

Pastoral Bearings

Lived Religion and Pastoral Theology

Edited by
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and Mary Clark Moschella



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Pastoral Bearings: Lived Religion and Pastoral Theology

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and Leonard Hummel*

INTRODUCTION

Under the influence of postmodern theory, contemporary pastoral theologians and practitioners increasingly find themselves wrestling with issues of power, cultural diversity, and religious pluralism in their studies of the religious understandings and caring practices of individuals and communities. For example, some contemporary questions about religious practices and meaning facing pastoral theologians include the following:

- How can we understand the healing and transformative power of Catholic devotional practices for immigrants and their descendants? The ethnographic study of an Italian Catholic community in the Port of Los Angeles reveals a sacramental way of life involving prayer, art, artifacts, and food. In the mundane and material dimensions of religious practices seen up close at the local level, pastoral theologians can decipher meanings and trace evidence of God's grace.¹
- How do some members of the Lutheran tradition who have experienced a wide variety of negative events cope with and seek consolation in the midst of those events? In their coping and seeking after consolation, how are these same Lutherans informed by their tradition and how do they also reform it through their unique beliefs and practices? A qualitative study of seven Lutherans reveals the importance of attending to tradition in the study of lived religion because the multiplicity and messiness of lived religion is startlingly revealed precisely via this lens. At the same time, it reveals that tradition, while not a cultural

consensus that binds all into one, is an organizing principle that influences some of the beliefs and practices of many.²

- How do the members of an Episcopal congregation in San Francisco who experienced massive AIDS loss recapture a sense of hope and goodness in the face of their grief? Interviews with survivors suggest that the presence of God revealed within the experience of loss transfigures it. When viewed through the lens of love, grief becomes a doorway to a profound emotional and spiritual awakening that softens the heart and enables a degree of intimacy that heals. The encounter with grief also provides a tangible reminder of the union in love the members share and of the responsibility that the members feel for one another. The fruits of this experience, and the congregation's theology of resurrection life arising from it, inform their advocacy for the marginalized and have birthed more hospitable liturgical practices.³

The brief vignettes just cited, besides illustrating the concerns facing postmodern pastoral theologians, provide a snapshot of the study of lived religion, an enterprise that elucidates how "ordinary" men and women in all times and places draw on religious behavior, media, and meanings to make sense of themselves and their world. Through the influence of liberation theology and postmodernism, pastoral theologians, like other scholars of religion, have begun more closely to examine the particularity of religious practice that is reflected through the rubric of "lived religion." Scholars of American religious history have adopted this term from French sociology of religion and extended it to include the ethnographic and cultural study of religion, particularly religious practice.⁴ As Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri remind us, there is an increasingly complex and multidisciplinary literature on practice as an aspect of "lived religion."⁵ In their helpful review of this literature, they identify two distinct approaches to practice. First, they cite the work of social theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Catherine Bell, and Talal Assad. These theorists emphasize "the hegemonic, regulatory and structuring character of practice" and view practice as a means through which social relationships are formed and maintained. In their view, a principle contribution of social theorists to the study of practice is their focus upon issues of power as an aspect of sociality, including attention to colonialism, political interactions, and economic and cultural domination.⁶ Maffly-Kipp and colleagues also identify a second approach to the study of practice, that of "constructive theology and moral philosophy." They include within this strand the work of such scholars as Dorothy Bass, Craig Dykstra, and Stephanie Paulsell, who emphasize the contribution of Christian practice(s) to spiritual formation. They particularly investigate ways in which Christian practices, representative of the tradi-

tion, but also attuned to contemporary needs and situations, help to foster faithfulness and cultivate virtue.

The historians of American religion who contributed to the two volumes on lived religion edited by David Hall and Maffly-Kipp and colleagues believe that neither of these two approaches to religious practice is complete in and of itself. Thus, they attempt to foster an ongoing interdisciplinary conversation between social theorists, religious historians, constructive theologians, and practicing Christians. Their aim is neither to minimize the importance of social power nor the theological concerns related to the formative nature of practice. Rather, they seek to illustrate the particularity of practice, to provide fuller descriptive accounts of certain practices that have received relatively less attention such as dance and architecture, and to identify the ways in which these practices have contributed to community cohesiveness in the American religious context. As they put it, they aim to “take a mediating stance between social analysis and theological appropriation of practice,” producing descriptions which hold in tension creative trust and the hermeneutics of suspicion. They also hope to illustrate how various practices viewed through the lens of history have helped to regulate religious culture *and* to expand its horizons through creativity, improvisation, and resistance.⁷

Meanwhile, a focus upon “everyday religion,” defined as “all the ways in which non-experts experience religion,”⁸ reflects a quiet revolution within the sociology of religion, a field which heretofore has been primarily concerned with “the internal condition and societal role of churches—or with survey data covering the beliefs and behaviors of large populations.”⁹ The impetus for this paradigm shift has arisen, in part, because sociologists have repeatedly observed that the complexities of individuals’ religious lives have all too frequently challenged their standard scholarly assumptions about religion and spirituality.¹⁰ Additionally, as Peter Berger suggests, their standard research procedures were simply too remote from much of what constitutes the everyday religious and spiritual life of many people to facilitate fuller understanding and interpretation. Increasingly, therefore, sociologists of religion have approached the study of everyday or lived religion, and their study has challenged some prevailing assumptions in their field at the same time as it has provided an increasingly nuanced understanding of others. In general, the research of Nancy Ammerman and her colleagues demonstrates that secularization and privatization, although present in both America and Europe, are much less pervasive than sociologists had previously assumed.¹¹ However, the mix of these trends varies. While Europe is more secularized and America is more religious, the importance of pluralism and personal choice have been widely observed on both sides of the Atlantic. The study of lived religion in both contexts has highlighted the dynamic nature of religious culture in which both official and unofficial religious ideas and prac-

tices exert a significant effect upon those of ordinary believers. Sociological research has also revealed the importance of negotiation as a metaphor in lived religion. Beliefs and practices cross not only institutional but also geographical boundaries, and social trends such as international migration and trans-nationalism combine with the dynamics of choice and improvisation to reveal and create a diversity of practices. Other findings suggest that while religion is present in a variety of practices not traditionally considered religious per se, such as gardening or Internet chatting, the individuals who engage in these practices are not “beyond the reach of the cultural patterns, the rituals and stories of the religious institutions in their societies.”¹² After summarizing the many provocative questions and concerns that lived religion has given rise to within her field, Ammerman concludes that understanding religion will continue to require attention to both the “micro” world of everyday interactions and the “macro” world of larger social structures. Attending to other concerns such as the influence of habits on behavior, the importance of agency, and the intersection of the social domains of life and plural cultural patterns will also help to create a fuller picture of everyday religion and its effects. Ammerman notes that there are many modernities and many kinds of choices, each exerting its particular effects, and providing sociologists with much to ponder in their future research.¹³

As this brief introduction has illustrated, therefore, there is a burgeoning interest in lived religion, the everyday practices through which character is formed, communities are strengthened or subverted, and religious meaning is made. Let us now consider the implications of this growing body of literature for pastoral theologians and practitioners.

LIVED RELIGION AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

The purpose of the present project is to describe and illustrate the value of the lived religion paradigm for understanding contemporary practices of care and expanding the development of pastoral theology. Like social theorists, church historians, systematic and constructive theologians, and sociologists of religion, pastoral theologians have also increasingly focused upon the notion of practice. A number of intellectual and theological influences have contributed to this development. They include:

- The shift within the fields of pastoral theology, care, and counseling from the clinical pastoral paradigm to newer paradigms, including the communal contextual and intercultural paradigms. These emerging paradigms are more sensitive to particularity and to the larger “web” of political and social structures affecting both the individuals and communities who seek and offer care.¹⁴

- The influence of liberation theologies that stress the inextricable links between theory and praxis and would judge the adequacy of care in terms of orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy.¹⁵ A concern with these emancipatory movements and their stress upon relational justice has transformed the field of pastoral theology and is reflected in the work of many leading lights in the field, including, most notably, Pamela Couture, James Poling, Christie Cozad Neuger, Edward Wimberly, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore.
- A recovered emphasis on the caring activities of the laity as well as the clergy noted by pastoral theologians such as Peggy Way, who recognize care as a human activity first and foremost and view it as grounded theologically in baptism.¹⁶
- The influence of the congregational studies movement. Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward see in this movement a renewed emphasis upon moral and spiritual formation within congregations understood with respect to locally dominant images and metaphors and sets of practices giving rise to a sense of corporate identity.¹⁷ Don Browning's influential work, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, illustrates this line of thought.¹⁸
- The developing understanding of local theologies which seek to embody the wholeness of the Gospel in a particular time and place.¹⁹
- The influence of postmodernism. Within the field of pastoral theology, perhaps the most sophisticated treatment of this topic may be found in the work of Elaine Graham. The central question with which she contends is "Do Christian truth claims make any coherent sense amid the multiple narratives of the public domain?"²⁰ In reconstructing the theological grounds for pastoral theology, Graham makes a "turn to practice," as a way of "understanding Christians as participating in and reshaping a living faith through their contemporary practices of worship, care and social concern." These practices both emerge out of reflection upon God and embody a concrete vision of the good and true. Thus, in engaging in them, in her view, the faithful may catch a glimpse of the Divine.²¹

We are arguing, therefore, that because of these crucial developments within the field of pastoral theology, pastoral theologians have much to offer to an interdisciplinary conversation about Christian practice. Like our colleagues in American religious history and the sociology of religion, we are committed to careful description of the practice of lived religion in all of its particularity. Similarly, we are committed to a hermeneutical approach to the study of practice. That is, we are open to the full meaning of caring practices in all of their complex and ironic richness. We are concerned, also, to illustrate the political import of caring practices, recogniz-

ing that like all religious practices they may be both liberatory and repressive. However, like our colleagues in constructive and systematic theology, we are also committed to understanding what the everyday practices of ordinary men and women and ordinary Christian communities may reveal to us about the way of life abundant in a given time and place.²² Thus, we believe that careful attention to the caring practices of particular communities of faith and their effects has much to offer the fields of pastoral theology, care, and counseling.

"PASTORAL BEARINGS": A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

The title of this edited work, *Pastoral Bearings*, has its origin in the Pragmatic Maxim of the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). Like William James and other pragmatists of his time—and like pragmatic thinkers of our time—Peirce was concerned not so much with the usefulness of beliefs as with the ways whereby they informed life and vice-versa. In light of this concern, the point of the Pragmatic Maxim may be discerned: "Our idea of anything is our idea of its sensible effects. . . . Consider what effects, *which might conceivably have practical bearings*, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."²³ The point that ideas and reality—and also that what we think and what we do—are connected was made even sharper by Peirce's explication of the maxim through the lens of religious tradition: "It [the maxim] is only an application of the sole principle of logic which was recommended by Jesus: 'Ye may know them by their fruits.'"²⁴

It is not much of a stretch to apply pragmatic perspectives on the relationship between thought and life to the many varieties of lived religion because that is precisely what William James (1842–1910) did in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Doing so is also fitting because of James' abiding concern in his study of religious phenomena not so much with their origins but with their effects on human well-being, for example, "If the *fruits for life* of the state of conversion are good, we ought to idealize and venerate it, even if it be a piece of natural psychology."²⁵ By carefully laying out exemplary religious experiences and by noting the ideas at work in them, James strove to describe the ways in which religious truths affect life—sometimes for better, and sometimes not.

For our study of lived religion we have revised Peirce's Maxim to read this way: "Our idea of anything theological is our idea of its pastoral effects. . . . Consider how theology has pastoral bearings, and how the object of theology—God—is understood to be related to these pastoral effects. Then, our understanding of these pastoral bearings—that is, how an understand-

ing of God affects lived religion—is the whole of the object of theology—God.” Accordingly our study of lived religion will attend to the pastoral effects of religious beliefs and practices relating to the divine. Some might argue that to inquire into the effects that beliefs in and practices related to God have on matters such as race, community, the body, sex, and sexism is to direct attention away from God as the ultimate concern to these more penultimate matters. To the contrary, we would argue that these very matters are the ultimate concern of God.

Not only does our concern for the pastoral bearings of religious beliefs bear an affinity with early pragmatic thought, but also with the pragmatically oriented Chicago School of Theology in the 1920s and 1930s²⁶ and with contemporary studies of empirical theology.²⁷ Our study of the pastoral bearings of lived religion also is connected to another movement that itself was a source for pragmatism’s focus on thought and life—the broadly construed movement of European and American Pietism. While often adjudged, sometimes accurately, as fostering religious climates of excessive affectivity and individualism, the essence of Pietism may be that there is no essence of religion, no one form to religion, but that religion is a living thing—always changing, always formed by humans, always practiced by persons who are always in some community. In articulating his own pious desires, one of the earliest of the Pietists, Phillip Jacob Spener (1635–1705), asserted that “since theology is a practical discipline, everything must be directed to the practice (“praxis”) of faith and life”;²⁸ in doing so, Spener set the stage for the practical bearings of the similar desires of August Hermann Francke in his labors for the poor and with children. In later years, Pietism at times took on quasi-religious forms of thought and practice, even among some who, like G. W. F. Hegel, railed against its emotional excesses. Later derided by not a few pragmatists for what they inaccurately perceived to be his otherworldly philosophy, Hegel’s famous claim that what is true (*wahr*) is real (*wirklich*), and what is real is true, has links to Pietism and shows that movement’s concern for religion as it is played out in the world: “[T]he fundamental question in Pietism has to do with making real or *wirklich* what is asserted as being formally and materially true—that is, *wahr*—in action or in life as lived.”²⁹

Somewhat recently, several theologians in Germany picked up on the theme of lived religion (*gelebte Religion*) in classical Pietism to find a direction for contemporary understandings of the relationship between fields of systematic and practical theology, and also between the constructs of religion and spirituality.³⁰ Even more recently, lived religion has become the subject of speculation among Swiss and German practical and systematic theologians as a topic that connects their inquiry. A number of theologians in both of those fields have also appropriated and applied lived religion to understand a variety of religious practices and struggles, for example, Regina

Sommers' ethnographic study of how Christian socialist women negotiate their triple identities.³¹ Leonard Hummel's study of seven Lutherans in the United States who had experienced a variety of negative events was itself informed by these European studies and by the Pietist element in Hegel's thought. For example, Hummel asks, "To what degree is that which is said to be *true* in the Lutheran tradition *real* in the lived religion of seven Lutherans who sought consolation for their suffering?"³² *Pastoral Bearings* extends the inquiry of these many theological studies in lived religion by focusing on the pastoral implications of all theological study.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Congregations, Bodies, and Theology

An increasing awareness of the importance of the sentient experiences of people at worship becomes apparent in many of these studies. In the first chapter, constructive theologian Mary McClintock Fulkerson helpfully lays out a case for "rethinking normative memory as if bodies matter." Examining her own reflexive experience of dis-ease as a white participant-observer in a worship service in a Protestant church that espoused the value of multiculturalism, Fulkerson lingers over her heightened awareness of skin-color differences as well as her awkwardness in greeting and settling in to worship near individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities. Using theorists of practice such as Paul Connerton and Pierre Bourdieu that view bodily proprieties as well as practices of inscription as constitutive of social memory, Fulkerson expands her theological understanding of traditioning or faithful memory. By taking seriously the memories lodged in the body as part of the Christian tradition that is routinely taught through segregated worship practices, Fulkerson gives us pause. If racism and able-ism are being learned as bodily proprieties through the very practice of Christian worship, in this church and likely in many others, then pastoral practice is undercutting pastoral theology. This work challenges the paradigm of belief-driven definitions of practice and theological reflection and illustrates how the gaps between professed theology and lived practices in congregations can become rich sites for theological reflection.³³ The full-length study, in which Fulkerson describes herself as "in search for a theology of the ordinary," is available in her book, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*.³⁴

The work of Karen Scheib and Barbara Hedges-Goettl also addresses questions of faithful social memory in a congregational context. Their ethnographic account of Agape United Methodist Church weaves together multiple strands of lived practices, professed theologies, denominational

records, and public and private stories of this “young and growing church.” The authors explore the open secret of a previous pastor’s atrocious crime, arrest, conviction, and incarceration. The crime and that period in the congregation’s life seem to be remembered and at the same time forgotten when members of the congregation who are interviewed narrate the history, identity, mission, and ministries of their church. Viewing the congregation through the lens of narrative therapy, the authors suggest ways in which the church, which changed its name and relocated three years after this incident, has moved beyond a problem-centered mode of existence and with new leadership renewed its practice of the professed mission of sharing God’s grace with the lost.

In another ethnographic chapter, “Culture-Coded Care: Ecclesial Beliefs, Practices, and Artifacts in Response to Illness,” Susan J. Dunlap explores pastoral responses to persons whose bodies are disrupted by illness. She compares what she calls the “belief-practices” related to illness and care of the sick at three distinctly different congregations in Durham, North Carolina. One is a small, independent, African American congregation in the Apostolic Holiness tradition; another is a 650 member, primarily Euroamerican, downtown church in the Reformed tradition; the third is a Latino/Latina Catholic subset of a Catholic parish. In this essay, Dunlap focuses on the material cultural aspects of illness and care, including spiritual caregiving practices involving objects and artifacts such as anointing oil and visual representations of the holy. In particular, Dunlap highlights what she calls “tactile religion,” which includes the use of items “meant to be touched, held, and embraced by the sick, as well as pieces of the material world that hold, anoint, and embrace believers in their illness.” For Dunlap tactile religion also includes “the animate, the living human body.” Dunlap foregrounds kinesthetic, felt, embodied encounters in the diverse experiences of care for the sick that she studies. She suggests that pastors, practitioners, and Christians of varying traditions can benefit from understanding each other’s lived experiences of caregiving and care receiving, in order to expand pastoral imaginations.

Issues of class and bodies-at-risk also come to the fore in “Homeless in Seattle,” Sharon Thornton’s vivid description of the participation of St. Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral in Seattle, Washington, in the Tent City 3 movement. Thornton describes Tent City 3 as “a roving encampment that has moved across the Seattle, King County area for more than a decade, journeying through vacant lots, churchyards, even a university tennis court.” This movement houses roughly 100 homeless men, women, and children in colorful tents and temporary shelters designed to be a public and “visible statement about the abomination of the poverty that puts them there.” Thornton offers thoughtful theological reflections upon this congregation’s efforts to practice hospitality by working with homeless guests in a political

quest to end homelessness. Thornton makes use of personal interviews, public records, and the published remarks of various stakeholders in this endeavor, including the Dean of the cathedral, cathedral members, and Tent City dwellers. The author probes the process whereby a congregation embarks upon this unconventional ministry, experiences controversy, and moves forward in an on-going commitment to a ten-year plan to end homelessness in the city. She explores numerous theological concepts including the idea of "the stranger," and the "real presence" in the Eucharist as an ethic of giving and sharing bread. She is interested to understand how the liturgy forms the people and leads the church to its commitment to ending local poverty and homelessness. Thornton complexifies her analysis by probing the "dance of power"³⁵ between host and guest, and the importance of land, territory, and occupied space. Such work challenges Christians' complacency in light of homelessness even as it reveals the ambiguities involved in a church's efforts to provide space and forge relationships with homeless men, women, and children.

Gender Positive Care: Re-writing Dis/ability, Denominational History, and Unchurched Religion

Pastoral theologian Janet E. Schaller likewise keeps us focused on the lived experiences of embodied persons, and adds a focus on gender positive care through an analysis of the narratives of five women with visible physical dis/abilities. Using lengthy qualitative interviews, Schaller allows the women to tell their own stories of "resisting the stare," the oppressive cultural gaze that threatens to diminish and dehumanize women with dis/abilities. Schaller reflects theologically upon the spiritual challenge of affirming one's own life in the face of cultural assumptions that objectify and devalue. She suggests pastoral practices for congregations that can help "rewrite dis/ability" by creating life-giving environments that support the full participation, agency, and leadership of persons with dis/abilities. By highlighting insights from these first-person accounts and bringing them together with the literature of disability studies, feminist pastoral theology, and theological reflection, Schaller exemplifies a life-affirming approach to pastoral theology and care that helps both disabled and nondisabled persons affirm the value of human life.

Eileen Campbell-Reed uses qualitative research methods to probe what she calls "Baptist Clergywomen's Narratives: Reinterpret Southern Baptist Convention Schism." According to Campbell-Reed, the well-documented schism in the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979 has been described extensively in recent years.³⁶ However, these studies, which rely most heavily on official publications and documents, treat women's ordination or

"the woman question" as "a chapter in a larger discussion of the splintering of the denomination, such that women functioned as one of several issues over which Baptists disagree." Taking her cues from the lived religion paradigm, which often directs attention toward laypersons and popular religious practices, Campbell-Reed conducts in-depth interviews with eight Baptist clergywomen with roots in the SBC, women whom she understands as occupying a boundary between popular and ecclesial religion. The author understands these clergywomen not only as a subject of the schism but also as subjects whose lives and stories can add a nuanced interpretation to the historical record of the split within America's largest Protestant denomination. Campbell-Reed's analysis focuses on the principle of "soul competency," one of five key "tensions of Baptist conviction" that theologian Bill Leonard has identified. Soul competency is the tension between Baptist understandings of individual liberty of conscience and biblical authority. Campbell-Reed's pastoral theological analysis opens up new insight into a lived denominational schism, revealing the painful persistence of theologically sanctioned gender discrimination, as well as the corruption and psychological splitting at work in negotiations over gender and women's leadership during the conflict.

Campbell-Reed did not set out to make an argument about Southern Baptists. In her words, she set out to understand these women's lives and thought the SBC conflict was important "background." It turned out that in gathering these stories, Campbell-Reed discovered that their narratives offer a way into a deeper understanding of the institutional rupture. The "good" in that pivotal moment of her research, as the author understands it, is that she pursued a close reading of lived religion in an understudied group and found that the women's lives had much more to offer than that for which they had previously been given credit.³⁷ Certainly this kind of research contributes to the work of relational justice that has emerged as a central concern of pastoral theology in the last forty years.³⁸

The essay by Jean Heriot, a cultural anthropologist as well as an ordained minister in the Unitarian Universalist Association, also includes a focus on gender. Her essay, "American Spirituality," reflects on her ethnographic study of five small spirituality groups in upstate New York from 1992 to 1993. Heriot uses the themes that emerged from her study to plumb the meaning of the common phrase "spiritual but not religious" in contemporary American society. She finds that "the diversity, fluidity, and availability of multiple 'spiritual' markets ('unchurched' religion) have come to provide a viable alternative to congregationally based religious life ('churched' religion)." She elucidates some of the problems and limits of "unchurched religion." She goes on to suggest that the term "spirituality" has taken on a certain functional meaning in the American context that expresses a felt need for healing and justice, a need that many individuals believe the

American institutional church has often failed to meet. Heriot's emphasis on spirituality and her reliance upon cross-cultural analysis provide a link to the next group of essays, which engage us with sites of lived religion outside of the continental United States.

Intercultural Nuance

Pastoral theologian Lonnie Yoder focuses our attention on the "sung religion" of Jamaican Mennonites. A Mennonite himself, Yoder worshipped on a regular basis with the twelve Mennonite Congregations on the island from 2001 to 2002. He was drawn to the singing of "lively choruses" as one important feature of Jamaican Mennonite worship services. He decided to write down the lyrics of forty-three of these choruses, check them for accuracy with a leading local musician, and then analyze these lyrics using grounded theory. Through this analysis, he finds that the lyrics suggest "an immediate, total, embodied and relational dance with God that recognizes God's saving actions in the past, transforms one's experience in the present moment, and sustains one's longing for personal faith experience and Christian community in the future." Yoder further finds a connection between these lyrics and the legacy of slavery and the challenges of contemporary social economic realities in Jamaica. By rigorously examining the lyrics that are regularly and enthusiastically proclaimed in worship, Yoder opens up a rich understanding of the faith of these Mennonite Christians. The practice of singing these lively choruses addresses the community's historical and contemporary experiences of subjugation and poverty, while at the same time proclaiming or "dancing" God into the midst of its life. The emphasis on communal pastoral practice and ritual exemplifies one of the recent shifts in pastoral theology.³⁹

Esther Acolatse's study of pastoral diagnosis and care in African Independent Evangelical and Charismatic Churches (AIEC) in Ghana emphasizes the theological issues related to African traditional religions and the pervasive belief in the spirit world. She notes that this worldview plays a large role in the ways that persons perceive and present their problems and the ways that pastoral counselors process and interpret the information received. Based on her research conducted in four languages, English, Ewe, Ga and Twi, Acolatse finds that diagnosis in the AIEC churches seems to be based on a set of beliefs and practices that is inherited from African traditional religions and blended with certain cosmological ideas from the Old and New Testaments. In these, the power of Jesus is often invoked to ward off attacks from the spirit world. Acolatse describes some of the problems and liabilities related to this approach to healing. She goes on to suggest that Barthian theology offers resources for a practical theological framework that might be beneficial in AIEC churches with their deep adherence to

scriptural principles, and where belief in the spiritual world characterizes common life.

Expanding our sights further, Siroj Sorajjakool helps us to learn from the perspective of another faith as well as another culture in his essay, which is based on interviews with Thai Buddhist monks. Like Acolatse, Sorajjakool recognizes that pastoral theology as a discipline has formulated its own discourse and methodology within the context of Western cultural and religious practices. He challenges us to consider what pastoral-theological reflection would look like from within the context of the lived experience of the Thai monks. Among the Thai people, Sorajjakool finds a common belief in a spirit world, which is similar to but also quite distinct from the Ghanaian concepts of the spirit world. The monks report that they themselves do not believe in these spirits, but they work with these beliefs rather than challenge them when people come searching for release from pain and struggle. Sorajjakool finds that in these Buddhist monks' pastoral theology, spirituality rather than sociology is viewed as the main cause of suffering. Suffering is ultimately the result of attachment and helping people let go of attachment is the most important part of the monastic commitment.

"PASTORAL BEARINGS": IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE ARISING FROM THE STUDY OF LIVED RELIGION

Lived Religion and Research Methods in Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling

In her essay "Methods in Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling," Joretta Marshall considers four important methodological trajectories characterizing research in these fields.⁴⁰ We contend that the studies in the present volume, grounded in the paradigm of lived religion, both build upon and strengthen the existing methodological trends that Marshall names.

The first methodological commitment Marshall identifies is the need for continued attention to particularities and diversities of pastoral theology and practice within the United States. She also highlights the need for developing broader, more global understandings and pastoral theological methods that emphasizes experience and particularity, power dynamics, and deeper engagement with diverse theologies. The approach to lived religion exemplified within the present volume demonstrates the usefulness of this paradigm in highlighting the complexities in individual belief and practice arising in geographically diverse settings and arising from a challenging set of pastoral concerns. The lived religion paradigm also provides the basis for compelling and richly textured descriptions of theology and

practice in varied domestic settings, whether focused on individuals or communities. The paradigm also provides a useful tool for examining issues of power associated with sexism, homelessness, and illness. Further, the three studies that elucidate religious and pastoral practice in diverse cultural settings demonstrate how the study of lived religion may offer promise to the field in describing and analyzing liberatory practices in historically repressive settings, in offering theologically and spiritually grounded pastoral care within a religiously pluralistic context, and in enhancing religious and spiritual approaches to care through interfaith dialogue.

The second methodological trajectory Marshall identifies is engaging with interdisciplinary conversation partners and using sophisticated qualitative methods. The studies within the present volume draw on a wide variety of qualitative methods including participant observation, qualitative interviewing, grounded theory, and the ethnographic study of congregations and small groups. The use of the lived religion paradigm within pastoral theology creates exciting possibilities for cross disciplinary conversation with sociologists of religion, church historians, anthropologists, and those specializing in the cultural study of religion, including popular religion, as researchers within each of these fields use identical methods and cope with similar theoretical concerns.⁴¹

The third methodological trajectory, which Marshall describes as emerging within the fields of pastoral theology and practice, is the expression of a deeper commitment to public theology and the broader concerns of the world. Once again, the studies within the present volume touch on each of the areas Marshall identifies, including: religious pluralism; interreligious dialogue; racism, sexism and able-ism; public issues, such as homelessness; and the historical effects of oppression, such as slavery and gender discrimination. The lived religion paradigm seems particularly well suited to the exploration of such concerns through its reliance upon qualitative approaches that lend themselves to nuanced description and analysis and through its sensitivity to the concerns of ordinary people as they cope with the demands of pluralism, religious disestablishment, religious transnationalism, and hybridity.⁴²

The final methodological horizon that Marshall identifies is the need for the fields of pastoral theology and practice to develop broader definitions of care that will definitively extend the scope of concern beyond mental health to include such concerns as the study of spirituality, the quality of theological reflection, congregational care and vitality, and social systemic analyses and critiques. The contributors to this volume provide robust examples of these diverse concerns. The congregational studies offered by Fulkerson, Scheib and Hedges-Goettl, Thornton, and Dunlap both elucidate the beliefs and practices of their members and invite us to consider the effects of power dynamics operating within these social systems and

the social and cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Heriot's study of small spirituality groups also sensitizes us to the pluralistic context within which traditional congregations are situated and emphasizes the hybridity that more and more characterizes spiritual practice in the post-modern American context. Yoder's fascinating study of lively choruses describes ways in which church music may enliven and strengthen those challenged by both a legacy of slavery and economic disadvantage, providing a medium through which believers may encounter God and experience transformation and hope. In conclusion, therefore, these studies and others in this volume provide exciting examples of the new horizons in research to which Marshall points and demonstrate how the lived religion paradigm offers great promise for extending the scope of research in pastoral theology and practice.

Contributions of the Lived Religion Paradigm to Education in Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling

Some fruits of studying lived religion have shown themselves in a course that one of us, Leonard Hummel, has taught at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. In a class composed of those who have completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), lived religion is the hermeneutic tool by which students first unpack and then repackage that learning experience. Concerns, if not complaints, are legion that what seminarians learn through CPE is split off from the rest of their theological education. Often tightly packaged into an intense summer program, CPE is experienced by not a few students as a "summer fling" upon which they look back—some with wistful fondness, others with painful regret—but without a discernable link to their ongoing theological formation. In this "Integrative Seminar" at Gettysburg Seminary, students are asked to demonstrate a capacity to use the concept of "lived religion" in understanding the nature of their ministry and religious practices of others. Accordingly, through readings and reflections on their CPE training, students reflect on their own lived religion and that of the persons to whom they ministered in order to further their pastoral theological formation.

Two ways in which these students appropriate lived religion for its pastoral bearings are worth highlighting. One involves their focusing on the ways in which they and all persons reform traditional religious beliefs to meet present challenges. They employ the concept of "organic power" from the nineteenth-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder to do so: "These are the powers that human beings possess to receive and convert into their own natures what has been transmitted to them by tradition. These powers apply tradition to the needs of the present situation. Without such powers, history would be an endless imitation of what has already

been."⁴³ Lived religion is never a carbon copy of what has come before—and its evolving character demonstrates that the present, while informed by the past, also has power to redefine the past. The second way in which the pastoral significance of lived religion shows itself to students comes in the final sessions of the course and involves their review of and commentary on several of the essays contained in this volume. Without fail, they have found doing so helpful in thinking through and beyond their CPE experiences.

This volume can also be used in teaching ethnography as a pastoral practice.⁴⁴ The goal of this kind of pastoral research is to increase understanding of a particular community's values and longing for God; this includes the "deliberative theology" that members of the community discuss directly, and the "embedded theology" that is revealed through story or through practice.⁴⁵ Pastoral ethnography can deepen relationships between and among researchers and research participants, and enhance the quality of theological conversation among members of the community. The essays in this volume can be used as examples of pastoral research in teaching ethnography. Most of these essays provide summaries of longer and more complicated research projects; the collection as a whole demonstrates for students a range of subjects, research questions, and methods of interpretation.

Contributions of the Study of Lived Religion to the Practice of Pastoral Care and Counseling

Why should practitioners take up the task of identifying the nature of lived religion in individuals and communities? In her chapter, Dunlap suggests three important benefits. First, a knowledge of lived religion may expand the practitioner's empathic entry into the world of care receivers through broadening an understanding of the rules, roles, and cultural artifacts that communicate meaning, comfort, belonging, and connection to the transcendent. Second, having identified these aspects of the care receiver's world, practitioners may then work with them to disclose the novel, redemptive, and sacred dimensions of it, thus enabling transformation and greater wholeness. Third, the study of lived religion may also empower congregational leaders and others ministering to faith communities to call upon their historical cache of sacred images, objects, and practices in order to improvise new ones to address the demands of a particular situation of pain or rupture.⁴⁶

Additional benefits for practitioners may arise with the recognition, articulated by McGuire, that many individuals in this age of religious pluralism do not practice a single religion exclusive of other options. Instead, McGuire indicates that the religion of particular individuals may not be "fixed, unitary, or even coherent."⁴⁷ The term "lived religion" describes the importance of what Orsi has called "embodied practices,"⁴⁸ rather than religious ideas or beliefs, and McGuire argues that the everyday practices of

both individuals and communities are not usually confined to those of a single formal religious denomination, institution, or organization. A focus upon lived religion thus provides practitioners with a more nuanced understanding of the religiosity of individual believers and honors the full range of consciously chosen beliefs and practices which can and do shape both caregivers' and care receivers' relationships with the transcendent. As the noted sociologist of religion Peter Berger puts it "[Today] there is a lot of religion that cannot be studied by looking under 'churches' in the Yellow Pages of the phone book."⁴⁹ The diversity and dynamism of the everyday religious practices of both care receivers and practitioners begs for a new approach to the promotion of healing and wholeness. In our view, the paradigm of lived religion, as exemplified in the research of our contributors, honors the embodied practices of believers, lends itself to a nuanced analysis of power dynamics, easily accommodates the faith concerns of individuals as well as communities, and helpfully expands sensitive inquiry in interfaith and intercultural settings. We are pleased to present this body of research on lived religion and we look forward to witnessing the new horizons of research it will undoubtedly open for pastoral theologians, educators, and practitioners.

NOTES

1. Mary Clark Moschella, *Living Devotions: Reflections on Immigration, Identity, and Religious Imagination* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2008).
2. Leonard M. Hummel, *Clothed in Nothingness: Consolation for Suffering* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003).
3. Jane F. Maynard, *Transfiguring Loss: Julian of Norwich as a Guide for Survivors of Traumatic Grief* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2006).
4. See David D. Hall, "Introduction" in David D. Hall ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), vii.
5. See Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, "Introduction" in Laurie E. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, eds., *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America 1630–1965* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 1–2.
6. Maffly-Kipp, Shmidt, and Valeri, *Practicing Protestants*, 2–3.
7. Maffly-Kipp, Shmidt, and Valeri, *Practicing Protestants*, 6–7.
8. Nancy T. Ammerman, "Introduction: Observing Modern Religious Lives," in Nancy T. Ammerman, ed., *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5.
9. Peter L. Berger, "Foreword," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, v.
10. See especially Meredith B. McGuire, "Everyday Religion as Lived," in Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3–17.

11. Berger, "Foreword," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, vi.
12. Ammerman, "Studying Everyday Religion," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 221.
13. Maffly-Kipp, Shmidt, and Valeri, *Everyday Religion*, 234.
14. Nancy J. Ramsay, "Contemporary Pastoral Theology: A Wider Vision for the Practice of Love" in Nancy J. Ramsay, ed., *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2004), 159.
15. Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 170.
16. Peggy Way, *Created by God: Pastoral Care for All God's People* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2005), 3.
17. Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 135.
18. Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996).
19. Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology*, 227.
20. Elaine Graham, *Transforming Practice: Practical Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 2.
21. Graham, Walton, and Ward, *Theological Reflection*, 193–95.
22. Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," in Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 15.
23. Charles Sanders Peirce, "How to Make our Ideas Clear." In James Hoopes, ed., *Peirce on Signs: Writings on the Semiotic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 169.
24. Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, vol. 5. eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 258.
25. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Viking/Penguin Press, 1982), 237.
26. Victor Anderson, *Pragmatic Theology: Negotiating the Intersection of an American Philosophy of Religion and Public Theology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999).
27. Johannes van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1993).
28. Philip Jacob Spener. *Pia Desideria*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1964), 105.
29. Alan Olson, *Hegel and the Spirit: Philosophy as Pneumatology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 45.
30. Dietrich Rössler, "Fromm sein als Protestant: Gelebte Religion als Frage an die wissenschaftliche Theologie," *Evangelische Kommentare* 11 (1978).
31. Regina Sommers, *Lebensgeschichte und gelebte Religion von Frauen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998).
32. Leonard Hummel, *Clothed in Nothingness: Consolation for Suffering* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003)
33. See Amy Plantinga Pauw, "Attending to the Gaps Between Beliefs and Practices," in Volf and Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology*, 33–48.
34. Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

35. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 96–97.
36. Goodwin, 1997; Hankins, 2002; James and Leazor, 1994; Stricklin, 1999; Ammerman, 1993; and Kell and Kamp, 1999.
37. Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, *Anatomy of a Schism: How Clergywomen's Narratives Interpret the Fracturing of the Southern Baptist Convention* (PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2008). A newer analysis of this study is forthcoming from Baylor University Press.
38. Kathleen J. Greider, Gloria A. Johnson, and Kristen J. Leslie, "Three Decades of Writing for Our Lives," in Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern, eds., *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1999), 21–50.
39. Nancy J. Ramsay, "A Time of Ferment and Redefinition," in Nancy J. Ramsay, ed. *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2004), 1–14.
40. Joretta L. Marshall, "Methods in Pastoral Theology. Care, and Counseling," in Ramsay, *Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 133–154.
41. See, for example, the discussions of embodiments, healing and wholeness, and gendered spiritualities in the work of religious sociologist Meredith McGuire, in *Lived Religion*. These concerns echo those identified in the present volume.
42. See, for example, Nancy Ammerman, "Introduction: Observing Religious Modern Lives," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*.
43. Marcia J. Bunge, "Herder and the Origins of a Historical View of Religion," in Mary Potter Engel and Walter E. Wyman Jr., eds., *Revisioning the Past: Prospects in Historical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992), 178.
44. Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2008).
45. Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 112–18. Doehring borrows the terms "deliberative" and "embedded" from Howard Stone and James Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1996).
46. See chapter 4 of this volume.
47. McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 12.
48. Robert Anthony Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), cited in McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 12.
49. Berger, "Foreword," in Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, vi.