Religious movements and social movements

▌INTRODUCTION

In various parts of the book so far we have seen how religion has figured in studies of social movements. In Chapter 2, we saw how early theorists of collective behaviour included religious movements in their taxonomies and conceptual frameworks, although they tended to regard these movements as *expressive* or *value-oriented* and, hence, less significant than social movements striving for purposive social change. Also in Chapter 2, we considered briefly how Nazism has been described as a 'political religion' (Evans 2007), which, we might add, could be equivalent to 'civil religion' (Bellah 1970), in that it performs the same social function as religion (i.e., promoting social cohesion), albeit with a secular content. And, in Chapter 4, we saw how the precarity movement has utilized religious imagery, inventing its own saint, San Precario, to protect all precarious workers (see Figure 4.2.2).

While discussion of religious movements has been largely tangential up to now, the main focus of this chapter is on the relationship between social movements and religious movements. The chapter begins by considering why there has been relatively little cross-fertilization of ideas between the two fields of study, noting that most resistance has come from Marxist-influenced quarters of social movement theory, which view religion as regressive, reactionary, and conservative and, accordingly, see religious movements as retreatist or inward-looking, rather than progressive or emancipatory.

More recently, however, and especially with the advent of new social movement theory, which we looked at in Chapter 4, scholars have tried to reconcile the two fields, treating religious movements *as* social movements, or else acknowledging the religious qualities of some social movements. Indeed, if we accept the functionalist argument underpinning the idea that secular forms of civic religion bind people together in ways similar to traditional religion, we ought not be surprised by observations pointing to the quasi-religious nature of contemporary new social movements, which, like new religious movements, are searching for meaning, spirituality, and alternative conceptions of the sacred. Thus, some of the material contained in this chapter relates to developments associated with what we have previously identified as the 'cultural turn' in social movement research, which, as noted later, has engendered interest not only in culture and identity, but also in spirituality and the sacred, as well as other religious-like qualities of social movements.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET?

There has been a long-term estrangement between the sociology of religion and the study of social movements. Historical factors for this estrangement, which we considered in Chapter 2, have included the equation of religious sentiments with intolerance and fanaticism (Le Bon 1960 [1895]), as well as rigid conceptual distinctions between religious movements and political movements evident, for example, in the work of Blumer (1951: 216), for whom 'the latter sought to effect a political revolution as well as a change in ideology while the former were "expressive movements" whose members were unable to release their tension in the direction of some actual change' (Hannigan 1991: 313). When social movement theorists have included religious movements in their texts, it has usually been as illustrations of charismatic leadership, deviant systems of belief, relative deprivation, or conversion processes (Hannigan 1991: 314).

More recently, social movement scholars have disregarded religion and religious movements because just as they have been inclined to reduce collective action to organized (state) politics (see Chapter 4), so they tend to reduce religion to organized religion or 'religious organizations' (Diani 1992: 13–14). In this way, they have ignored the multiple definitions of religion and meanings of religious practice beyond church-oriented religion, such as the various contemporary forms of 'believing without belonging', which provide a

counterpoint to the secularization thesis, where secularization is measured strictly by declining church attendance (Davie 1994). Having said that, some social movement research does acknowledge the important part religion and religious organizations can play in successful mobilizations. The most prominent example here is the role of black churches in the US civil rights movement, which was discussed in Chapter 3. It will be recalled that, according to McAdam (1982), the relative success of the US civil rights movement depended upon the prevailing 'political opportunity structure', that is, the constraints of the political, legal, and economic context, and the opportunities afforded the movement within that context, including the presence of preexisting networks, such as those provided by the black churches. However, as this political process model is founded on the assumptions of resource mobilization theory, religion is seen as having no inherent value; rather, 'it is conceptualized as but another movement "resource"' (Hannigan 1991: 315).

Nonetheless, the idea that religious movements might be affected by political opportunities has been applied to a variety of religiously motivated protests in the former Soviet Union and Latin America, to the Falun Gong movement in China, and Islamist movements in the Middle East and North Africa (Beckford 2003: 174). Moreover, sociologists of religion have used a similar logic to the political process approach, proposing that 'religious movements are expected to flourish in circumstances where formerly, actual or would-be monopoly religions are weak and where political and legal constraints on religious activity are also weak' (Beckford 2003: 167).

Another reason social movement theorists have tended to ignore religion and not taken religious movements seriously is born of an ideological bias, based in Marxism, which, to quote Marx himself, regards religion as 'the opium of the people' (Hannigan 1991: 317). This, in turn, has caused social movement thinkers to regard religion as a dogmatic, conservative, and reactionary social institution rather than as a potentially progressive force for change in society (Beckford 1989: 143–162). Moreover, even when religion offers radical alternatives, it is ultimately seen to do so in a manner and form that is retreatist, inward-looking, or 'world-rejecting' (Wallis 1984). On this view, religion has little or no emancipatory function (beyond individual salvation or enlightenment, that is).

However, Hannigan (1991: 318) says that, generally speaking, the ideological critique of religious movements 'does not hold up very well', for, '[w]hile religious experience and political action can both be interpreted as differential responses to situations of economic and social discontent, there is little empirical evidence to show that

choosing one form necessarily precludes choosing the other'. Hence, expressive religious belief and radical social action are not necessarily incompatible. Indeed, for some members of religious movements, 'inner transformation is compatible with a more responsible participation in social life' (Diani 1993: 125). For instance, the radical personal transformation of 'born again' Christians can translate into radical social action on ostensibly nonreligious issues, although this can assume a conservative expression, as in pro-life activism against abortion. Regardless of the radical/progressive or conservative/reactionary nature of the activism, it remains the case that 'religious ideologies can be powerful vehicles for articulating "injustice frames" that diagnose social problems' (Williams 2000: 85).

Accordingly, religion and religious movements can have a significant role in public life and can contribute to the vitality of civil society, which in itself is nothing new, since religious communities and organizations have historically been seed beds for movements aimed at political reform and social justice, including mobilization around abolitionism, temperance, and disarmament (Williams 2000: 2–3; McCammon and Campbell 2002). Furthermore, some religious movements can be politically revolutionary, as demonstrated by Shi'ite Muslim fundamentalism in Iran (Hannigan 1991: 318; Kurzman 1998: 36–39), which provided the impetus for the Iranian Revolution of 1977–1979, wherein the 'mosque network' constituted a key resource (Kurzman 1994), equivalent to the role played by black churches in the US civil rights movement (see Chapter 3). The Iranian Revolution is but one example of 'Islamic activism' or 'the mobilization of contention to support Muslim causes' (Wiktorowicz 2004: 2). Indeed, Wiktorowicz (2004: 4–5) argues that:

. . . [g]iven the variety of collective actors that operate in the name of 'Islam' (prayer groups, terrorists, propagation movements, study circles, political parties, nongovernmental organizations, cultural societies, etc.), one might even make a strong claim that Islamic activism is one of the most common examples of activism in the world.

BOX 6.1 RELIGIOUS PROTEST REPERTOIRES

One way social movements can resemble religious movements is via their adoption of what we might term 'religious protest repertoires'. This is a variant of the concept 'repertoires of contention', which, as we saw in

Chapter 3, refers to 'the tactics groups employ in their struggles with one another' (McAdam 1995: 235). An example here would be Greenpeace's early direct actions that were rooted in the Quaker idea of 'bearing witness', which 'is supposed to change the observer and increase their level of activism, compassion, anger, whatever it is' (Dale 1996: 17).

Although the act of bearing witness does not necessarily intend to affect directly any political or policy change, it can constitute a 'symbolic challenge' (Melucci 1984; 1985). Hence, in Chapter 5 we saw how the creative protest of women's grassroots groups in Peru contributed to dissent in civil society about the corrupt and repressive regime of Prime Minister Fujimori. While the radical street performance of the women did not lead to Fujimori's demise, Moser (2003: 187) says that was not the point; what they actually did was 'bear witness' to the government's corruption and, as such, their protests posed a symbolic challenge to the incumbent regime.

As an act of bearing witness, the performative protest of Peru's women 'creates a connection between knowledge and responsibility for the audience: their awareness of the issue means that they may choose to act or not, but that they cannot turn away in ignorance' (Moser 2003: 188). Moser (2003: 188) goes on to note that while bearing witness is rooted in the Quaker tradition, 'it also has an established presence in the political context of Latin America'. The paradigmatic example here being the *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (Figure 6.1), who are the group of mothers of the disappeared that, since the late 1970s

> . . . have taken over the main public square in Argentina every Thursday afternoon, to walk slowly around the perimeter, dressed in white headscarves and holding pictures of their missing relatives in a courageous act of defiance which they explicitly regard as 'bearing witness' to state oppression.
>
> (Moser 2003: 188)

The concept of repertoire of contention has also been applied to Islamic activism (mentioned earlier) and, in particular, the various protest events that emerged in opposition to the US-led invasion of Afghanistan following the terror attacks of 11 September 2001. Along with marches and rallies, protestors used other 'tools of dissent', including petitions directed at US representatives as well as Muslim governments, the unveiling of banners in both indigenous languages (to capture local audiences) and English (to capture global audiences), and symbolic props and actions, especially religious idioms and the burning of American flags and effigies of US President George W. Bush (Wiktorowicz 2004: 2). As we will see in Chapter 8, the use of new forms of social media during the Arab Spring can be seen to have added to the protest

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Figure 6.1 *Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* during Thursday demonstrations, Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America

repertoire of Islamic activism, although new media were also central to earlier anti-war protests post-9/11 (Carty and Onyett 2006; Gillan et al. 2008).

David Snow (2004: 18) has pointed out that scholars have tended to ignore the social movement activity of religious movements because 'they typically are only indirectly and secondarily politically-oriented, and therefore do not fit neatly under the contentious politics umbrella'. To compensate for this shortfall, Snow (2004: 19) says, 'we need to broaden our conceptualization of movements to include collective challenges to systems and structures of authority beyond the government and state', including movements that challenge authorities indirectly 'by exiting the system and thus the bailiwick of the authority, as in the case of communal movements and other-worldly religious "cults"'.

This relates to what Beckford (2003: 175) says about religious movements illustrating 'some of the interesting complexities and ambiguities concerning the mapping of public and private spheres of social life in modernity'. Paradoxically, he states, they 'press for the extension or defence of free, public space *and*, in some cases, make use of it in order to create inward-looking communities that appear

to isolate their members from public life' (Beckford 2003: 175, original emphasis). However, the more outward-looking they are, the more likely religious movements contribute to strengthening civil society:

> . . . movements such as Scientology, the Unificationists and some of the New Religions of Japan have repeatedly offered to serve the interests of wider society by providing drug rehabilitation programs, schemes to reduce levels of crime and environmental pollution, and support for human rights campaigns.
>
> (Beckford 2003: 175)

Just as it is for social movements, establishing and retaining autonomy is an ongoing dilemma for religious movements and organizations. Fitzgerald (2009) has explored some consequences of 'cooperative collective action' by looking at the impact of government funding on religious identity and autonomy in faith-based community development organizations in the United States. He shows how while partnering with government agencies in the creation of community development and social services provision is key to revitalizing some neighbourhoods, it also has its dangers. For instance, like all not-for-profit organizations, faith-based organizations run the risk of becoming dependent on state resources, which may have negative organizational consequences. In one instance, Fitzgerald (2009: 194) found the organization 'was encouraged to grow at a faster rate than initially planned after receiving a government contract', and '[w]hen the contract was not renewed, the organization was forced to downsize rapidly and lay off nearly half of its staff'.

Ricardo Blaug (2002: 112–113) notes a similar process in the context of British politics, which, he says, has become wholly undemocratic, as it has moved away from deliberative participation towards 'engineered democracy' whereby grassroots and self-help groups are subject to a process of colonization, being offered resources with strings attached and threatened constantly by co-optation. One consequence of this development is that organizations with once-radical, nonhierarchical structures become institutionalized and instrumental forms subject to bureaucratic procedures.

Another tension can arise between partnering with the state *and* exercising a prophetic voice against injustice, such that, 'it is difficult (and perhaps unwise) to publicly challenge or criticize the state when the state is your partner' (Fitzgerald 2009: 194). Arguably, it is easier to challenge the state or government from a position of power and authority, which raises interesting questions about the relationship

between religion, church, and state. And we will look at some of those issues later when we consider the Catholic Church's espousal of liberation theology in Latin America (see Box 6.2), the Church of England's political interventions during the Thatcher era in Britain, and, more recently, the churches' support for the Occupy movement.

RECONCILING NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Studies that recognize 'the disruptive, defiant and unruly face of religion' (Smith 1996: 1) suggest it is not sufficient to treat religious movements as clearly retreatist or purely cultural (Hannigan 1991: 318). Furthermore, researchers who have explored the similarities and differences between new religious movements and new social movements argue that even though the former, like the latter, may not strive to achieve any political or policy objectives, they nevertheless can offer important and meaningful contributions to transforming social institutions and cultural values. These arguments relate to the efficacy of cultural politics and symbolic challenges to dominant codes that are posed by some forms of contemporary protest, including new social movements, which was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Regardless of the apparent similarities that exist between social and religious movements, there has been an impasse between social movements studies and the study of religious movements, which, with a few exceptions, has prohibited the transference of ideas between the two fields. In America, that has largely been a result of sociologists of religion choosing to 'embrace the homegrown "resource mobilization" paradigm' (Hannigan 1993: 3; see also Hannigan 1990: 255). Given this perspective regards social movements as 'rational, strategically calculating, politically instrumental phenomena', it is hardly surprising, says Smith (1996: 3), that 'in the move to sweep irrationality and emotion out of social movement theory, religion – bearing all of those associations – was also swept away with the classical theories'.

On the other hand, European social movement theorists have displayed the kind of ideological opposition to religion that was discussed earlier, whereby religion is seen to reflect dominant class interests, and is therefore conservative and reactionary, 'and religious movements are regarded as withdrawals from rather than encounters with social change' (Hannigan 1993: 3). However, with the advent of new social movements and new religious movements, a constructive conversation began to take place between scholars from their respective fields.

In the sociology of religion, Barbara Hargrove (1988: 45) applied Wallace's (1956) conception of 'revitalization movements' to what she termed 'new mazeways' that could give rise to a 'larger vision of global responsibility and economic thinking'. These included:

> . . . the indigenous spirituality of Native Americans, the 'recovery by women's groups of ancient understandings of human relations to one another and to the earth', liberation theology, and the world view of the ecology movement 'where concerned persons are fighting for the preservation of a balance of nature that the rush towards development has upset'.
>
> (Hannigan 1991: 321, quoting Hargrove 1988: 45–46)

Like new social movements (Hannigan 1990: 252), these new religious formations contained high concentrations of the 'new middle classes' (managers, professionals, etc.), thus gainsaying another ideological bias in the study of religious movements, which sees them as the religion of the oppressed and lower orders (Hannigan 1991: 318, 321).

BOX 6.2 LIBERATION THEOLOGY

At a conference in Medellín, Colombia, in 1968, Latin American Catholic bishops declared the right of the poor to seek justice and challenge unjust military regimes. Soon after, the popular church began to articulate beliefs that effectively reversed traditional biblical teachings. These biblical beliefs of the poor became known as 'liberation theology', the central tenets of which constituted a radical challenge to established beliefs insofar as they assigned different meanings to orthodox Christian teachings. First, liberation theology was premised on the view that rather than being time neutral and culturally neutral, theology must be contextual: it 'must be culturally relevant and cannot be separated from its socio-economic and political contexts' (Erickson Nepstad 1996: 110).

Second, while God loves both rich and poor, God has a preference for the poor. Moreover, sin is not understood in terms of personal and individual wrongdoing, but is equated with capitalism and the exploitation of the poor by the rich, who have also used religion as an ideological means of justifying the status quo (see Box 6.4). Third, in a reversal of the traditional view of salvation as a personal reward given a Christian in the afterlife, liberation theology maintains God's kingdom is 'an ambition for a just society in this lifetime' (Erickson Nepstad 1996: 111).[1] This utopian vision aims to reverse social inequality and injustice in the present, where, it is believed, God's kingdom

can be established with the abolition of classes, private property, and ruling elites. Accordingly:

> The salvation message is changed to mean a human liberation in the present, instigated by popular church adherents. This transformed understanding of salvation means that the Christian mission no longer consists only of proselytizing souls, but also of establishing social justice.
>
> (Erickson Nepstad 1996: 111)

In a development paralleling the key role of black churches in the US civil rights movement (see Chapter 3), the popular Central American church has provided the necessary resources and organizational structure to enable the expression of people's aspirations for revolutionary change (Erickson Nepstad 1996: 110; see also Kurzman 1998). Moreover, the strong political language and abiding concern for a just social order voiced by liberationists has resonated at the highest levels of Church governance, which Hewitt (1993: 75) sees as 'an important development, given that it is precisely here that the resources and the power of the Church can be most effectively marshaled to effect real change'. This has been most evident in Brazil, 'where the Church has developed a reputation as one of the most progressive within world Catholicism in implementing the "preferential option for the poor"' (Hewitt 1993: 74).

Similarly, the Canadian Church has long spoken out against social injustice and been a defender of the downtrodden. As in Brazil, the United Church of Canada has institutionalized its social justice concerns, at one time identifying the following three programs or priority areas: (i) faith and justice; (ii) regional inequality, native people, and urban poverty; and (iii) justice in the Third World, including issues of human rights, world peace, and environmental protection (Hewitt 1993: 83–84). Furthermore, as in Brazil, there has been an emphasis in Canada on grassroots organizations, or 'base ecclesial communities', such as parish and local community groups, which 'are seen as playing a vital role in the fight for social transformation by denouncing injustices' (Hewitt 1993: 84).

By contrast, the Catholic Church in the United States has been a less vociferous critic of social injustice and defender of the poor. Although, like Canada, the United States differs from Brazil since it is a developed country and major industrial power, that is not to say the US Church operates in a society without social problems. Nonetheless, rather than addressing the structural causes of social ills, it has been observed that the response of the Church in the United States has been 'a mere reflection of the dominant liberal tradition in America insofar as it advocates a piecemeal or individualistic approach to the solution of social problems' (Hewitt 1993: 80). Accordingly, bishops there

'have directed their pastoral on the economy to those in authority in America, not to the grassroots in the first instance, as the "option for the poor" would seem to dictate' (Hewitt 1993: 80–81). Moreover, in concrete undertakings, US bishops have adopted a similarly circumscribed approach, focusing on education, 'with little or no emphasis on organizing active opposition to particular forms of injustice' (Hewitt 1993: 81).

Hannigan (1990, 1991, 1993) has attempted to reconcile the study of new social movements and new religious movements by proposing a synthetic approach to religious movements and change that applies the framework of new social movement theory to the sociology of religion. For instance, he recommends eliminating the analytical distinction between religious movements and social movements. If we accept Turner and Killian's (1988: 237) argument that every social movement is ultimately a 'moral crusade' (cp. Eder 1985) and the classical view of Emile Durkheim (1965 [1912]) that religion and morality are different sides of the same coin, we can set aside any ideological opposition to the study of religion and religious movements, recognizing that 'religious and nonreligious social movements are thus potentially cut from the same cloth' (Hannigan 1991: 327). According to Hannigan (1991: 326), this provides 'a deeper rationale for treating religious and social movements in the same terms beyond simply observing that segments of the new social movements appear to have spiritual or theological themes'.

Documenting the religious or spiritual dimensions of new social movements is precisely what James Beckford (1989, 2003) has done. Beginning his analysis with a critique of those European scholars (i.e., Habermas, Offe, and Touraine) who have taken ideological exception to religion and religious movements, Beckford draws attention to the religious quality of new social movements. As suggested earlier, many of the problems flowing from this ideological opposition to religious movements derive from the fact that, like some sociologists of religion (Hannigan 1990: 255), social movement scholars tend to have a limited conception of religion, which they equate with formal religious organization, such as churchgoing. Significantly, there are echoes here of new social movement theorists' critique of resource mobilization theory for focusing exclusively on social movement organizations, which Melucci (1989: 44) sees as symptomatic of a 'myopia of the visible' prevalent in studies of collective action and mass mobilization.

Notwithstanding the fact that, as discussed earlier, many quasi-Marxist theorists of new social movements are ideologically opposed to religion,

Beckford shows how, interestingly, there are religion-like elements in their work (Beckford 2003: 161–165). For instance, Habermas (1987: 393) differentiates the 'emancipatory potentials' of anti-nuclear movements, feminism, and peace movements, among others, from 'potentials for resistance and withdrawal' evident in some youth sects and in religious fundamentalism. Because they are capable of 'conquering new territory', Habermas (1987: 393) classifies the former as 'offensive movements', while the latter 'have a more defensive character'. Nevertheless, Beckford (1989: 151–152) shows how Habermas has some:

> . . . guarded support for a humanistic kind of religion which might have emancipatory effects [. . .] if it served as a vehicle of critical self-reflection and if, as a result of the process of secularization, it became separated from dominant interests.

By highlighting the themes and values of new social movements as 'autonomy and identity [. . .] and opposition to manipulation, control, dependence, bureaucratization, regulation, etc.' (Offe 1985: 829), Beckford (1989: 156) shows how Claus Offe impliedly points to the religious quality of new social movements 'insofar as they have to do with the values that are considered ultimately important for human life and which transcend particular social arrangements'. Touraine also 'appears to touch indirectly on matters of religion' (Beckford 1989: 157). Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 4, Touraine's 'mission' could be described as discovering *the* social movement of post-industrial society. To Beckford, this project chimes with the general objectives of many religious movements:

> . . . some broad religious movements exhibit precisely the kind of traits which, for Touraine, constitute *the* social movement: a strong sense of distinctive identity for participants, a clear idea of their opponents and a sharp awareness of what is at stake in the movement's struggle against its opponents.
>
> (Beckford 1989: 160–161, original emphasis)

Furthermore, for Beckford (1989: 161), 'in view of their all-encompassing diagnoses of problems and prescriptions for remedies', some religious movements could be exemplars of Touraine's notion of social movement. In fact, he states, 'it seems almost perverse and arbitrary for Touraine to deny that such movements as Christian evangelicalism, liberation theology, or Islamic fundamentalism could qualify as social movements' (Beckford 1989: 161). Presumably, however, they do not qualify as social movements because they are not self-directing and, therefore, in Touraine's opinion, '[e]ven if they intend

to create a new form of society, it would not amount to a truly autonomous creation' (Beckford 1989: 161).

Elsewhere in this chapter the social movement-like qualities of both liberation theology and conservative forms of Christianity are considered. For now, we will note one study of 'Islamic activism' (Wiktorowicz 2004) that does indeed attempt to show how some of the central features of new social movements (e.g., autonomy, loose network of associations, adherence to post-material values) characterize both moderate and radical Islamic movements (Sutton and Vertigans 2006). On the other hand, it has been suggested that the international growth of Islamic terrorism after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 has given rise to a global 'anti-movement', which is defined as 'a distorted, inverse image of a social movement' (Wieviorka 2005: 15).

Although Beckford is able to see some religious-like qualities in the new social movement theories of Habermas, Offe, and Touraine, for him, the strongest case for the view that new social movements have a religious quality is presented by Alberto Melucci. For example, Melucci (1985: 801) proposes that contemporary new social movements have a *prophetic* function, since '[t]hey practice in the present the change they are struggling for'. In this way, as we saw in Chapter 4, contemporary collective actors resemble nomads dwelling in the present (Melucci 1989: 55). Furthermore, and unlike collective behaviour theorists of the past, Melucci does not categorically distinguish new religious movements and new social movements since he 'accepts the sacred can serve as the basis for an appeal to a different, alternative social order' (Beckford 2003: 162). A similar point is made by Hannigan (1990: 255) who says that the 'holistic' ethics and imagery of both contemporary new religious movements and new social movements 'constitutes a new and distinctive conceptualization of the sacred'.

The religious quality of new social movements is particularly evident in environmentalism and feminism. Mario Diani (1993: 125) has shown how both adherents of neo-oriental religious groups and ecological activists in Italy articulate similar critiques of modern society (which we will see later is also something common to religious fundamentalist movements) that are based on a 'version of individual freedom which is not indifferent to social problems but rather aims at a balanced growth of both the private and the public sphere'. Similarly, Hannigan (1990: 253) shows how the holistic worldview of 'New Age' spirituality is evident in segments of new social movements (see also Box 6.3). For instance, 'deep ecology', which 'is an ecophilosophy that stresses the fundamental interrelatedness and value of all living things' (Hannigan 1993: 14), suggests 'a kind of mystic religiosity based on nature worship' (Hannigan 1990: 253).

▌BOX 6.3 RELIGIOUS 'LIFESTYLE MOVEMENTS'

Kemp (2001: 37) has argued that a Christian form of New Age spirituality, dubbed 'Christaquarianism', should be referred to as a 'new socio-religious movement [. . .] to emphasize the wider cultural base and similarity to the new social movements'. On the other hand, Shimazono (1999) has said it is more apt to refer to what is commonly called the New Age Movement as the 'New Spirituality Movements and Culture'. The fact that many adherents have individualistic inclinations and are reluctant to take part in collective actions suggests classification as a 'culture' rather than a 'movement', where 'culture' means 'aspects of the production or consumption of culture, rather than active individual practices' (Shimazono 1999: 125). Another way of viewing Shimazono's observations about New Age adherents is through the lens of what Haenfler et al. (2012: 14) call 'lifestyle movements', which because they 'encourage adherents to take action in their daily lives [. . .] the vast majority of people will never engage in civil disobedience or even symbolic demonstration'.

Lifestyle movements 'consciously and actively promote a lifestyle, or way of life, as their primary means to foster social change' (Haenfler et al. 2012: 2). While some established social movements have lifestyle 'wings', such as the green living segment of the environmental movement, lifestyle movements differ significantly from overtly political movements, since they are (i) relatively individualized and private, (ii) ongoing rather than episodic, and (iii) aimed at changing cultural and economic practices rather than targeting the state (Haenfler et al. 2012: 6). Examples include the voluntary simplicity movement, which 'advocates reducing overall material consumption by fixing broken items, reusing old items, and "doing without" in order to reduce environmental burdens', and the social responsibility movement, which 'encourages participants to "vote" with their dollars, buying from socially responsible companies (and boycotting others), supporting locally owned businesses, purchasing "fair trade" products, and making socially responsible investments' (Haenfler et al. 2012: 6).

Whereas green living, voluntary simplicity, and social responsibility movements form part of the environmental and social justice movements, other lifestyle movements include religious movements or sects. Examples here are Promise Keepers (men committed to 'changing the world' by being spiritual leaders of their families), virginity pledgers (sexual abstinence aimed at both personal spiritual fulfillment and challenging 'hookup' and 'pornographic' culture), and Quiverfull (a pronatalist movement that 'trust the Lord' to determine family size), which are considered lifestyle 'wings' of the broader conservative Christian Right movement (Haenfler et al. 2012: 5, 12). Indeed,

in accordance with Beckford's (2003: 165–167) treatment of religious move-ments *as* social movements, religious and secular movements can be seen to intersect – both now and historically – to produce hybrid movements, which focus on both contentious politics and lifestyle action (Haenfler et al. 2012: 12). For instance, Soule (2009: 12) shows how, in the United States, at least, responsible investment has its roots in Colonial America 'when certain reli-gious groups (e.g., Quakers and Methodists) refused to invest in enterprises that benefitted the slave trade'.

Significantly, Haenfler et al. (2012: 13) argue that lifestyle movements 'may also serve as refuges in times of unfavourable political opportunity, act-ing as abeyance structures until opportunities improve' (see also Taylor 1989, discussed in Chapter 4). Moreover, while lifestyle movements bear a strong resemblance to new social movements, not least because they reflect the post-material values of post-industrial societies, they 'are in a sense *newer* than typically studied new social movements, that is, lifestyle movements are more individualized and more deeply infused with *personal* identity work' (Haenfler et al. 2012: 15, original emphasis). Haenfler et al. see this as symptomatic of broader trends in contemporary societies that are individualistic and consumer oriented in nature, and which stress the importance of lifestyle in identity construction:

> . . . encouraging people to individualize the self by altering daily habits (especially consumption). Just as people 'shop' for and attempt to person-alize their style, hobbies, and religious/spiritual identities, so too do they customize their involvement in social change.
>
> (Haenfler et al. 2012: 15)

Feminism also has a religious side. For instance, 'spiritual feminism' emphasizes 'holistic thought' and 'interconnectedness' (Hannigan 1990: 253), as does 'ecofeminism', which 'equates the suppression and domination of nature with the domination of women and encourages a more spiritual approach to the natural world' (Hannigan 1993: 6). Both deep ecology and ecofeminism draw sustenance from what Albanese (1990) calls 'nature religion', which acknowledges that 'the beliefs and traditions of North American indigenous peoples are important ingredients in the ideologies of radical environmentalists' (Hannigan 1993: 7).

Given the multiple examples provided here, and notwithstanding the ideological bias of many European new social movement theorists, it is something of a surprise that religion has been a neglected area of social movement studies. Indeed, as Beckford (2003: 165, 171) notes, following

Calhoun (1999: 237), this is even more surprising given the 'cultural turn' seemed to foster greater interest not only in culture and identity, but also in the spiritual, sacred, and other religious-like aspects of social movements (see also Hart 1996; Williams 2004: 106–108; 2006: 84–85). Arguably the most likely and possibly most fruitful area for synthetic research in this area relates to the struggle of religious movements for 'free space' and 'identity spaces' (Beckford 2003: 172), which can be regarded as similar to the struggle of new social movements for autonomy.

FREE SPACE AND AUTONOMY

In Chapter 4, we saw how Melucci (1985: 815) argues that contemporary social movements seek to establish an intermediate public space, between state and civil society, in which they strive to maintain their autonomy. Similarly, Touraine proposes *the* new social movement of a programmed society will seek 'self-management' against technocratic encroachment into more and more areas of social life. Likewise, for Habermas (1987: 395), '[t]he new conflicts arise along the seam between system and life-world', to resist the 'colonization' of the latter by the former. Religious movements similarly 'are contending for the possibilities of creating and exploiting free space' (Beckford 2003: 175), which they use for religious experimentation.

There are clear similarities here between Melucci's characterization of the submerged networks of contemporary movements that act as 'cultural laboratories' (Melucci 1989: 60), experimenting in alternative forms of socialization (Melucci 1984: 829; 1985: 789) and cultural innovation, and which enable individuals to experience new cultural models and codes (Melucci 1984: 829; 1989: 60), and Beckford's (2003: 172) depiction of religious movements as 'quasi-laboratories in which profound social and cultural experiments can be relatively easily observed [. . .] whereby religious movements construct distinctive codes of meaning and modify them over time, often in conflict with the rest of society'. Yet, Beckford (2003: 172) goes on, 'religious movements are rarely free to construct their cultural codes in complete independence from existing codes and social structural constraints'.

Indeed, the availability of free space for religious experimentation often depends upon wider structures of opportunity, including political opportunities, which, in turn, affect the varying degrees of success of religious movements (Beckford 2003: 172–173). That means religious movements 'often develop a form of intense, inward-looking solidarity that is articulated and celebrated through controversies and conflicts with external agencies' (Beckford 2003: 172), often with

lethal consequences. Examples here include the cases of the People's Temple of the Disciples of Christ, which involved the mass suicide and killing of 920 people in Guyana in 1978, and the Branch Davidians, whose fifty-one-day siege of their property, the Mount Carmel Center, in Waco, Texas, in 1993, ended in the death of eighty-three Branch members and four federal law enforcement agents.

The *relative autonomy* of religious movements, then, leads to a paradoxical situation whereby they press for the extension or defence of free, public space, while simultaneously forming insular, inward-looking communities isolated from public life (Beckford 2003: 175). Hence, their contribution to civil society is likely to be minimal; although one may expect that to differ if they were to adopt a 'world-affirming' or 'world-accommodating' orientation (Wallis 1984). Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 4, a similar criticism has been leveled at the autonomy-seeking new social movements that do not have political, legal, or policy objectives, and thus do not connect their demands to 'institutionally imminent possibilities' (Giddens 1991a: 155). Equally, however, as we saw earlier when we looked at Fitzgerald's (2009) study of US faith-based community development organizations, being too closely connected to the state and government agencies can compromise movement goals and values. Nevertheless, research into labour struggles in the United States during the early twentieth century indicates some of the ways in which autonomous religious institutions can foster activism.

Billings (1990) shows how religion had a significant influence on strikes that occurred in Appalachian coal mining towns between 1928 and 1931. Since coal operators built and supported local churches and encouraged ministers to denounce unions as an atheistic menace, Billings notes how during the strikes most ministers aligned themselves with management. However, most Appalachian coal miners did not heed the conservative teachings of their pastors. In fact, many openly denounced the ministers for siding with management, and up to 90 percent stopped attending company-supported churches. Instead, miners held their own alternative church services, and some militant miners even emerged as lay preachers:

> These 'miner-ministers' used this free space to promote a religious culture of resistance that fostered an insurgent mindset and a willingness to strike for union recognition. Moreover, these alternative religious services provided a context where biblical teachings were given new meaning, granting religious legitimacy to labour struggles. For instance, miners altered lyrics of traditional hymns to link faith with union activism.
>
> (Erickson Nepstad and Williams 2007: 425)

Billings argues that the oppositional religious culture fostered by the miners' services functioned as a *free space* that aided labour activism in three important ways:

> First, it provided a context where an oppositional religious culture and critical consciousness was cultivated. Second, the pro-union rituals and music in these alternative services helped sustain this insurgent mindset and reinforce union commitment among the miners [. . .] Finally, these autonomous religious groups provided a context for the emergence of indigenous leaders who were known and trusted by their co-workers.
>
> (Erickson Nepstad and Williams 2007: 425–426)

BOX 6.4 RELIGION: IDEOLOGY OR OPPOSITION?

In Chapter 5, we saw how music and song can play important roles in social movement activism. Similarly, Billings (1990) shows how, during their labour struggles, Appalachian coal miners altered the lyrics of traditional hymns to link faith with unionism, which included changing the words of one hymn as follows: 'When you hear of a thing that's called union / You know that they're happy and free / For Christ has a union in heaven / How beautiful a union must be' (Corbin 1981: 164). Previously in this chapter it was noted that some social movement scholars aligning themselves with the conventional Marxist view of religion as an opiate of the masses contest the idea of religion as opposition, seeing it instead as an instrument of domination used by the ruling class to justify the status quo.

The notion that class division is somehow preordained was clearly evident in the text of the now-oft omitted verse from the famous Anglican hymn, *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, written in England in 1848 by Cecil F. Alexander, which reads: 'The rich man in his castle / The poor man at his gate / God made them, high or lowly / And order'd their estate'. From a Marxist perspective, this provides a stark illustration of the use of religion as ideology, which functions to create a 'false consciousness' among the subordinate classes, who, by being promised emancipation (or salvation) in the afterlife, are encouraged to be satisfied with their lot, or resigned to their fate on earth, and are, therefore, less likely to revolt or question and challenge the existing order.

Despite the fact that from a Marxist perspective religion is regarded as a conservative social institution, Marxist analyses have nevertheless formed the bases for religious radicalism. For instance, a Marxist analysis was key to the thinking in Latin America of liberation theologians who, as we saw earlier, aim

to establish God's kingdom in this lifetime by reversing social inequities and injustices on earth that stem from social class divisions and private property ownership. However, as revolutionary ideologies waned throughout the world in the 1970s, liberation theology downplayed its radical Marxist rhetoric. And although after his investiture in 1978 Pope John Paul II committed the Catholic Church to adopt a strong stance on alleviating poverty and inequality, the Vatican simultaneously attacked liberation theology's uncritical use of Marxism (McGovern 1989: 51), which it saw as incompatible with Christian conceptions of humanity and society (Kurzman 1998: 35).

The Church's critique of brutal regimes that 'were legitimated with the rhetoric of a perverted Marxism' (Barker 1986: 58) was particularly evident in Poland where, it has been argued, both the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II were influential in giving birth to the Solidarity movement against communism in the early 1980s. Hence, the moral leadership of the Pope – who was himself a Pole – as well as the Church's instruction on issues of human rights from the 1960s onwards, had the effect of encouraging the working class to challenge the vanguard claims of Marxist-Leninism by shifting their attention from economic issues to a higher plane concerned with human rights and political participation (Osa 1996: 69).

STORIES, NARRATIVE, AND EMOTION IN RELIGIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

As we saw earlier when we looked at the study of Billings (1990), pro-union rituals and music performed in alternative church services proved very significant in the labour struggles of Appalachian coal miners during the early twentieth century. This example not only shows how religion might serve some wider political and potentially emancipatory purpose, but also highlights the important role culture can play in both social and religious movements. And just as the cultural life of social movements is not limited to music – but also includes, as we saw in Chapter 5, stories, narrative, and emotion – this is no less the case with religious movements, nor indeed social movements with religious dimensions, or what we might call 'religious social movements'.

An example of how emotion and religion can intersect is provided by Erickson Nepstad and Smith (2001), who show how, during the 1980s, moral outrage was a driving force in the Central American peace movement, which was responding to civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Thousands of North Americans protested US political and military involvement in these countries and stood in

solidarity with the poor of Central America in their struggle for social justice. And religion was a key factor contributing to the generation of moral outrage.

Erickson Nepstad and Smith (2001: 166) show how US Christians and Jews were particularly 'subjectively engageable' on account of the fact that, first, 'many embraced social teachings that emphasize peace, justice, and political engagement as essential expressions of religious commitment', and, second, 'their common collective identity as people of faith took greater precedence over their identity as Americans'. Moreover, church connections and a sense of having a shared identity also transcended national differences, which, for instance, 'enabled Nicaraguans to feel solidarity and empathy with US Christians, when they might have otherwise felt anger or enmity since the US was the source of much of their suffering' (Erickson Nepstad and Smith 2001: 168). Crucial to the development of a transnational Christian identity was the direct interpersonal encounters North American people of faith had with Central American refugees and asylum seekers whose 'stories moved North Americans both emotionally and politically' (Erickson Nepstad and Smith 2001: 162).

Similarly, a narrative approach has been used to develop a general theory of fundamentalism to show how, despite their differences, religious fundamentalist movements all share a common story of how history has gone awry, which constitutes what Yates and Hunter (2002) term a 'world–historical narrative' of fundamentalism at odds with the progression of modernity. Examining specific fundamentalist 'movement narratives' (Benford 2002) from a variety of the world's major religions (i.e., Protestant-Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Hindu), they show how the world–historical narrative unfolds in three steps:

> It begins with the deep and worrisome belief that history has gone awry, demonstrates that what 'went wrong' with history is modernity in its various guises, and leads to the inescapable conclusion that the calling of the fundamentalist is to make history 'right' again.
> (Yates and Hunter 2002: 130)

In the narrative of Islamic fundamentalism, for example, history began to go awry when during the eighteenth century, European powers established direct economic, political, and military control over Islamic countries, which subjugated Islamic culture and ideals to Western rationalism, secularism, and pluralism. Moreover, when colonial rule ended, 'many postcolonial governments were transitioned to a Westernized Muslim administration that continued to embrace modern European modes of thought and rule and promised increased

economic and social prosperity' (Yates and Hunter 2002: 135). For fundamentalists, however, the accommodation of modern Western values resulted in moral and political decay.

Modernity in the form of Westernization, or 'Westoxification' as it has been called, heralded a crisis for many Islamic fundamentalists, some of whom characterize 'the unique destructive force of modernity as an unstoppable monstrous "machine"' (Yates and Hunter 2002: 136). The solution of Islamic fundamentalists:

> . . . to the insidiousness of modernity [. . .] is to return to strict adherence to Islam in every sphere of life [. . .] Like the earliest (protofundamentalists') reactions against the internal 'deterioration' of Islam in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, twentieth-century fundamentalist movements all share the common passion to recover the classical experience of Islam, 'a history without deviation', and the original meaning of the Islamic message, 'a faith without distortion'. The fundamentalist solution demands nothing less than the establishment of a totally Islamic social and political order.
>
> (Yates and Hunter 2002: 136)

The first step toward establishing the new Islamic order is internal reform, which requires that, among other things, fundamentalists rid themselves of 'compromised' elites who embrace secular attitudes and values, having been educated in the West. Beyond internal reform, 'the establishment of a new Islamic order also requires active resistance to the external influence of pagan societies', and nowhere has this shift from passive to active faith been more pronounced than in contemporary Iran (Yates and Hunter 2002: 138). Here, the traditional religious scholars, or *ulama*, weaved together selective moments in Persian history into a 'militant theocratic and messianic movement narrative', which 'created the religious legitimation for a revolutionary resistance in what was the most modernizing society in the Middle East' (Yates and Hunter 2002: 138). Against that background, and using highly emotive rhetoric, the Ayatollah Khomeini condemned all foreign powers, but especially Western powers, as inherently satanic, corrupt, and evil, which accordingly need to be fought, rooted out, and, ultimately, overthrown (Khomeini 1980: 5).

Rhetoric and emotion are also used by Christian fundamentalists, who frequently see themselves as involved in a Manichean battle, or 'culture war', against liberal, secularizing forces in contemporary society. In her study of battles over the issue of homosexuality that occurred in numerous small communities in the US state of Oregon during the 1990s, Arlene Stein (2001: 117) depicts the Oregon Citizens Alliance

(OCA) as being part of the conservative Christian Right in the United States, which, she says, is itself a 'moral movement'. Drawing on interviews she conducted with Christian conservative activists, Stein (2001: 118) describes how the OCA is a movement with 'profound emotional dimensions'. She shows how the 'emotion of shame' figured prominently in the narratives of the religious conservatives she interviewed (Stein 2001: 118), whereby, for instance, shame is linked to sexual desires, which call up emotions (Stein 2001: 128). Moreover, 'shameful emotions' (Stein 2001: 119) are mobilized for political ends, confirming Jasper's (1998: 215) view that social movements combine strategic purpose and emotion (see Chapter 5). However, Stein (2001: 127) argues, the OCA campaigns to amend local charters in rural parts of Oregon 'were largely symbolic', since 'the vast majority of these localities had never considered passing any such gay rights ordinances, or if they had done so they would have a negligible effect'. To Stein (2001: 127), then, '[t]hese campaigns were much more about consolidating a religious right collective identity than about affecting public policy'.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Previously, we have seen how social movement scholars have largely avoided looking at religious movements because, it is believed, they tend to be retreatist, reactionary, or conservative. According to this view, religious movements have little or no emancipatory potential, nor are they capable of contributing positively to social change. Indeed, Stein's (2001) study underscores that very point, as do the examples of religious movements, discussed earlier, which are lifestyle 'wings' of the wider conservative Christian movement, such as groups like Quiverfall and Promise Keepers (Haenfler et al. 2012).

However, just as religious movements can be conservative or reactionary, so, too, can social movements. This sometimes assumes the form of countermovement opposition to social movements, such as in the case of pro-life (anti–abortion) activism against the pro-choice (abortion rights) movement, although this example also highlights the fact that, as we have seen throughout this chapter, social movements (and countermovements) may contain religious elements or have religious qualities. Hence, the pro-life movement began almost entirely as a Catholic movement, but it took on a new dimension with the rise of right-wing movements like the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition, which drew strength from white Southern evangelicals (Kniss and Burns 2004: 703). Things get even more complicated when we consider the prospect that some conservative religious movements might

have progressive outlooks. For example, Andrea Smith (2008) has uncovered some 'unlikely alliances' between Christian Right activists and progressive groups, including coalitions to do with prison reform, and potential alignments on abortion and Native American women.

These examples not only confound the narrow view of religion as having limited, if any, progressive or emancipatory potential, but they also raise important questions about the relationship between religion and politics, which is a key dynamic lying at the heart of many issues considered in this chapter. Indeed, in Box 6.2, we saw how the Catholic Church in the United States has been less inclined to engage in liberationist projects than its counterparts in Brazil and Canada. This is especially interesting given the formal separation of church and state in the United States under the First Amendment to the Constitution, which, in theory, at least, gives religious organizations carte blanche to criticize governments and politicians. Alternatively, it may be that the church–state separation is the cause of the Church's relative inaction. That is, the Church does not feel the need to intervene in matters beyond its religious remit.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the nature of the US church–state relationship guarantees American churches a great deal of autonomy, which, according to Kniss and Burns (2004: 710), also 'may help explain the apparent paradox that religious affiliation does not predict political affiliations well'. Thus, they say:

> . . . while most American social movements have had a strong religious component, most religious adherents in the US typically do not connect their religion with political causes and, even when they do, they may find that the right-wing version of religion they favour is opposed by a leftist sitting in the next pew.
>
> (Kniss and Burns 2004: 704)

However, although church autonomy is particularly strong in the American context and has led to significant political interventions, such as the involvement of US churches in the Central America peace movement of the 1980s (discussed earlier), churches have also played a key role in opposing repressive regimes, as well as advocating for human rights in other parts of the world, including, as we have seen, in Poland and Latin America.

In Britain, unlike in the United States, church and state are, to some extent, constitutionally entwined. The Church of England is the officially established Christian church in England, for instance. And, even though it is not expressed in terms of liberation theology, the Church of England has on occasion been a vocal opponent of British

governments and their policies. A prominent example was the Arch-bishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, which was established in 1983 and yielded the report, *Faith in the City*, which was published in 1985 (Davie 1994: 151–154). Among other things, the report contained a devastating critique of Thatcherite policies, which it saw as the cause of growing spiritual and economic poverty in Britain's inner cities. A more recent example is the extensive involvement of churches in the Jubilee 2000 campaign for the cancellation of Third World debt (Staggenborg 2011: 160).

BOX 6.5 JUBILEE 2000

The Great Jubilee of 2000 was a major celebration in the Roman Catholic Church, involving several events, held between 24 December 1999 (Christmas Eve) and 6 January 2001 (Epiphany). It was commemorated by the building of numerous memorials, including the one depicted in Figure 6.2.

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Figure 6.2 The Memorial of the Great Jubilee of 2000 is one of several monuments on the beach of Ouidah, Benin, West Africa

which focuses on social issues, while the Tea Party movement's focus is fiscal. It has also been observed that the Tea Party movement 'does not share the Christian Right's built-in hindrance to growth because it does not proffer theological tenets that anti-tax, anti-government folks might find off-putting' (Boykoff and Laschever 2011: 344).

CONCLUSION

Towards the beginning of this chapter, we saw how there has been an impasse between the study of religious movements and social movement studies, which has tended generally to preclude crossover between the two fields. Generally speaking, it has been social movement scholars who have resisted studying religious movements, which, as we have seen, is an attitude based in the Marxist view of religion as the opium of the masses. And, in this respect, religion has been regarded as negative – or otherwise ancillary to the purposive action of social movements – in much the same way as emotions were viewed as negative in the early theories of social movements and collective behaviour, discussed in Chapter 2.

However, what our explorations in this chapter have shown us is that religion, religious movements, and religious organizations are not always necessarily conservative, reactionary, and inward looking, but, on the contrary, they may actually provide valuable insights and contribute positively to civil society, public debate, and politics. In this way, then, there is an argument for *bringing religion back into* social movement research, which parallels the argument of those who, as discussed in Chapter 5, posit the value of bringing emotions back into social movement studies.

SUGGESTED READINGS

The following texts and resources can be used to explore issues raised in this chapter.

Books

Beckford, J. A. (1989) *Religion and Advanced Industrial Society*. London: Unwin Hyman.
Beckford, J. A. (2003) *Social Theory and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In both of these books, James Beckford engages with issues to do with the relationship between religious movements and social movements. Both books are also useful studies in the sociology of religion.

Smith, C. (ed.) (1996) *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism.* New York: Routledge.

The intention of Christian Smith's edited volume is to fill the void left by scholars' neglect of the important role religion often plays in social movement activism. Accordingly, it provides a useful collection of case studies that consider the disruptive potential of religion and religious movements.

Swatos, W. H. (ed.) (1993) *A Future for Religion? New Paradigms for Analysis.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

This is an interesting collection of early essays that explore new research agendas for the sociology of religion in contemporary society.

Journals

Diani, M. (1993) 'Themes of Modernity in New Religious Movements and New Social Movements' *Social Science Information* 32(1): 111–131.
Hannigan, J. A. (1990) 'Apples and Oranges or Varieties of the Same Fruit? The New Religious Movements and the New Social Movements Compared' *Review of Religious Research* 31(3): 246–258.
Hannigan, J. A. (1991) 'Social Movement Theory and the Sociology of Religion: Towards a New Synthesis' *Sociological Analysis* 52(4): 311–331.

Each of these articles considers the relationship between social and religious movements.

NOTE

1   In this way, liberation theology resembles the Social Gospel movement of the early twentieth century, which sought to put into practice the sentiment, expressed in the Lord's Prayer: 'Thy kingdom come / Thy will be done / on earth, as it is in heaven'. The Social Gospel also influenced activists in the US civil rights movement of the 1960s, has inspired Christian socialists, and can be regarded as part of the ecumenical movement insofar as it has parallels in Catholicism and Judaism (White et al. 1976).