incorporation. The immigrant experience is not a linear, irreversible journey from one membership to another. Rather, migrants pivot back and forth between sending, receiving and other orientations at different stages of their lives. They supplement the income they earn in the U.S. with investments they still have in their homelands. They raise their during the school year in Boston and send them back to Pakistan for the summer because they want them to be culturally and linguistically fluent in both places. Some are fortunate enough to be able to move up the U.S. and homeland socioeconomic ladder at the same time. Others move up with respect to their homeland while they experience status declines in the U.S., while still others are downwardly mobile in relation to both places. And the more their lives are grounded in legal, health care and pension systems on both sides of the border, the more likely it is that their transnational lives will endure.<sup>20</sup> Newcomers will not fully assimilate or remain entirely focused on their homelands but continue to craft some combination of the two.<sup>21</sup>

#### REMAPPING THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE<sup>22</sup>

Statistically speaking, the United States remains overwhelming Christian. Of the 82 percent who call themselves Christians, the majority (52%) are Protestant, followed by Catholics (24%). Those who claim “no religious preference” comprise about 10 percent of the population.<sup>23</sup> Although the numbers of Muslims and Buddhists have doubled in the past decade, and the numbers of Hindus have tripled, non-Christians still represent a fairly small portion of America.<sup>24</sup> Jews and Muslims represent only two and 1.5 percent of the population respectively, and “Eastern” religions, such as Buddhism or Hinduism, weigh in at less than one percent each.<sup>25</sup> The most remarkable change in American religion has been the increasing number

<sup>20</sup>Caglar 2003.

<sup>21</sup>Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, Morawska 2002.

<sup>22</sup>Much of what is included in this section will be old news to religion scholars. It will not, I fear, be old news to migration scholars who have largely ignored religion. Witness the SSRC handbook (1999) on international migration with one reference in the index about religion. In recent years, migration scholars have begun to pay more attention to religion, but there is still much more that needs to be done.

<sup>23</sup>The remaining six percent identified as Mormons, “Something Else” and “Don’t Know or Refused to Answer,” at two percent each (PEW 2002).

<sup>24</sup>Kosmin et al 2001, using their figures from the 1990 NSRI (National Survey of Religious Identification) and the 2001 ARIS (American Religious Identification Survey)

<sup>25</sup>World Christian Database 2004.



of individuals who say they have no religion, up from just over eight percent in 1990<sup>26</sup> to anywhere between 9-14 percent a decade later.<sup>27</sup>

Embedded in these categories, though, is much more diversity than broad labels like “Christian” or “Catholic” reveal. New immigrants are introducing new faiths as well as “Latinoizing” and “Asianizing” well-established denominations. A survey of “new immigrants” conducted by Guillermina Jasso and based on a random sample of persons admitted as Permanent Residents to this country in July and August of 1996, found that Catholicism (41.9%), Christian-Protestant (18.6%), and “No Religion” (15.1%) were the residents’ top religious preferences.<sup>28</sup> By some estimates, Mexican and other Latin American foreign-born individuals account for nearly forty percent of the country’s Roman Catholics.<sup>29</sup>

Differences in migrants’ country-of-origin mix are also changing the religious make-up of the Asian immigrant population. Between 1990-2001, the proportion of newly arriving Asians fell from 63 to 43 percent while those professing Asian religions increased from 15 to 28 percent.<sup>30</sup> Jasso and her colleagues also found that the proportion of foreign-born people professing faiths other than Judeo-Christianity was more than four times greater than among the native-born—nearly 17 percent versus four percent. Surveys conducted in 2003-2004 found a continued rise in non-Christian religious preferences, although the researchers carrying out this work differed as to how much.<sup>31</sup>

Incorporating newcomers is an age-old story for Catholics, who had plenty of practice turning Irish and Italian immigrants into American Catholics and are using many of the same techniques to incorporate Brazilians and Vietnamese. Mainline and evangelical Protestant faiths are not as experienced at integrating newcomers, although they face great incentives to do so given their declining native-born populations.<sup>32</sup> Many of these new immigrants are the product of

<sup>26</sup>Kosmin et al 1990.

<sup>27</sup>Kosmin et al (2001), who place this proportion at the higher end (13.6%), cite that the *number* of adults “who do not subscribe to any religious identification” doubled from 14.3 million in 1990 to 29.4 million in 2001. Data from the General Social Survey also support this view. Social Change Report No. 49 (2005) cites the percentage of respondents whose current religion is “none” at 7.7% in 1990 and 14.1% in 2000. PEW Research Council surveys (2001; 2002) and WCD (World Christian Database) are more conservative, estimating these figures at about 9 percent.

<sup>28</sup>Jasso et al 2004: 221.

<sup>29</sup>According to the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops’ Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, approximately 39 percent—or 25 million of the nation’s 65 million—of U.S. Catholics are Hispanic. Citing the fact that from 1970-2000, Latinos accounted for 86% of the growth in the U.S. Catholic population, the National Council on Hispanic Ministry estimates that within one generation, they will make up half of all U.S. Catholics (2001).

<sup>30</sup>Kosmin et al 2001

<sup>31</sup>Gallup polls (2004) found about five percent professing “Other, non-Christian religions,” while Pew Surveys on Religion and Public Life showed slightly more (6.4%). A survey by the Barna Research Group (2004) that looked at “Religious Beliefs and Practices by Race” uncovered 11 percent “aligned with a non-Christian faith,” including 45 percent among Asians.

<sup>32</sup>Except for the influence of German Lutheranism on the predominantly Calvinist pre-Civil War religion, Protestantism largely sidestepped the “problem” of religious accommodation throughout



missionary work done in Latin America and Asia during the 1900s.<sup>33</sup> The descendants of those who converted are now bringing their own version of Christianity back to the United States and asking to practice their faith alongside their denominational brothers and sisters. New and old members are having to invent ways to pray, learn, and pursue social change together. Their views about how to do this are often quite different, but the compromises that are starting to be reached are a major source of religious change.<sup>34</sup>

Other immigrants belong to global religious movements that unite members who happen to be living in the United States with fellow believers around the world. Again, this is not entirely new. Some Sufi orders, for example, have maintained strong ties between new places of residence and their centers since the tenth century.<sup>35</sup> Charismatic Catholics also belong to small communities of prayer and fellowship which unite them with fellow believers in other countries. The Tablighi Jama'at, one of the largest transnational Islamic movements, is now believed to be comparable in size and scope to Christian Pentecostalism. Its members participate in missions travel around the world urging Muslims to wake up, be faithful, and return to the correct practice of their faith.<sup>36</sup>

---

the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The first, and most obvious reason was that a large number of "newcomers" were Catholic. By 1860, a nation that was virtually 100 percent Protestant in 1790, was only three-quarters so, or even 60 percent if you looked at actual church membership instead of ethnic or religious identification (Hutchinson 2003: 26-27). On an ideological level, however, "integration" was only allowed from within; if you were a "cultural insider," you could be about as different as you wished in actual religious views" (Hutchinson 2003: 57). Newcomers had to become "like us" first-American, and by default, Protestant. Even though the phrase, "the decline of Protestantism," was already used by the mid-nineteenth century (Noll 2002), it didn't relax the requirements to become fully Americanized in order to be at all Protestant – whether within U.S. borders or abroad.

<sup>33</sup>The extensive missionary work, that was an outgrowth of American Protestantism from the start, has not been a one-way religious export. Flows from the missionized, even if a trickle, constantly change the Christianity of the missionizers, at the same time, introducing ideological conflict. In the early twentieth century, many Protestant missionaries turned their focus toward social service provision rather than conversion and also began to question some of the culturally imperialist assumptions at the root of many of their activities. In fact, more evangelically-minded preachers were shocked when, in 1925, E. Stanley Jones, suggested that American Christians had as much to learn from Indian Hindus as the other way around and noted that should Indians indeed adopt Christianity, it would be very different-it "will be essentially Eastern and not Western" (Gaustad & Schmidt 2002: 270).

<sup>34</sup>According to Machacek (2003: 147), "Instead of assimilating American social practices and cultural beliefs and values, the new immigrants, often using religion as a primary resource, appear to be actively renegotiating the terms of American social and cultural life," thereby transforming main-line Protestant denominations in the process. Far from portending Balkanization, Warner (2005) suggests, new immigrants strengthen and diversify Protestant and Catholic churches. The movement of beliefs and practices within Christianity (or any world religion) helps build global faith communities. One way to do this is to embrace the emotionalism and forms of embodied religious ritual that many immigrants bring. In what he calls a "new theory of religious assimilation," Warner (1997) suggests that by sharing music, movement, food, and affection, we construct bridges that move across diversity instead of building walls of difference.

<sup>35</sup>Bowen, 2004, Eickelman and Piscatori 1990; Riccio 2001; and Werbner 2003.

<sup>36</sup>Bowen 2004, Gaborieau, 1999.



Migrant and non-migrant followers of particular saints, deities, or religious teachers also belong to imagined global communities of connection. One of the fastest growing religious shrines in Mexico, for example, is Santa Ana de Guadalupe in Jalisco State, the birthplace of Mexico's patron saint of migrants, St. Toribio. Many believe St. Toribio guides people safely across the border to the United States. Santa Ana has been transformed from a former backwater into a major tourist destination not by remittances but by the many faithful who visit each year and feel a sense of kinship to this saint and to each other. Vendors eagerly sell them pocket size prayer books, including a *bon voyage* message from the local Bishop and a prayer for those crossing the border without documents. "I feel I am a citizen of the world," it says, "and of a church without borders."<sup>37</sup>

Anthropologist John Bowen describes what he calls a transnational public space of reference and debate. Long before it emerged in the west, this space was created, in part, by debates and exchanges between Muslim scholars and public figures in Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt and elsewhere. In its contemporary incarnation, scholars and professionals form networks, attend conferences, and create institutions to help convey how universally shared faith and values apply to local contexts.<sup>38</sup>

The globalization of the sacred, then, occurs on many fronts.<sup>39</sup> Changes precipitated by migration run parallel to connections arising between members of global religious communities and social movements. And these developments are taking place in a world where universal norms about human dignity, rights, and social and economic justice are increasingly salient.<sup>40</sup> As global actors, religious

<sup>37</sup>Levitt 2004a.

<sup>38</sup>In fact, John Bowen (2005) and Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins (2002) argue that a Muslim transnational public sphere has been in place since the beginning of the Islamic era. The Qur'an urges followers to turn away from localized deities and worship the transcendent God. The caliphate is not limited to one particular region or center. Bowen (2005:882) concludes, "This sense of Islam's transnational character is diffuse but powerful, and it derives its power from the ways in which rituals reproduce, and histories remind Muslims of, the shared duties and practices of Muslims across political boundaries. In its impulse to refuse particularistic loyalties to ethnic groups or to a nation-state, this consciousness first and foremost creates an imagination of an Islamic community transcending specific boundaries and borders."

<sup>39</sup>I borrow this term from Vásquez and Marquardt (2003).

<sup>40</sup>World-Polity theorists and neo-institutionalists argue that there is a universalistic or global level of cultural and organizational formation that creates and strongly influences states, business enterprises, groups, and individuals. More and more, actors define themselves and their interests in response to the global cultural and organizational structures in which they are embedded (Boli and Thomas 1999, Meyer 2003). Because the definitions, principles, purposes, and modes of action that constitute and motivate actors comprise a global level of social reality, actors around the world do things in the same way. Although global actors act back, changing, adapting, and restructuring the global polity, some scholars claim that the structural isomorphism that characterizes the "actors, interests, and behavior in the world polity operates increasingly via top-down rather than "bottom-up processes" (Boli and Thomas 1999:5).

Some, however, see global cultural production as an encounter between the global and the local. Instead of conceptualizing the global as macro-level political and economic forces that stand in opposition to local cultural elements, they explore where and how the global and the local meet, and the ways in which power hierarchies, as well as relations of reciprocity and solidarity, shape



bodies make people aware of these norms and mobilize their adherents to support them. In turn, sharing universal norms encourages the emergence of religious global identities.

It is not only the cast of religious characters that changes through migration. Ideas about what religion actually is and where to find it change as well. The separation of church and state is so firmly embedded in the American psyche that most Americans treat religion and culture as more distinct than they actually are. Many new immigrants come from places where religion and culture go hand in hand. They cannot sort out Irishness from Catholicism, Indianness from being Hindu, or what it means to be Pakistani from what it means to be a Muslim. Faith guides the way they live their everyday lives, who they associate with, and the kinds of communities they belong to, even among people who say they are not very religious. Their ideas about tolerance and diversity are shaped by having lived in states where religious life is actively regulated and where expectations about relations between “us” and “them” are quite different from those in the United States.

As a result, many immigrants bring to the table a much broader understanding of what religion is and where to find it. The sacred and the spiritual spill over into the workplace, the schoolyard, and the neighborhood. When people adorn their refrigerator doors with “saint magnets,” hang cross-stitched samplers with religious teachings on their walls, light candles in honor of the *Virgen*, or decorate their rearview mirrors and dashboards with photos of their gurus, they imbue the quotidian with the sacred. When a Latino family celebrates its daughter’s fifteenth birthday or a Hindu son invites his elderly father to live with him in the United States, they are performing religious as well as cultural acts. For some newcomers, American values are, in part, religious values. And these values are not just “made in the U.S.A.,” but around the world.

Migrants also bring different understandings of what it means to belong to a religious community. In some cases, membership means worshipping in a particular congregation, with a clearly-defined canon, leadership, and fee-structure. But many people do not identify with a single congregation. They are comfortable worshipping at whatever church, temple, or mosque is close by. Their faith does not depend on participating regularly with the same group of people or, in some cases, with worshipping in a group at all.

Furthermore, religion does not stay inside the walls of official religious buildings. Private, informal religious rituals often reveal much more about the changing nature of religious life than what goes on at the church or at the temple. When a Muslim silently says her prayers while stopped at a traffic light because there

---

these encounters (Hannerz 1992, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Ong 1994, Merry 2003). Appadurai’s (1996) notions of ethnoscapas, ideoscapas, and mediascapas bring to light how social actors use resources and construct identities that transcend traditional political and social boundaries and layers. See Boli and Thomas (1999), Khagram, Riker and Sikkink (2003), and Merry (2005).



is no place nearby to pray, she is transforming Islam in America. When a traveler crosses himself before the plane takes off, he is expressing his faith whether or not he attends mass on Sunday.

These changes in ritual and belief are communicated back to the home community where they also transform religious practice.

Just as the walls of religious buildings are permeable, so are the boundaries between faith traditions.<sup>41</sup> Many migrants come from countries where religion has always combined elements from several faiths. Much of Latino Catholicism, for example, integrates indigenous, African, and Christian practices, implicitly giving followers permission to be many things at one time. Many of the Brazilian and Indian immigrants I have studied saw no problem with belonging to several religious communities simultaneously because all the pieces fit under the broad umbrella of Christianity or Hinduism. For these individuals, boundary crossing, or combining elements from different faiths, is the rule not the exception. The American context, with its wide array of religious choices, strongly encourages this kind of mixing and matching.

Similarly, religion itself does not obey political or ethnic boundaries. The Crusaders resurrected Christianity in a range of dominions, kingdoms, and principalities that had been claimed by Muslims. Incan, Mayan, and Aztec traditions were forcibly absorbed into Hispanic Catholicism. The British spread Anglicanism to the four corners of their Empire. Even the birth of the modern nation state system has not required God to use a passport. There are one billion Catholics around the globe – just less than the population of China. India's 966 million population is only slightly bigger than the worldwide population of 900 million Sunni Muslims.<sup>42</sup> The Catholic Church has the most sophisticated, familiar system of transnational governance, linking its members around the world through its national conferences and social movement chapters. But many denominations, such as the Baptist World Alliance<sup>43</sup> and the International Swaminarayan Satsang Organization, also have administrative structures with a global reach.

These changes in religious demography are transforming the balance of power within global religious institutions. At the last ten-year meeting of the Anglican communion, Third World bishops challenged the traditional authority

<sup>41</sup>According to Tweed (2002), scholars of religion still assume that identity is singular and fixed and characterized by a core essence. By characterizing as adherents or non-adherents, based on their adoption of a particular set of beliefs, norms, membership and attendance, those who consider themselves followers without adapting the entire package, the ways in which traditions change through contact with each other, and the hybrid forms that result are left out. Religious identity is much more complex because: (1) religions can be functionally compartmentalized, (2) People will mix and match when there are no negative consequences, and (3) even when there are negative consequences, people still mix and match. See also McGuire 2002.

<sup>42</sup>Religious Bodies" 2003.

<sup>43</sup>The Baptist World Alliance is officially the largest organization of Baptists around the globe, with 211 Baptist Conventions (the Southern Baptists left in 2004) and approximately 11 million members (<http://bwanet.org/AboutUS/index.html>).





of English and American prelates and their positions on homosexuality, abortion, and the ordination of women. The center of political gravity in Roman Catholicism, dominated until only recently by Italian prelates, is slowly shifting as more and more cardinals from Africa, Asia, and South America are appointed to positions of power.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, religion is the archetypal spatial and temporal boundary crosser. It endows followers with symbols, rituals, and narratives that allow them to imagine themselves in sacred landscapes, marked by holy sites, shrines, and places of worship.<sup>45</sup> Some people think of these as easily co-existing with the actual physical and political geography. For others, the religious landscape takes precedence over its secular counterpart. What happens in Bombay, London, Johannesburg, Sydney, and Trinidad matters much more to some Swaminarayan members, who think of these sites as the boundaries of a sort of “Swaminarayan country.” Minarets, crosses, and sanctuaries are the salient landmarks in these imaginary terrains, rather than national monuments or historical structures. Religion also transcends the boundaries of time because it allows followers to feel part of a chain of memory, connected to a past, a present, and a future.<sup>46</sup> That is why, for example, Cubans in Miami bring their newborns to be baptized at the shrine they built for their national patron saint. They are inducting their children into an imagined Cuban nation with a past in their ancestral land, a present in Miami, and a future that they hope to re-claim once again in Cuba.<sup>47</sup>

#### A BLESSING OR A THREAT?

America is likely to remain an overwhelmingly Christian country. Those who settle definitively in the U.S will probably always outnumber migrants who live transnational lives. But changes in migration and religion are on the rise and signal important changes on the way. More and more migrants will live transnational lives and they will use religion to do so. This is a good thing for America rather than something to deny or to attempt to halt.

<sup>44</sup>For more on these developments, see Jenkins 2002.

<sup>45</sup>According to Vásquez and Marquardt (2003: PAGE), religion “is one of the main protagonists in the process of unbinding culture from its traditional referents and boundaries and in its reattachment in new space-time configurations.” Individuals use religion to create new spatio-temporal arrangements and invent new mental maps with which to locate themselves within terrains that globalization is constantly changing. They argue that a hemispheric approach is required to understand Latino religious life in the context of globalization. See also Tweed (2002).

<sup>46</sup>Hervieu-Léger 2000.

<sup>47</sup>Tweed 1999. Another striking example of this is provided by Queen (2002) who studied the emergence of “Engaged Buddhism” from a faith generally considered otherworldly. He shows how globalization transforms the orthodoxy and practice of established world (or any) religions. The old/new, the distant/near, the East/West, inform each other and interact to recreate religion’s meanings and motivations. And, in this case, it produces a positive result – namely a new perspective on a seemingly “stuck” issue: human rights discourse.





These trends are not confined to the United States. In Europe, migrants also live lives that cross borders by belonging to religious communities. Some sending-country governments actively facilitate these linkages. The Paris Mosque, for instance, with its many member mosques, is run by the government of Algeria. The National Federation of Muslims, one of the largest Muslim organizations in France, is run by the Moroccan government. The Turkish states' directorate for religious affairs, The Turkish-Islamic Union for the Institution of Religion (DITIB) maintains foreign branches that act as the government "caretaker" of Turks abroad and supports the community's many Turkish-Islamic cultural organizations.<sup>48</sup> Thus, indirectly, it controls nearly half of all Turkish mosques (about 1,100) in Europe.<sup>49</sup>

Some Americans feel that keeping one foot in the U.S. and one foot in the country that you come from will only lead to trouble. They believe it is impossible to pursue American and homeland dreams at the same time. Samuel Huntington's much-discussed 2004 book, *Who Are We?*, warned Americans that we are headed toward our own internal "clash of civilizations" because Mexican immigrants do not assimilate Anglo-Protestant values and because they remain behind linguistic and political walls.<sup>50</sup> To survive and thrive as a nation, many believe, America needs newcomers to "become Americans," which means subscribing to a core set of values, and abandoning their ancestral homes. Especially after September 11<sup>th</sup>, they argue, aren't those who are loyal to two countries suspect?

Others point out that many acts of terrorism and violence are perpetrated in the name of God.<sup>51</sup> Not just Al Qaeda but Hindu, Christian and Jewish groups espouse versions of faith that leave little room for argument. With some exceptions, like Catholic Liberation Theology or Women Living Under Muslim Laws, it seems like there are few progressive, tolerant groups using religion to promote a different end. These critics find it hard to imagine a religious voice preaching inclusiveness and respect.

But they are out there, and they are the face of the future. Rather than posing a threat, transnational migrants represent an opportunity. Instead of precipitating a "clash of civilizations," they build bridges across cultures.<sup>52</sup> They carry ideas,

<sup>48</sup>Lemmen 2000.

<sup>49</sup>Marechal, 2001: 32, cited in Laurence 2004.

<sup>50</sup>In his book, *Who Are We?*, Huntington (2004: xvii) calls for Americans to "recommit themselves to the Anglo-Protestant culture, traditions, and values that have been embraced by Americans of all races, ethnicities, and religions" and warns against the dangers of "Hispanization."

<sup>51</sup>See work on religious violence by Appleby 2000; Bromley and Gordon 2002; Ellens 2004; Juergensmeyer 2000; Martin 1997; and Stern 2003.

<sup>52</sup>Religious Studies Scholar Bruce Lawrence (2004) also argues for bridge building. He sees President Bush as a modern day "crusader," who misuses religious rhetoric when he speaks of the "axis of evil" and positions "our crusaders" against "their jihads." Huntington's "clash of civilizations" set the precedent for this in a way that was reminiscent of Progressive-era patriots denouncing Roman Catholics and Jews. According to Lawrence, "If there is to be a global future marked by social and religious inclusion, it will be under the hybrid rubric of Abrahamic civilization, a civilization shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. That future also must have secular and Asian accents



introduce skills, and redistribute wealth. Like the Pakistani mosque-goers I have been studying, they are translators –teaching people in the United States about Islam and exporting a more liberal version of what it means to be Muslim back to Pakistan. Like the Gujaratis, they are negotiators– figuring out how they can reconcile the conflicting demands of Hindu and U.S. values by still meeting their aging parents’ expectations about filial respect while taking their children to soccer practice at the same time. Like the Brazilians who realize that “your last name isn’t going to get you a job in the U.S.,” they are catalysts of change who demand equal treatment for all at home.

By doing so, these migrants extend the boundaries of the collective good beyond our national borders to include those in their homelands. They expand the dictionary of the values and meanings we all share. What constitutes right and wrong, tolerance, and fairness are transnationally, not nationally, determined. Fighting poverty, sickness, or pollution is not just an American project. We need to embrace this reality and use it to move forward. There is too much at stake to throw the religious baby out with the bathwater. And there are all kinds of religious voices that can be brought into the conversation. Some simply need help speaking up.

Clearly, there is cause for alarm when religious extremists want to make the world over in their own image.. There is also cause for concern when secular public space, narrowed in the name of God, compromises basic rights. But the vast majority of people are not religious extremists. They live transnational lives to achieve something better for themselves and their families, not to perpetrate atrocities. In India, Pakistan, Brazil, Ireland or the U.S., most of the people I talked with were concerned about raising their children, helping their communities, and being able to live safely and securely in places where the schools and police departments work. Their stories could not be reduced to simple punch lines with clear heroes and villains. Their dreams are dreams we can all agree on.

Finally, true diversity requires a willingness to confront this country’s Christian biases and how they limit the possibilities for difference and choice. Protestantism is what Martin Marty calls, “the wallpaper in the mental furnishing department in which America lives, always in the room but barely noticed.”<sup>53</sup> While American culture claims secularity and tolerance, in fact it demands reli-

---

that go beyond the monotheistic imaginary. While this way is more complex than the dyads of “good versus evil” and “us versus them,” it offers a future more promising and finally more secure than its alternative, broadcast under the flag of an American empire pursuing and punishing the elusive but mostly Muslim axis of evil” (2004: 7)

<sup>53</sup>Quoted from an interview with Bob Abernathy, May 3, 2002. Also, see Dobkin Hall (1998) on the Protestant underpinnings of American institutions and organizational forms. Far from being a “second-order phenomenon” religion (in particular, liberal Protestant values) was integral in the development of American corporate technology. “The rationales and methods of bureaucratic and corporate organization actually emerged from the domain of religion and spread from there to the economic, political and social institutions” (1998: 101).



giosity, and religiosity of a certain kind. Protestant assumptions and models permeate American corporations, universities, and charitable institutions. The Bush Administration's openly religious orientation is new only in degree, not in kind, an explicit, more extreme version of the marriage between religion and politics that has always been in place.<sup>54</sup>

Women's rights and civil rights activists woke us up to the pervasive power of white, male privilege. A similar conversation needs to take place around Protestant privilege. This is not to deny the positive legacy of tolerance and diversity bequeathed to us by our Protestant forefathers. It is to drive home how individuals feel when they are on the wrong side of the default category. Just as women internalize a certain minority status when the operative pronoun is "he," so Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews feel like outsiders when Christian cultural references and practices are the automatic norm.

New immigrants and their family members around the world, regardless of their address, are all important participants in this conversation. As the religious panorama expands, our challenge is to construct a genuinely pluralistic community, based on engagement and interaction with difference, rather than its simple acknowledgement. This is a question not just for the newcomers and native-born inside our borders but one for the people, organizations, and social movements to which they are connected across the globe.

<sup>54</sup>In an interview for PBS' Flashpoints series, Joseph Loconte of the Heritage Foundation recalled numerous instances in which U.S. Presidents have demonstrated their loyalty to a religious cultural regime: "Even Thomas Jefferson, the Enlightenment icon who gave us, of course, the "wall of separation" metaphor—even Jefferson, on his way to church one morning there on Capitol Hill near where I live—Jefferson said to one bystander—he said, "No nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion, nor can be. And as the chief magistrate of the land, I owe it the" —"the sanction of my public example" [...] You go to Teddy Roosevelt and the turn of the century and the Social Gospel Movement (which in Hutchinson's (2003) estimation, "helped maintain the preeminence and cultural authority of Protestantism") really influencing, I think, his administration. And so Roosevelt says he—that he could not imagine modern industry in the hands of modern paganism, that it would be a nightmare beyond imagining. But in the hands of Christian charity, that would be a dream worth dreaming. And then you jump to people like John Kennedy, who assures the nation that his Catholic faith will in no way influence, of course, his - his politics."

