



SACRED TRIBES JOURNAL AND THE STUDY OF NEW
RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Michael T. Cooper
Trinity Graduate School

Introduction

We live in a period of history where new religious movements and spiritualities are entering the mainstream religious landscape of Western society. Whether such movements are potentially harmful in nature, like the Strong City Cult or Tony Alamo Christian Ministries, or isolationist, like the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or innocuous, like the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, it is our responsibility as academics and scholars of religion to learn about our culture and the impact such religious movements are having. We are increasingly aware that such a landscape presents challenges and perhaps opportunities to our faith and to the faith of many others. It is a landscape where, of the top twenty-five largest Christian denominations in North America, the two fastest growing are the Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses.¹ As the American Religious Identification Survey recently demonstrated, new religions are the fastest growing faith expressions in the United States and their proliferation in the West in general has been noted by many.²

Sacred Tribes Journal was born out of the desire to understand the religious landscape in which we live. In 2002 when the journal was founded, there was a clear sense of purpose: "The purpose of this international online journal is to explore ways in which to bridge the gulf between the disciplines of cult apologetics, contextual missiology and religious studies."³ The original article laid the ground work for a different approach to the study of new religious movements. This approach was decidedly evangelical in nature and took into account the need to respect the religions being studied. In many ways, the journal heeded the admonition of Christopher Partridge:

Certainly, from the perspective of Christian scholarship, just as Christians would prefer or expect others to spend time seeking to understand the Christian faith from the inside in order to avoid caricatures and misunderstanding, so they should do no less when seeking to understand non-Christian religions and when formulating theologies concerning those religions: "in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."⁴

The journal's first volume published in the fall of 2002 was followed in the spring of 2005 with a themed edition focusing on contemporary Paganism. It would be another three years before the next issue would be published. What was seen as an opportunity to disseminate information about new religions via the Internet proved to be a challenge due to the sporadic publication of the journal. This raised concerns for its future.

In 2007 the journal was re-envisioned as an academic publication. A major aspect of that re-envisioning was to focus the journal on academic research by publishing peer-reviewed articles. In so doing, I became the editor of the journal along with Philip Johnson, John Morehead and Jon Trott (the three of them have had extensive interaction and experience with new religious movements). We also recruited an editorial board made up of academics in the field of religious studies.⁵

Today, the journal continues to pursue the understanding of other religions. At the same time, its focus is not solely on Christian engagement of the religions. Although at times articles will and have appeared that deal with particular ways in which Christians have encountered and addressed new religions, the journal is not a missiological journal. Instead, the journal is dedicated to the academic pursuit of understanding new religions. In doing so, articles appearing in the journal will be characteristically descriptive in nature and will represent quality academic research.

Evangelicals and the Academy

The editors of *Sacred Tribes Journal* come from various Christian traditions. All of us share a common moniker: evangelical. Being an evangelical in today's spiritual marketplace often brings ridicule, especially in the area of religious studies. The term evangelical is commonly associated with particular personalities like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson or Ted Haggard. These outspoken figures, however, do not represent the diverse movement called evangelicalism. Being an evangelical means different things to different evangelicals. However, evangelicals will agree that there is an inherent commitment to the Christian Bible as the word of God, the necessity to make known the teachings of Jesus Christ who is himself good news, and the adherence to loving God and loving others as normative in the life of the evangelical.



While religion continues to exert an influence on the lives of Westerners, the gulf between the academy and Christianity continues to widen. Beginning in the 18th century, Christianity submitted its once prominent social stature to modern science and relegated faith to the private sector of the individual. That gulf was exacerbated by the Fundamentalist-Modernist debates of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the ensuing anti-intellectualism associated with Fundamentalism and often assumed on evangelicals. Commenting on the times, the historian Mark Noll suggested that, "Comprehensive and coherent Christian thinking has rarely played a major part in the evangelical life in America."⁶ According to Noll, the changing university climate in America along with the anti-intellectualism characteristic of the Fundamentalist-Modernist debate contributed to the discontinuity between the academy and faith in the evangelical mind.⁷ This is particularly seen in the field of religious studies. As missiology grew in disfavor among academics of religion, the scientific study of religion increasingly took its place. Terry Muck noted,

To be sure, some of these early scholars of religion saw themselves as merely creating a scholarly alternative to missiology, either preparatory to or complementary with more confessional approaches. Others, however, considered the scientific study of religion a replacement for missiology, and the proper way to study religion, at least when such study takes place in the context of the secular university.⁸

In spite of the growth of evangelicalism in the Western religious landscape, there has not been a concomitant growth in evangelical academic scholarship in the academy. Due in part to the marginalization that took place in European universities, but also due to anti-intellectualism in American evangelicalism, the academy did not include such a voice in its academic discourse. In spite of a postmodernist call of inclusion in the academy, Christians have been unjustifiably excluded. George Marsden noted, "University culture is not necessarily hostile to religion; but the norm for people to be fully accepted in academic culture is to act as though their religious beliefs had nothing to do with education."⁹

According to Robert Priest, metaphors such as the "missionary position" have been used to marginalize Christians in the academy.¹⁰ Modernists and postmodernists alike have been so enamored by the myths surrounding Christianity that they are unable to unravel their own role in myth-making. When employing such rhetoric they do so in a pejorative manner and become rather elitist. The "missionary position"

metaphor has been utilized as an excuse to exclude Christians from academic discourse because of a perceived "taboo morality" which gives indication that Christians would be too narrow in their scholarship. Priest suggested that,

A society that muzzles academically sophisticated religious voices will instead hear religious voices that are less rational, less interested in constructive reasoned interaction, less supportive of structures underpinning procedural pluralist participation, and more grounded in and reflective of a quest for power.¹¹

Similarly, Marsden recognized that today's academic culture rejects notions of reality based upon religion and especially Christianity. In spite of the fact that Christianity has held a privileged position in the West, it is increasingly viewed as less than academic.¹² Much of this reaction emerges as a result of what Miroslav Volf suggested: Christianity has only heightened the distinction of exclusivity and distanced itself from social others, in effect forming a new culture.¹³ The separation is only exacerbated by an academic culture that views Christianity as oppressive. Marsden noted,

The difference in their [academics'] minds is that Christians have been the oppressors and, as the majority in this country [United States], are not to be trusted. One can easily understand how radical feminists, lesbians, gays, or even advocates of sheer secularism might feel the same way. These groups are represented by some of the most powerful lobbies in the academy and typically see traditional Christianity as one of the powers from which the world needs to be liberated.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Marsden recognized a unique opportunity for Christian scholars to contribute to academic discourse. That opportunity seems even greater in the context of religious studies. With the relative newness of religious studies broadly and the study of new religions specifically, the Christian academy has an opportunity to provide an important voice in the discussion. *Sacred Tribes Journal*, as a journal with roots in evangelicalism, seeks to contribute a credible and sophisticated academic voice in the discourse on religious studies.

Understanding New Religious Movements: Setting the Context for the Journal

According to J. Gordon Melton, the study of new religious movements or NRMs resulted from the convergence of the disciplines of religious studies and social scientific studies of religion.¹⁵ As such, it is multi-disciplinary in nature. Melton stated that the study of NRMs builds



upon the traditions of the history of religion as well as theology and sociology.¹⁶ Its public popularity began in the 1970s as a result of so-called cult controversies¹⁷ that were increasingly reported in the press¹⁸ and anti-cult books.¹⁹ Lorne Dawson asserted that the Peoples Temple mass murder-suicide, led by Jim Jones, in Jonestown, Guyana in November of 1978 heightened the public's concern regarding cults²⁰ and we could add a number of other more recent religious groups that continue to captivate our attention (House of Yahweh, Tony Alamo, Scientology and Concerned Christians etc.). Thomas Robbins noted that the rise of cults in the 1970s resulted from the counter-culture movement of the 1960s and inspired William McLoughlin to label the period as America's "Fourth Great Awakening."²¹

Defining the Taxonomies: Cult, New Religious Movement or Minority Religion

The taxonomies of "cult" and "new religious movement" (NRM) are synonymous. However, while, for example, Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge prefer the taxonomy of "cult" in its scientific understanding as "a deviant religious tradition in a society,"²² the vernacular use of the term has a pejorative connotation. Nonetheless, the study of NRMs has emerged from Ernst Troeltsch's expansion of Max Weber's ideal church-sect typology.²³ Stark and Bainbridge built upon and revised the typology in the 1980s based upon Benton Johnson's classification of religious groups²⁴ and their typology, "church-sect-cult,"²⁵ has gained popularity among sociologists of NRMs.

NRMs has been the academic nomenclature for religious groups that emerge as deviant from the norm of a society's dominant religious expression. A NRM in Western society is a religious group that is deviant from the dominant Christian religion. In this understanding, the presence of world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc.) in the West are constituted as new religious movements in spite of their obvious antiquity. Similarly, one might argue that Christianity in a predominately Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist country is a new religious movement since it is deviant from the mainstream religion.

Eileen Barker defines the newness of NRMs in terms of their presence in Western society after World War II and the religiousness of NRMs in terms of their answers to ultimate questions.²⁶ In the case of The Family or The Way who claim to have roots in Christianity, they are new in the sense that their presentation of Christianity differs from what is considered normative for the faith in a Christian society.²⁷ Melton

adds that NRMs hold teachings and practices that are markedly distinct from the mainstream religion of the society and their membership is generally from the indigenous population.²⁸ In this manner, non-Western religions that have found new expressions and adherents in Western culture are considered new religious movements in those cultures in spite of the fact that they could pre-date Christianity.

More recently, Barker and others are utilizing the taxonomy of minority religions. This designation indicates newness to a culture rather than newness in existence. It also indicates size in relation to the prominent religion of a culture. In this manner, the taxonomy accounts for religious groups that emerge onto the religious landscape whether they are a variant of the dominate religion or one of the world religions.

Whether one refers to these movements as cults, new religious movements or minority religions does not distract from the fact that the Western religious landscape is diverse and complex. Recognizing such diversity is one thing. However, understanding such diversity is the focus of this journal.

An Approach to the Study of New Religions

Robbins noted that there is no standardized method for the study of NRMs. He added that the lack of a clear methodology results in "bias, terminological confusion (e.g. "conversion" equated with recruitment), overgeneralization, unwarranted causal inference and inadequate methods of collecting data."²⁹ Beckford suggested that this is an area where sociology of religion needs strengthening.³⁰ Nonetheless, studies have been conducted and increasingly sociologists are applying anthropological methods.³¹ Robert Blach, Robbins, Stark and more recently Susan Pitchford, Christopher Bader and Stark have suggested a sociological framework based upon anthropology's Human Relations Area Files as a useful tool for comparative analysis of new religions.³² In spite of the lack of a standardized method, the academic study of NRMs progresses on many fronts.

The manner in which the Christian academic or observer of religious culture engages the study of new or minority religions is crucial to a credible voice both in the academy and in the culture. There are of course many models for pursuing an explicit Christian study of new religions from those who let their faith be implicit through their excellent research like Gordon Melton³³ to those who are explicit about their faith like James Beverley³⁴ and others who are more missiological like John Morehead.³⁵ Among those who encountered religious others in the early history of Christianity, consideration should be given to the Apostle Paul. Born in Tarsus as a Roman citizen with a credible academic pedigree (Acts 22:3) and ethnic lineage (Phil 3:5-6), Paul's example of engaging the religious other by observation and dialogue is a model for the



contemporary engagement of minority religions today.³⁶ Paul demonstrates how an individual should interact with others and this demonstration applies as much to the Christian as it does to the academy.

Distinctive of Paul's method was the dialogical manner in which he attempted to understand others. Dialogue is not a new method for communicating with religious others. The modern Christian use is often associated with the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Their respective meetings at New Delhi in 1961 and Second Vatican Council from 1962-1965 set the tone for inter-religious dialogue. The inclusiveness of their form of dialogue, however, left some evangelicals wrestling with the degree to which dialogue leads to syncretism. Dialogue in the Western context is often more concerned with consensus building by conceding negotiable doctrines or beliefs. In the pluralistic theology of religions of John Hick and Paul Knitter, dialogue has become a euphemism for universalism as it devalues the uniqueness of any religious expression.³⁷ This form of dialogue was recently demonstrated in the Yale University produced document, "A Response to 'A Common Word Between Us and You'" where an apparent desire to engage Muslim religious leaders led to the concession of Jesus to be a prophet like Muhammad rather than the son of God.

Contrary to a universalistic understanding, the classic use of dialogue assumes epistemological commitments of the parties involved and values those commitments. As Clark Pinnock observed, "The purpose of dialogue is in part testing such truth claims."³⁸ The English word comes from the Attic Greek *διαλογος* and means "conversation." There are a few cognates in the NT such as *διαλεγομαι*, *διαλογιζομαι*, *διαλογισμος*. Of these, *διαλεγομαι* is used 13 times in the NT, ten of which are in St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles. All of the uses in Acts deal with the Apostle Paul. When Luke uses the word to describe what Paul was doing, it is often translated in the New American Standard Bible as "reasoning" (6 times in Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9), "talking" (2 times in Acts 20:7, 8) or "discussion" (2 times in Acts 24:12, 25).

Consistent with Attic Greek, Dieter Kemmler agrees that the NT use of *διαλεγομαι* is best reflected as, "Reasoned, or discoursed argumentatively, either in the way of dialogue . . . or in that of formal and continuous discourse."³⁹ It seems apparent that Paul was conversing with various people and his conversation was dialogical probably, as Howard Marshall pointed out, in a Socratic manner.⁴⁰ This is consistent with the understanding that Paul's itinerant work resembled that of traveling sophists and his instruction with that of the Hellenistic schools.⁴¹

The manner in which Paul engaged religious others in dialogue has several important characteristics that are highlighted in his encounter with classical Pagans. First, Paul respected the religious beliefs of others. While in Athens on his second missionary journey recorded in Acts 17, he seems to identify the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers searching for spirituality as a positive desire to know truth (Acts 17:22). The Lukan scholar, William Larkin, observed that, "Here we have a respectful recognition of religious endeavors but not an acknowledgement that they lead to true, saving faith."⁴² This was characteristic not only of Paul, but also of his colleagues. For example, consider the testimony about Christians by the Ephesian town clerk in Acts 19, "For you have brought these men [disciples of Paul] here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess [Artemis]" (v. 37).

Second, Paul's disrespectful recognition of religious endeavors is not out of ignorance. He sought to understand the religious practices of others, "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols" (my translation, Acts 17:16). Paul was in the Agora dialoging with those he encountered. More than likely, such dialogue revolved around what he had observed. Paul's "observing" (the Greek θεωρεω) was in response to something he sought to understand. His understanding of the religious beliefs of the Athenians came not only from his observation, but also from knowledge of their literature. Twice Paul quotes from their own philosophers (Acts 17:28): "In him we live and move and have our being,"⁴³ and "for we are indeed his offspring."⁴⁴ Paul saw the opportunity to connect what he knew to be the true worship of God with the religious beliefs of those at the Areopagus.⁴⁵ What is of particular note is that Paul quotes from the Stoic philosopher Aratus.

Aratus (ca. 315-240 BC) was born in Soli, Cilicia near Tarsus and ultimately made his way to Athens. At the request of a benefactor, Aratus wrote his *Phaenomena*. What makes his work of particular interest is the clear indication that Greek philosophy was moving away from polytheism toward monotheism. It is evident in the opening lines of *Phaenomena* that Zeus is not the jovial trickster Zeus of Homer and Hesiod. According to Aratus, Zeus is kind and benevolent. He wrote,

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed;
full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men;
full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus.
For we are also his offspring; and he in his kindness unto men
giveth favourable signs and wakeneth the people to work, reminding
them of livelihood. He tells what time the soil is best for the labour
of the ox and for the mattock, and what time the seasons are
favourable both for planting of trees and for casting all manner of
seeds. For himself it was who set the signs in heaven, and marked



out the constellations, and for the year devised what stars chiefly should give to men right signs of the seasons, to the end that all things might grow unfailingly. Wherefore him do men ever worship first and last. Hail, O Father, mighty marvel, mighty blessing unto men. Hail to thee and to the Elder Race! Hail, ye Muses, right kindly, every one! But for me, too, in answer to my prayer direct all my lay, even as is meet to tell the stars.⁴⁶ (emphasis added)

Paul understood this religious shift in culture because he engaged it by dialoguing about his observations.

The third characteristic of Paul's encounter with religious others was his unassuming attitude. He was invited into dialogue with religious others. It is after his observation that he receives an invitation and begins a dialogue with the philosophers of the city. Hans-Josef Klauck noted that the opening address at the Areopagus has the same structural elements as classical travel accounts.⁴⁷ "Men of Athens, I observe (θεωρῶ) that you are very religious in all respects, for while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with the inscription, 'To an Unknown God' (Acts 17:22-23). Out of regard for the beliefs of others and what he had learned he respectfully acknowledged the spiritual journey of his hosts. Marshall remarked, "What Paul was doing was to side with the philosophers, and then demonstrate that they did not go far enough."⁴⁸ However, he could only do so because of the respect he earned by engaging in reasoned dialogue.

Finally, Paul honestly and openly contrasted his own faith position with that of his dialogue partners in a manner that was engaging the religious culture. Christianity was new at the time of the apostle Paul and the people of his world were concerned about a new religion that they did not understand. What is interesting is the fact that his provocation did not meet with absolute resistance. In fact, Luke's description of the exchange seems to suggest sundry responses. Some of Paul's dialogue partners indeed mocked him for his beliefs. Others accepted what Paul had to say. Still, as Luke recorded, "Others said, 'We will hear you again about this' (Acts 17:32). Paul did not force his beliefs on the people of Athens. Instead, his dialogue sought to understand and engage people in their beliefs while contrasting the differences with his own in a manner that respected the religious nature of others.

Conclusion

The evangelical encounter with religious others must be characterized by this Pauline model: respect, understanding,

unpresuming attitude and engagement. In the spring of 2009 I was on a research trip to Stonehenge near Amesbury, England. My project was to understand the significance of the megalithic monument to contemporary Druid rituals. While I was there I met many Druids from various British Druid orders as well as others. One individual I encountered was a recently honorably discharged Iraqi soldier on a sort of spiritual journey around Great Britain. He was intrigued by the fact that a Christian would be interested in Druids and would travel such a distance in order to dialogue with them. After the spring equinox ritual among the inner circle of Sarsen stones the man asked me an honest question in regards to how being at Stonehenge affected me personally. My immediate response was purely academic as I try not to allow my emotions to affect my research. However, after reflecting further on the experience I came to realize that being at Stonehenge did affect me as I began to ask the question of the future of one's soul.

The next day I saw him in Avebury at another renowned stone circle and our dialogue continued. He was interested in my observations about the Druids as he was himself searching. As we talked I communicated my respect for the Druid spiritual path, but acknowledged that ultimately one must find a satisfactory response to the issue personal destiny. For me, that response is only found in Christ and I challenge him to search for himself. With that comment we went our separate ways. It is not for me to coerce anyone to a particular religion. That decision is personal. However, it is for me to understand and evaluate other religions with integrity and to critique and provoke them in a manner that is respectful and sincere.

Sacred Tribes Journal intends to be an academic journal that models constructive engagement of religious others by understanding them through dialogue and observations and respecting them as people seeking truth. As a journal committed to truth and integrity, we are also committed to disseminating solid academic research to the academy as well as to those interested in religion. With this goal in mind we are hopeful that academics of various religious expressions will feel free to contribute to the dissemination of their research through *Sacred Tribes Journal* as well as participate in dialogue that is respectful, engaging and provocative.

¹See Eileen W. Linder, eds., *2008 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* (National Council of Churches, 2008).

²See for example Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey* (Hartford: Trinity College, 2009); Christopher Partridge, *Introduction*, *New Religions A Guide: New Religious Movements, Sects and Alternative Spiritualities*, ed.



Christopher Partridge (New York: Oxford, 2004), 14-24; Rodney Stark, "Europe Receptivity to New Religious Movements: Round Two," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32, no. 4 (1998): 389-398.

³Jon Trott, Philip Johnson and John Morehead, "Why Sacred Tribes Journal," *Sacred Tribes Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2002): 2.

⁴Christopher H. Partridge, "The Study of Religion," in *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World: Exploring Living Faiths in Postmodern Contexts*, ed. Christopher Partridge (Grand Rapids: Intervarsity, 2002), 143.

⁵Editorial Board. Internet resource available from http://www.sacredtribesjournal.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=32.

⁶Mark Noll, "The Evangelical Mind," in *The Evangelical Landscape*, ed. Garth Rosell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1996), 16.

⁷*Ibid.*, 18.

⁸Terry Muck, "History of Religion and Missiology: Complementary Methodologies," in *Encountering New Religions: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*, ed. Irving Hexham, John W. Morehead, Stephen Rost (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 65.

⁹George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford, 1996), 23-24.

¹⁰Robert J. Priest, "Missionary Positions: Christian, Modernist, Postmodernist," *Current Anthropology* 42, 1 (2001).

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea*, 6

¹³Miroslav Volf, "A Vision of Embrace: Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict," *Ecumenical Review* 47 (1995): 197-198.

¹⁴Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea*, 32.

¹⁵J. Gordon Melton, "The Rise of the Study of New Religions," a paper presented at the Center for Studies on New Religions (CENSUR) 1999.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Thomas Robbins and David G. Bromely, "What Have We Learned About New Religions? New Religious Movements as Experiments," *Religious Studies Review* 19, no. 3 (1993): 209.

¹⁸James A. Beckford and Melanie A. Cole, "British and American Responses to New Religious Movements," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 70 (1988): 209-224.

¹⁹Melton, "The Rise of the Study of New Religions."

²⁰Lorne L. Dawson, *Comprehending Cults: The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998), 13.

²¹Thomas Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma* (London: Sage, 1988), 1.

²²Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), 26.

²³Dawson, *Comprehending Cults*, 29.

²⁴Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, 23.

²⁵Dawson, *Comprehending Cults*, 35.

²⁶Eileen Barker, "New Religions and New Religiosity," in *New Religions and New Religiosity*, ed. Eileen Barker and Margit Warburg (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University, 1995), 15-16.

²⁷Ibid. The same could be said for Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.

²⁸J. Gordon Melton, "The Changing Scene of New Religious Movements: Observations from a Generation of Research," *Social Compass* 42, no. 2 (1995): 270.

²⁹Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 14.

³⁰James A. Beckford, "Religious Movements and Globalization" in *Global Social Movements*, ed. Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai (London: Athlone, 2000), 165-183.

³¹Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma*, 15.

³²Ibid., 16; Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11, no. 2 (1996): 133-145; Susan Pitchford, Christopher Bader and Rodney Stark, "Doing Field Studies of Religious Movements: An Agenda," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 3 (2001): 379-392.



³³See for example, J. Gordon Melton, "From Occult to Western Esotericism: Catching up on Changes in the New Age Movement," paper presented at the Trinity Consultation on Post-Christendom Spiritualities (Deerfield, Illinois, 2008).

³⁴See James Beverley, "Unification Church," in *A Guide to New Religious Movements*, ed. Ron Enroth (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2005), 60-77.

³⁵See John W. Morehead, "New Religions, Subjective Life Spiritualities and the Challenge to Missions in the Post-Christian West," *Lausanne World Pulse* (July 2008).

³⁶See Arthur F. Holmes, *Building the Christian Academy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 4.

³⁷See for example Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1985); John Hick and Paul Knitter, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 1987).

³⁸Clark Pinnock, "An Inclusivist View," in *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Dennis L. Okhom and Timothy R. Phillips (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 114.

³⁹Dieter W. Kemmler, *Faith and Human Reason: A Study of Paul's Method of Preaching as Illustrated by 1-2 Thessalonians and Acts 17, 2-4* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 35-36.

⁴⁰I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 283; cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2003), 76.

⁴¹Alexander Loveday, "Paul and the Hellenistic Schools: The Evidence of Galen," in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 61.

⁴²William J. Larkin, *Acts* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1995), 255.

⁴³Some note that this is a possible quote from Epimenides of Crete. According to Klauck, "There is not in fact a literal verbal parallel to this passage, but its components are found in early Greek philosophy, in the reflections about the being and the significance of Zeus, the highest god." In *Magic and Paganism*, 87.

⁴⁴Aratus, *Phenomena* 5 as cited in Larkin, *Acts*, 258; cf. Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 88.

⁴⁵See Gerald R. McDermott, *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions?* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2007), 82.

⁴⁶Aratus, *Phaenomena*, trans. G. R. Mair (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1960), 207.

⁴⁷Klauck, *Magic and Paganism*, 75.

⁴⁸I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 282.