Presidential Address 2001
Return of the Sacred: Reintegrating Religion in the Social Sciences

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This first year of the new millennium (2001) has certainly been an important one for those of us who study religion in American society. Prior to the September 11 terrorist attack, President Bush's Faith Based and Community Initiative generated vigorous debate over the role of religious organizations in providing social services and their eligibility for federal dollars allocated to social welfare programs. The war on terrorism that followed September 11 pushed Bush's initiative to a back burner on the national agenda. Nonetheless, the public debate that his proposal generated has catapulted issues of religion to center stage and increased public discussion of the role of religion in public affairs.

The September 11 attacks themselves generated a series of religiously oriented responses, on the part of both religious institutions and individuals, and created a religious consciousness and dialogue in the country unprecedented in recent decades. Within hours of the attacks, President Bush began a campaign emphasizing that the Al Queda does not represent Islam. In the months following, a relatively unknown religious minority in the United States—Muslims—and the practice of Islam became the focus of news media, books, panel discussions, classes, sermons, and mosque open houses. More broadly, debates on religion and terrorism were nightly news items in American homes.

In the hours and days following the attacks, churches, temples, mosques, and interfaith coalitions expressed publicly their condemnation of the terrorist attacks and their hopes for interfaith dialogue and understanding. Americans of all faiths and denominations turned out in vast numbers to houses of worship across the nation. People felt a need for a place to mourn, to share feelings with others, to try to make sense of what happened, and to find comfort. Religious places of gathering were the social spaces in which people felt free to express themselves and join together spiritually. On the Friday proclaimed by President Bush as a day of national mourning, television screens kept alive the fact that people in mourning turn to their churches, temples, mosques, gudwaras, and shrines to express their grief and to seek solace.

It was no surprise to social scientists, who have been tracking religious behavior for the past 60 years or so, to discover that, by and large, Americans are religious people. The polls have been demonstrating this fact for decades and providing data that challenge the secularization hypothesis. During the past two decades, with the realization that secularization is more a taken-for-granted assumption than an empirical fact (Hadden 1989), religion has begun to move back into the academic social science mainstream and into public policy discussions. Rather than sitting passively on the sidelines and observing, recording, and celebrating this trend, I want to make a strong plea that we, as individual researchers and as an organization committed to the scientific study of religion, become proactive in nurturing and directing the wave of interest in religion that has been building not only in the United States but worldwide. I see this first decade of a new century and millennium as a moment of opportunity for religion scholars to plunge into the wave in order to ensure that it becomes a mighty force with staying power.

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In this article I will do the following: (1) present evidence demonstrating that over the past 60 or so years the study of religion has, in fact, been largely absent from mainstream social science and public policy; (2) document historical reasons for this absence; (3) suggest nooks and crannies in which I see scholars and policymakers taking religion seriously; and (4) suggest concrete ways we can nurture and enhance the nascent movement to put the study of religion back into the mainstream. I conceptualize my remarks as a call for action and as the basis for discussion, debate, and the development of strategies that will call attention to the importance of religious phenomena for practically every research and policy question related to social behavior. Given the fact that I am a sociologist and most familiar with trends in my own field, my examples will be heavily skewed in that discipline's direction. However, I hope that my remarks will spark discussion of related issues in the other social sciences.

The Historical Absence of Religion from Mainstream Social Science

As we are all well aware, the analysis of religion and its changing role in industrial societies was central in the birthing of sociology as an academic discipline in the mid to late 19th century. In his Law of the Three Stages, Comte (1896) posited that religion, as an explanatory paradigm based on "the immediate action of supernatural beings," would first give way to a metaphysical logic based on personified abstractions. Subsequently, the positivistic stage would gain ascendancy, in which the mind gives up its search for absolutes and applies itself to the study of laws, that is, the "invariable relations of succession and resemblance." Comte argued that it was time to give up the remnants of supernatural ghosts and abstract logic and to create a new "religion of humanity" with sociologist-priests as its moral guides. The "big three" following closely upon Comte—Durkheim, Weber, and Marx—each in his own way presented variants on the theme that religion would, and in at least Marx's case, should, fade from importance as industrialization with its accompanying formal rationality replaced the gods of traditional societies. Even though each of them predicted the inevitable demise of religion in industrial societies, the changing role of religion in modern society provided a theoretical handle in their explanations of social change. It is intriguing that the history of sociology through the early decades of the 20th century is simultaneously the history of the social scientific study of religion. About the time of Durkheim's death in 1917 and Weber's in 1920, the two fields began to diverge. One indication of this is evident in the works of Weber and Durkheim that are routinely assigned and emphasized in both undergraduate and graduate classes in sociology. How often were we required, in general sociology courses, to read Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* or Weber's comparative books on the religions of China, India, and Judaism? We were all introduced extensively to Durkheim's theory of the division of labor and to *Suicide*, as well as to Weber's work on class, status, and party and his ideal type of bureaucracy. Theories of religion were introduced, as was usually the case for *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, only to argue its declining importance with the advent of a capitalistic economy.

One indication that sociology of religion has stood on the sidelines of mainstream sociology is the fact that in the 96 years of its existence, only one of 97 ASA presidents could be characterized as having a central interest in the study of religion, namely, J. Milton Yinger in 1977. However, Yinger chose a convention theme unrelated to religion, "Sociology and Related Disciplines: Shared and Divergent Perspectives." A subdiscipline benefits greatly when one of its own, as president, chooses it as the theme for the annual meetings, a theme that influences the content of plenary and thematic sessions. For example, the fact that in the past three years two of ASA's presidents have been immigration scholars (Portes in 1999; Massey in 2001) was reflected in their annual meeting themes and the number of thematic, plenary, and regular sessions devoted to the topic of immigration. As far as I can determine from annual meeting programs, religion has never played a central part in any of the ASA's annual meeting themes, unlike social class, poverty, theory,

social policy, social change, globalization, race, ethnicity, gender, politics, and, most recently, immigration.

The fact that ASA has had specialty sections for 40 years but none in the sociology of religion until 1994 is both cause and consequence of the marginality of the field. Only in the last few years have an increasing number of papers and sessions at ASA meetings focused on topics of religion by infusing paper sessions and panels dealing with traditionally mainstream issues, such as race, stratification, organizations, and immigration, with religious concerns. In 1990, for example, out of a total of 312 sessions at the meetings, there was a plenary session organized by Bill D'Antonio on the religious right and politics and four joint ASA/ASR sessions. In that same year, out of a total of 466 papers in regular sessions, there were only seven papers on religion presented in regular sessions. Ten years later, in 2000, there were two joint ASA/ASR and four sociology of religion section sessions, one sponsored jointly with the section on homosexuality and one with the immigration section. In addition to these six sessions, there were three regular sessions organized by Dean Hoge (with a total of 12 papers in them) plus 50 other papers with religion in their titles presented throughout the ASA program.

Hand in glove with the long-time marginalization of religion in ASA has been its sideline status in academic departments. Ammerman and Woodberry's (2001) recent survey of graduate students who are members of the ASA section on religion (N = 62) shows that nearly half (43 percent) reported that they could not take comprehensive exams in the sociology of religion; 61 percent do not know of a funded research project on religion by faculty at their university; and 44 percent reported that their professors are either indifferent (32 percent) or occasionally hostile (10 percent) toward their study of religion. Sociology students interested in studying religion are often forced to specialize in more mainstream areas, such as organizations, gender, work and occupations, or immigration, and slip religion in the back door.

Why the Marginality of Religion?

For at least a century (nearly three, according to Rodney Stark (1999)), social scientists have accepted the assumption that secularization inevitably accompanies modernization. Some of the recent debates on the secularization thesis challenge interpretations of Weber's use of the term and whether his notions of the processes of rationalization and disenchantment apply specifically to the realm of religion (Swatos and Christiano 1999; Hadden 1989). However, the fact is, as Hadden argued in his 1986 presidential address to the Southern Sociological Society, secularization constituted a doctrine more than a theory and, over time in social scientific circles, "the idea of secularization became sacralized" (Hadden 1989) as a taken-for-granted belief system. If religion is on its way out in modern, industrial societies, why should social scientists take it seriously in their explanatory models of contemporary societies? In one sense, by uncritically accepting the assumptions of the secularization thesis, we scientific observers of the religious scene legitimized the omission of religion as an important variable in understanding Western society's march toward a modern, industrial, and then postindustrial world.

In addition to methodological issues, social theorists such as Calhoun and Lemert (in the 1999 special issue of *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 3, devoted to a symposium on religion) argue that "Sociological theory not only shares in the marginalization of religion as a topic of inquiry, it has helped to produce it" (Calhoun 1999:237). This occurs, Calhoun maintains, because classical sociologists made the secularization argument so basic to theorizing about religion that it displaced attempts to understand the actual meaning and organizational significance of religion in contemporary society. This neglect, he claims, has weakened and distorted sociological theory. "Sociological theory that makes good sense of religion is better sociological theory in general" (Calhoun 1999:238). In similar fashion, Lemert (1999:241) suggests that "It could well be said that the most unyielding of social scientific puzzles over the last century has been just why religion, which was so firmly the foundation of premodern social order, has lost so *little* of its effective

force in post-traditional societies." To enhance the analytic power of social theory, he argues, it may well be time for social theorists to consider the return of religion.

The positivistic stance of social science in the 20th century also introduced an anti-religious bias into both research and the organization of sociology departments in the United States. Because religion involves transcendent, nonempirical realities in the lives of people, it is frequently seen as outside the purview of the objective, value-free world of science, despite the fact that religious variables are central in explanations of human behavior. In academic circles, as well as the public forum, many people react to the idea of the scientific study of religion as an oxymoron. Coupled with this bias toward religion as a nonempirical, nonscientific human endeavor is the effect of the constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state, a principle that has been interpreted to prohibit the inclusion of religion items in survey data collected by government agencies, such as the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, state boards of education, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Since government statistics constitute a major data source in many social science disciplines, and are the basis for many of the quantitative articles that appear in our major journals, it follows that analyses of religious behavior would receive short-shrift in mainstream outlets.

Perhaps the major explanation for religion's loss of centrality in the social sciences lies in the proliferation of professional societies dedicated to the study of religion from a social scientific perspective. We now have a detailed, although somewhat controversial history of SSSR and RRA, thanks to those who contributed to the 1999 50th anniversary meetings of the two organizations, and to the special issue of *JSSR* (Vol. 39, No. 4) that Demerath, Silverman, and Lehman edited as a follow-up to these meetings. Whether one accepts Moberg's (2000) 1950 date for the founding of SSSR and 1944 for RRA, or Glock's (2000) 1949 birthdate for SSSR and Swatos's (2000) 1959 founding date for RRA, the fact is that for more than four decades both societies have provided venues for the presentation of research papers and the development of camaraderie among religion scholars, as well as publishing outlets for social scientific research concerning religion. Added to the mix is the creation of the American Catholic Sociological Society in 1938 (see Gallagher 1989; Morris 1989) that, in 1970, became the Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR). Given the facts that all three societies have historically supported journals specifically focused on the social scientific study of religion, and that acceptance rates for articles submitted to these journals have consistently been higher than for those in mainstream social science journals (e.g., *American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, Psychological Science, American Political Science Review*), the result is that those of us studying religion mostly ended up "preaching to the choir" while failing to reach the broader audience of social scientists who subscribe to more general interest journals.

The interesting question is why social scientists concerned with religion, in particular sociologists, formed and remained for so long within their own societies rather than organizing as a section of the American Sociological Association, whose constitution has encouraged section formation since 1961. The answer, I think, lies in the professional biographies of the early figures who pioneered the empirical (in contrast with philosophical or theological) study of religious behaviors. Both Moberg (2000) and Hadden (1974) credit the origin of RRA to Harlan Paul Douglass, a staff member of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, whose purpose was to apply scientific method to the study of socioreligious phenomena and to include staff members of various denominational and interdenominational agencies. In 1959, after a series of reorganizations under the umbrella of the National Council of Churches, the name, The Religious Research Association, was officially adopted. SSSR, originally the Committee for the Social Scientific Study of Religion, dates from a meeting in Boston in May 1949 that was called by academics who deplored "the lack of interest in the study of religious problems of the average social scientist and equally the failure of religious workers to make any extended use of scientific procedures in many fields where such procedures would be immensely profitable" (from a letter written by J. Paul Williams, quoted in Moberg 2000). From its inception, SSSR has been self-consciously

interdisciplinary, which precluded its incorporation into any one of the national associations (e.g., the American Sociological Association, the American Psychological Association, or the American Political Science Association).

In his inaugural presidential address to the newly formed American Catholic Sociological Society (ACSS) in 1938, Ralph A. Gallagher, S. J. stated, "Our [meaning Catholic] philosophy, our faith, and the teachings of the Church must be kept in view as we engage ourselves in the study of social phenomena. The American Catholic Sociological Society must take its place up in the front with the leaders in the field of Catholic social thought and action. We are to engage in Catholic social action under the leadership of the Hierarchy" (Gallagher 1989). Thus began an effort to develop a "Catholic sociology" that sought to use social science perspectives and methods that harmonized with the Catholic faith and provided an alternative to "the withering atheistic [and often Marxist] abuse" practicing Catholics suffered in the American Sociological Society (Stark and Finke 2000). In Gallagher's (1989) words, "We deny much of their theory and condemn the lack of principle so evident in much of their work. Our estimate of man differs from theirs, so that the data collected from the study of the relationships of man will often be interpreted in a different way. . . . Social theory must not be at variance with fundamental principles." For those teaching sociology in Catholic universities, many of them priests and nuns, the ACSS was a legitimate and safe alternative to the secular sociology advocated by the ASA.

Although I do not have hard data to demonstrate the exact proportion of members in the three organizations who have come from clerical or denominational staff backgrounds, the history of each is rich with descriptions of priests, nuns, ministers, and lay denominational staff who assumed leadership roles in creating and nurturing these organizations. In ASR, for example, five of the 10 women presidents were Catholic nuns (Wallace 2000). Even today, according to Ammerman and Woodberry's (2001) data on graduate student members of the ASA section on religion, almost half (45 percent) came to the sociology of religion after having a previous career in either religion (e.g., pastors and priests) or social work.

Because of these organizational histories the scientific study of religion became isolated from more general social science associations and journals, in which the study of religion could have been defined as an integral part of the analysis of social institutions and behavior. It was only in 1994 that the religion section was created in ASA, in large measure driven by a group of younger scholars who wanted affiliation with and recognition of their specialty by the American Sociological Association.

Return to the Mainstream

The 1980s and 1990s brought a number of changes, both substantive and institutional, that prompted more attention to the topic of religion and brought social scientists studying religion into closer contact with social scientists in other subdisciplines. The continued robustness of religion in the United States, documented by numerous recent surveys and widely reported in the media, makes it difficult for social scientists who focus on numerous other topics to ignore the impact of religious phenomena. Furthermore, developments in four theoretical areas in the social sciences catapulted religious issues into mainstream dialogues: globalization, social movements, civic culture, and rational choice theory. Interest in theories of globalization and transnational networks, which gained widespread recognition through the work of such people as Wallerstein (1983), Featherstone (1990), and Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994), raised issues regarding the role that religious systems play in both promoting and hampering global processes. Wallerstein (1983) suggested that Christianity may have served as a supporting ideology for the universalism and rationality of a capitalist world system. Likewise, John Meyer (1988) argued that Christianity not only contained values that were transposed to the global level but also linked a particular worldview to a well-established and powerful organization. In response, others demonstrated particularistic religious responses that thwart globalization, such as Iranian Islam even before

the revolution of 1979 (Beyer 1994), tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India and in the Indian Diaspora (Bhatt 1997), and various forms of religious fundamentalism (Kurti 1997; Marty and Appleby 1991). The point is that theorists could hardly ignore the part that religion plays in globalization processes.

Simultaneously, sociologists of religion, Roland Robertson (1992) in particular, were among the early voices to argue that religion constitutes an important part of the complex processes that comprise globalization. As Beckford (2000) states in his piece in the 50th anniversary issue of *JSSR*, Robertson's work on religion and globalization is one of those rare occasions on which a sociologist of religion helps create and define a major perspective and area of enquiry in the social sciences. To borrow from Beckford's summary of Robertson's analysis, "Religions provide many of the symbols of common humanity and are therefore implicated in globalization. But they are also vehicles of particularistic ideas about humanity, so they appropriate and filter the experience of globalization in 'local' terms. In short, religions can mediate between the global and the local." The fact that other sociologists of religion, such as Beyer (1994), Casanova (1994), and Rudolph and Piscatori (1997), took up the theme of religion and globalization has helped keep religion at the forefront of discussions of globalization.

A second area of interest that drew the attention of social scientists in the 1970s and 1980s was that of social movements. In addition to the many and varied secular movements of the 1960s (e.g., civil rights, feminism, anti-war, environmentalism), the proliferation of new religious movements (NRMs) caught the attention of social movement scholars as well as those whose specialty was religion. A perusal of mainstream journals in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s shows a disproportionate number of articles on movements in general and religious ones in particular. While the proliferation of NRM studies gave visibility to work in the sociology of religion, Beckford (2000) questions whether they forged any real and lasting innovations in conceptual, theoretical, or methodogical thinking about religion. He does see current signs of connections with mainstream concerns in social science through interest in issues of religion, human rights, and social justice.

The third issue that highlighted the importance of religion was a renewed focus on civil society in a number of sociological subdisciplines. Criminologists, political sociologists, sociologists of culture, racial and ethnic scholars, and social scientists analyzing the "new" immigrants began to use the concept of civic society to describe structural and environmental factors that impact group behaviors. Bellah's (1967) notion of civil religion, Durkheim's (1915) analysis of ritual, and Tocqueville's (1969 [1835–1840]) insight that religious institutions are important in sustaining the voluntarist ethos in American society were rediscovered during the 1980s and 1990s. As civil society and civic culture gained attention in the social scientific literature, religion as a bearer of culture and religious institutions as providers of social spaces in which social capital is generated gained attention. Putnam's (1995) argument that contemporary Americans prefer to "bowl alone" challenged the assumption of strong social bonds underpinning American civil society. The robust debate that Putnam's article generated (see *American Behavioral Scientist*, September 1998, an issue dedicated to the debate) has contributed to the growing literature on civil society and social capital and the role that religion plays in this arena.

The fourth, most recent, and most contentious of the theoretical approaches that has brought religious scholarship into mainstream debates is that of rational choice theory. Warner (1993) describes the impact of competitive religious markets on religious pluralism as a key element in the new paradigm for the sociological study of religion in the United States. However, heated debate over the explanatory value of rational choice theory exists within the ranks of religion scholars (see Hechter 1997; Sherkat and Ellison 1999) as well as in the larger discipline, a robust debate that introduces new language into our field (e.g., costs and rewards, compensators, supply and demand) and challenges some taken-for-granted assumptions (e.g., the nonrational nature of religion; mechanisms of commitment). In particular, the work of Stark and Finke (see Finke and Stark 1992; Stark and Finke 2000), Iannaccone (1992, 1994) , and Young (1997) have

demonstrated the value of applying mainstream theories to religious phenomena while, at the same time, pinpointing the similarities between religious behaviors and other social activities. In a recent review symposium of Stark and Finke's *Acts of Faith* (2000), Bankston (2001) calls their rational choice model of religious behavior a "new paradigm" in the sociology of religion, and Robbins (2001) claims that, in terms of comprehensive theory, it has no competitors.

In addition to theoretical intersections between the study of religion and issues central to the broader social science disciplines, there were a number of institutional shifts in the 1990s that led to a greater involvement of religion scholars in mainstream academic activities. For academic scholars, tenure and promotion requirements began to include publication in major mainstream journals and participation in national professional organizations. A long list of publications in our religion journals no longer would substitute for a few articles well placed in the "big three" (*ASR*, *AJS*, and *Social Forces*). Likewise, membership in SSSR, ASR, and RRA no longer substitutes for active participation in ASA in terms of presenting papers, serving on committees, attending meetings, and garnering ASA awards. It was this shift in tenure and promotion requirements, along with the downsizing of professional travel budgets, that were important to both the creation of the sociology of religion section in ASA and to moving ASR meetings one day closer to ASA so that attendees could afford the costs of attending both. It was Ted Long who, in his 1991 ASR presidential address, called for that organization's closer alignment with ASA and for the creation of a sociology of religion ASA section. This address became the impetus for creating the ad hoc committee that studied and ultimately recommended that the ASR meetings overlap one day with ASA, that joint sessions between the two organizations be encouraged, and that groundwork begin toward the creation of an ASA section on religion, a goal that was realized three years later.

Another major factor in the 1990s that facilitated the mainstreaming of the study of religion was the increase in funding for religious research provided by major foundations, especially the Lilly Endowment, the Pew Charitable Trusts and, most recently, the Ford Foundation's religion program. The availability of more research funds, and especially the increase in the size of many of the grants, enabled social scientists studying religion to conduct larger projects with the potential of generating data that would lend itself more easily to publication in mainstream journals. Simultaneously, as evident in the comments of Camic and Wilson as they assumed editorship of *ASR* in April 2000, the big three journals appear more accepting of articles that focus on a wide array of subspecialties and utilize more diverse methodologies than they were in the past.

Specific national and international events over the past two decades have also raised issues about the intersections of religion and politics. The worldwide rise of fundamentalism (see Marty and Appleby's four volumes from the Fundamentalism Project) and its impact on political regimes, family structures, demographic patterns, and education systems around the world was reflected in international policy forums (e.g., Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi, 1985; Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995). During the tense days preceding the Waco debacle and in the FBI investigation of that tragedy in the years since, questions about David Koresh's religious beliefs and the limits of religious freedom were raised both by formal investigative panels and in the media. Realizing that religious issues were at the heart of the Waco affair, a number of religious scholars were brought into the investigations (see Wright 1995).

During the past five congressional sessions in Washington, religion has emerged as a key issue in a number of debates and legislative bills. The passage of the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998 is one of the most sweeping human rights statutes ever passed in the United States. It created a new State Department office and an ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom. It mandated that the State Department produce a comprehensive annual report on the status of religious freedom around the world, which sets into motion presidential action against countries in violation. It mandated better training for diplomatic personnel and fostered their ongoing contacts with vulnerable religious communities. This act, in effect, made religious freedom a political criterion for U.S. support of other countries. In his article, "The Faith Factor in Foreign Policy," Hertzke (2001) analyzes the political factors that came together in the 105th

Congress to make possible the passage of a bill that has become a touchstone for many subsequent foreign policy decisions. Among these factors is the resurgence of religion worldwide in the post-Cold War; the fact that many of the 60 percent of the world's Christians who live outside North America and Europe are experiencing political persecution; and, finally, the religious commitment of many members of Congress and their staffs who are predisposed to sympathize with religious causes. Hertzke's (2001) own studies demonstrate what he calls "a thriving religious life on the Hill," including weekly faith-sharing sessions among congressional members across party and denominational lines. In fact, key members of Congress who are friends and prayer partners (i.e., Tony Hall, D-Ohio; Frank Wolf, R-Virginia; and Chris Smith, R-New Jersey) emerged as leaders of the movement that resulted in the International Religious Freedom Act.

Regardless of whether Congress passes Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative and measures that assure access to federal funds on the part of religious groups, public awareness of social programs provided by faith-based organizations has been raised. In the course of media coverage, public debates, discussions in Congress, and the many panels assembled across the nation to address the issue, many aspects of contemporary American religion have been highlighted, such as religious diversity, deep-seated commitments to the separation of church and state, and anecdotal data on the number of social programs that exist within mainstream churches.

Proposals for Increased Mainstreaming of Sociology of Religion

Now to the pragmatics of how we as individuals and as an organization can nurture the embryonic movement to bring the scientific study of religion back into the heart of the social sciences.

In my estimation, the major mechanism is the publication of articles in major sociological journals and in a variety of well-respected specialty journals. I am not advocating that we cease to submit our work to our own sociology of religion journals (*JSSR*, *RRR*, *Sociology of Religion*, *Social Compass*) but that we also consider, at least periodically, writing for either a more general (*ASR, AJS, Social Forces, Psychological Science, APSR*) or a more specific audience (e.g., *Criminology, Law and Society, Sociology of Education, Social Problems, Gender and Society, International Migration Review*). Since the very beginning of our subdiscipline, sociologists of religion have studied the impact of religion on family, race relations, deviance, politics, social class, gender, and education, to name just a few areas. However, much of our work has appeared in religion journals, which are usually not read by social scientists in other subdisciplines. Publishing in general and specialty journals outside of religion would bring broader attention to religion and possibly encourage the inclusion of religious variables in the work done in other areas so that theories of religious behavior would become incorporated into the subspecialties. Beckford (2000) maintains that the social scientific study of religion is now taking up themes of much broader interest to many more social scientists than in the past and has become "less defensive, more expansive, more contentious and perhaps more interesting than it ever was." It follows, then, that the time is ripe to make every effort to become part of the social science mainstream by making sure that religion is taken seriously as an integral part of theories of social behavior.

The "secret" to acceptance in these broader journals, I propose, is the theoretical framing of a research question that links religious questions to other pertinent literatures. This involves more intensive framing and utilization of related literatures than simply citing references to them. For example, several reviewers of the recent article by Ebaugh and Chafetz (1999) in *Social Forces* on the status-enhancing role of religious institutions for immigrant women, applauded our use of gender theory to explain the impact of religion on these women. A perusal of the articles dealing with religion that have been accepted in the big three journals over the past two years (Yang and Ebaugh 2001; Gorski 2000; Greeley and Hout 1999; Chaves 1999) makes it evident that what all of them share is the framing of issues in ways that relate to broader sociological literatures.

It is evident that publishing in one of the mainstream journals is both cause and effect of the greater acceptance by the sociological community of research concerning religion. Publication in

specialty journals outside of religion may not reach as large and diverse an audience; however, such outlets can highlight the relevance of religion for specific sociological fields. The fact that many doctoral programs do not encourage sociology of religion as a major field of specialty and that students often approach the study of religion by way of some other academic specialty may, in the long run, be beneficial for pursuing this strategy, in that students are trained to integrate religion into the study of organizations, political sociology, gender, social movements, medical sociology, etc.

The story of the history of gender studies may provide an analogous case to our own. In the first several years of its existence, *Sex and Gender* was the premier journal for research in gender studies. In the early 1990s a group of senior women studying gender began to encourage gender researchers to broaden their submission outlets and to publish their work in mainstream and other specialty journals as well, so that the social scientific community would become aware of the importance of gender in whatever research topic they were considering. They also encouraged the submission of convention papers to ASA sessions other than those organized by the sex and gender section in an effort to de-ghettoize the study of women. The success of these pioneers in mainstreaming the study of gender is evident in the fact that work on gender now appears routinely in many of our major journals, throughout ASA sessions, and in the routine incorporation of gender theory in social science research.

Involvement in ASA, both on ASA committees and in the various sections, is another way of inserting interest in religion into the larger profession. A review of recent ASA annual meeting programs indicates that increasing numbers of SSSR and ASR members are presenting papers in both regular ASA sessions and in those jointly sponsored by various sections, thereby projecting religious research beyond our own religion organizations. The submission of names of sociologists of religion for ASA awards (e.g., career, best book and article, and best teaching awards) also publicize work in our area.

As we increasingly remind the broader social scientific community of the centrality of religion in social analyses, hopefully more and better religion questions will be routinely included in research designs. Frequently, such inclusion requires reminders and gentle nudging on our part. For example, as some of you are aware, when Doug Massey, Guillermina Jasso, and colleagues began several years ago to develop their National Immigrant Survey (NIS), a 10-year longitudinal survey of newly legalized immigrants, they had two very general questions on religion (i.e., religious identification and attendance). After several discussions with Massey, and with financial support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the researchers agreed to include more religion items formulated by those of us working on religion and immigration. The result is that we will now have religion data, along with all the related immigration items, for a national sample of legalized immigrants. Likewise, but not with equal success, about five years ago an effort was made to try to have religion included in the 2000 national census. That effort failed, in part, because it came too late in the census planning process, and in part because it lacked a broad enough constituency to gain serious attention. Perhaps it is not too early to consider mounting a similar effort for the 2010 census.

Given the heightened public awareness of religion as a result of current events, and the greater attention to the topic by social scientists in a number of subdisciplines, the time is ripe for catapulting the social scientific study of religion back into the mainstream of our disciplines. The nascent movement in this direction in the past decade needs to be nurtured such that our social science colleagues across subspecialties will routinely include religion among the factors they consider as central to social scientific analysis.

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In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 200l, I opted to forego delivery of my presidential address at the annual meetings in favor of a plenary address by Mark Juergensmeyer on the

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