

Rediscovering the Sacred:

From the Secular to a Post-modern Sense of the Sacred

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INTRODUCTION

Before looking into a Post-modern sense of the Sacred, one must first look at the present state of the contemporary modern society, its origins, characteristics and development. According to Harvard theologian Harvey Cox, the nation-state system, a scientifically grounded technology, a bureaucratic rationalism, an incessant drive for economic growth and the secularization of religion characterize the contemporary modern society.ⁱ In a global climate strongly influenced by Western values, it is not surprising that the concept of the secular state or secularization of religion has become both a model of emulation and a target for critical rejection, the latter due to a resurgence and increasing influence of religion on public life. Cox, in his *Religion in the Secular City*, sees as exemplary of this new movement, the events on Poland, the popularity of the Pope, the rise of the Islamic religion, the rise of the Moral Majority, the pastoral letter of the American Catholic bishops and the liberation theology in Latin America.ⁱⁱ Still, since the French and America revolutions, the secular state has been intact with the formal separation of church and state, the former constitutionally indifferent from the claims of the latter. It has been a model that has been influential on the international scale, partly as a colonialist legacy but also as a means of post-colonialist nation building.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to David R. Gress, the West is a symbiosis of religion and secularity. If religion withers, the result is not the health but the perversion of secularity.^{iv} Allen Guelzo in his *Selling God in America* points to a long-standing dualism within Christianity between the sacred and the secular. However, whenever the boundaries shift between a certain unspoken consensus about its definitions, commercialization sets in as it did during the Reformation.^v One might add that even before the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages was involved in simony and gross commercialization.^{vi} This commercialization of religion has invaded further, the by-product of the New Age Culture: New Age science, healing and personal growth, channeling, neo-paganism and the millennial idea of a New Age. Wouter Hanegraaff, however, concludes from his exposition that New Age religion is an expression of popular Western-culture criticism directed against the dualism and reductionism, that perceived as characteristic of both rationalist philosophy and science and dogmatic Christianity, is held responsible for the worldcrisis.^{vii}

We live in an era of posts: post-cold war, post-modern, post-industrial, post-Christian, post-ideological, post-materialist and post-eurocentric. The denizens of the post-era, according to Gress, can only look forward to endless rounds of the analyzing the

rationalist, romantic, revolutionary, reactionary, multiculturalist, American, pagan, Christian, liberal and conservative.^{viii} In our contemporary, industrial and post-industrial societies, many groups and social phenomena seem religious in character, but lack a true sense of religion. The ambiguity resides in the ongoing debate over the definition of “religion”. Most conventional groups and scholars employ functional and substantial definitions that draw the line differently at the margins. Now a compromise delineates marginal groups as “Quasi-Religious”, additionally, “Para-Religious” or secular religions are groups that deal with ultimate dynamics akin to religious organizations, but which do not have explicitly supernatural or super-empirical beliefs or referents.^{ix} Conversely and since the enlightenment, mainstream theology has focused on making religion credible to modern scientific man resulting in an excess of accommodation to a modern world in decay. Cox believes the problem has been the use of “top-down approach—from the great thinkers to the clergy to the people” The alternative for post-modern theology and the modern world is a process “that must come from the bottom up”^x. Most important is not only a definition of religion and secular religions, within the historical Western context but also a redefinition of the sacred beyond the institutional and secularization of the metaphysical and transcendental idea of the Divinity. The latter cannot assume the current structural decay of society worldwide; it must be seen within an evolutionary path that anticipates a cyclical end and beginning. If there is one area that all philosophers and scientists have agreed upon, it is that everything changes, nothing remains the same. The age of linear thinking and materialistic progress is coming to an end. Many of the great thinkers, from Alfred North Whitehead to Octavio Paz have dealt with this idea.^{xi} Visionaries from the East and the West have further corroborated this idea, calling for a return to the new philosophy that is both basic and eternal in values. The West is at the end of a long cycle as it completes its tenure that is, the West as we have known it in the past millennia. There are those who see material progress as a measure of success in culture and society, who see capitalism, science and liberal democracy on the verge of embracing the vast majority of the world’s people. This globalization originates in a society that is fragmented at its social and cultural core, notwithstanding a provider of economic inequities into halves and have-nots, is perhaps the essence of the conflict. Today, the U. S. model is riddled with conflict: racism, fights over abortion, prayer in schools, educational collapse in the public schools, role of government in protecting the welfare of families, corruption throughout many of our institutions (politicians, clergy, lawyers, doctors, hospitals, business both large and small), Americans have come to realize that the political animal and the system is not to be trusted. We now know that 16,000 Americans, including children and newborn were subjected to 154 human radiation tests by the Atomic Energy Commission. We know that cancer rates are increasing at an alarming rate due to toxins in the food chain, pesticides, and chemical pollutants. A one year-old child will receive lifetime doses of eight pesticides from twenty commonly eaten foods. The poor are getting poorer; the gap between the haves and have-nots is getting wider and will become a serious problem in the future. Healthcare is not available to over 30 million Americans. This society has created the poor and the homeless who are subjected to disease and higher mortality rates; these will become the lepers of the XXI century. The two party political systems is an illusion; the number of zeros on contracts decides policies. What some of the public has seen is a unilateral support by Washington for issues that polarize the voting public: high defense

spending, war on the environment, Mexican savings and loan bailouts, GATT, NAFTA, foreign aid, and corporate welfare. The demographics are unmistakable: the break-up of the family, the aging of the population, the steady decline on average real wages, rising crime, the crisis in education and health care, the degradation of the environment and the corresponding assault on health, the abdication of public responsibility by an overwhelmed, unresponsive, autocratic government. It is a nation at risk where in education there is a 30% drop out rate (50-60% in urban areas). Illiteracy is now at 27 million for persons over 17 years of age, with 45 million more that are barely competent.

Competent teachers are leaving the field. Colleges and universities are pricing themselves out of the range of the middle class. A college degree no longer guarantees a good job. As in corporate America, universities are downsizing, eliminating jobs, curtailing services, and imposing heavier workloads on professors. The quality of education at this level is being questioned. There is a struggle between the Religious Right fundamentalists (U.S. and Islamic) and the secular liberals, Protestants, Jews and Catholics (from Secular Humanists to New Age religions). The struggle is about what the U.S. society and by extension, modern society, and the contemporary and future West should be and not what it is.

SECULAR HUMANISM AND THE SECULARIZATION OF RELIGIONS

Religion: (1) Man's expression of his acknowledgment of the divine; a system of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in a community. (The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language) (2) "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others"- U. S. Supreme court (1961). (3) Any system of beliefs, practices, and ethical values e.g. Humanism as Religion (Webster's New World Dictionary). (4) Secularism: The belief that religious influence should be restricted especially in education, morality, the state; these should be independent of the state (Unabridged English Dictionary). (5) "Secularism...is the name for an ideology, a new closed world view which functions very much like a religion". (Harvey Cox).¹²

Despite the ruling of the Supreme Court regarding Secular Humanism as a religion, there are Secular Humanists that are intent in setting the record straight by citing numerous myths about Secular Humanism including that of being a religion. Matt Cherry in his *10 Myths about Secular Humanism* admits to some of the charges. "Secular Humanists don't believe in God or an afterlife"; Secular Humanism encourages people to think for themselves and question authority". "Secular Humanism says the morality of actions should be judged by their consequences in this world."¹³ Cherry cites misinformation as the cause for misunderstanding Secular Humanism. He points to the absence of a central authority or process for indoctrination or conversion ergo no monolithic dogma. They believe that morality and meaning come from humanity and the natural world, not from God or the Supernatural. They realize that individuals alone cannot solve all our problems but rather than turning to the supernatural they believe that problems are solved by people working together relying on understanding and creativity. They argue that Secular Humanism is not a religion since there are no supernatural beliefs, no creeds, sacred texts or required rituals. Humanists are not required to have

faith in what is said by authority, living or dead, human or supernatural. Values are derived through humanistic worldviews, from the natural world. Secular Humanism accordingly is a naturalistic, non-religious worldview.¹⁴ They contend that Secular Humanism is not a political movement and that Secular Humanists cover a wide spectrum of political views. Cherry contends that the remarkable thing about the United States was precisely that it was created a secular republic organized around the rights and freedom of its citizens. Secular Humanists refute the idea that the United States was created as a Christian nation and that it is the official religion of the public education system.

David A. Noebel maintains that Secular Humanism is a religion because it contains as all worldviews contain a theology. He points to a Humanist manifesto in 1923 that speaks in the language of religion. "No Deity will save us, we must save ourselves". Noebel contends that salvation is a religious experience.¹⁵ Even more specific is Paul Kurz's own declaration in his preface to the humanist manifestos II and I that Humanism is a philosophical, religious and moral point of view. Other humanists view it as a "religion to meet the psychological needs of our time,"¹⁶ or that its naturalistic frame is validly a religion.¹⁷ In short, Noebel views Secular Humanism as a comprehensive worldview that consists of a theology (atheism), philosophy (metaphysical, naturalism), ethics (moral relativism), biology (spontaneous generation (evolution), psychology (self actualization), sociology (feminism/homo-sexualism), law (positivism), politics (globalism), economics (socialism) and history (French Enlightenment). Humanists of the year, Lloyd and Mary Morain, authors of *Humanism at the Next Step; An Introduction for Liberal Protestants, Catholics and Jews*, sincerely believe that Secular Humanism is the historically logical and rationally based religion to follow in the wake of the other three religions.¹⁸

Noebel notes further that Secular Humanist groups on our nation's campuses are routinely placed in the religious sections of student directories or handbooks. Some argue against the notion that traditional biblical religions formed the framework of western religions and place it as "the orthodox, metaphysical-theological basis of the two modern political philosophies, socialism and liberalism."¹⁹

One has to question some of the assertions made by the aforementioned proponents of Secular Humanism. One of the assumptions is that man/woman is unconnected to any higher source and that it alone can solve his/her problems. It affirms that it derives meaning from the natural world; yet the natural world is devoid of the sacred or connection to the higher Divine order. It contends that the U.S. was created as a secular republic organized around the right and freedom of its citizens. While the founders were careful not to make the mistake of the Roman Church of mixing church and state, its whole reason for beginning anew in someone else's land was religion itself. Their idea of manifest destiny was imbued with a type of messianic deliverance in the future. The idea of a new utopia was part of the plan organized by Masons and directed, according to some obscure sources, by Francis Bacon. Let us not forget that all but one or two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons. Religious fervor was intense as fanatical ministers often led raids and massacres of Native-American villages, pillaging and killing in their account, savages led by Satan.²⁰ Other religious sects not properly belonging to the Church of England were persecuted. One notes that Catholics were not permitted to own arms and were persecuted for belonging to a papist religion. The

“rights and freedoms of its citizens “did not include Native-Americans, Jews, Catholics or other people that did not fit the specific mindset of colonialists. This exception noted at its very origins is still applicable today in the form of racism. While Secular Humanism is not an official religion of public education, there is no question that early educationists like John Dewey had much to do in establishing the secular humanist framework for public education. One notes, years later, that Dewey’s liberal philosophy impacted curricular policies that have contributed much to the lowering of standards and discipline in public education. The universities have additionally contributed to the secularization of the average student, as professors instill and inculcate their own secular agendas upon the young minds. Is Secular Humanism a religion? Certainly, not in the traditional sense, but there is no doubt that it has its philosophy and its adherents, like Marxists, preach its ideas just as dogmatically and intensely as the fundamentalists and the Religious Right. Not all-modern thought should be discarded. There are positive points within Secular Humanism and Marxism, as there is with the deconstructionist ideas of Derrida. But before we conclude on positive futuristic aspects of philosophies, one needs to look further at secularization and modernity.

The ideas of modernity and post-modernity have figured prominently in social thought. Closely related is the process of secularization, which has at issue some of the basic questions. Secularization describes a specific social phenomenon, namely a decline in the extent of religious observance in a given society. It is also a belief in history, which has entered deeply into contemporary thought beyond the confines of sociology. In the last two hundred years, Western culture has undergone a gradual process of secularization. While religion plays an important role on ancient, medieval and early modern periods, it plays a relatively small part in contemporary modern culture. It more over, is a conception of the past in which technological development, increasing prosperity, changing moral standards and the decline of the religion are all interconnected.²¹

Susan Curtis points to Perry Miller’s path breaking studies on the Puritans of New England and their subsequent secularization as a point of departure for scholarship on America’s religious experience leading to some form of a secularization theory. Miller’s successors continued to relate a series of “breakdowns,” that is a decline from an organic religious golden age to an impersonal, secular, usually materialistic one.²² This led the way to modernization theory that charred human social development from primitive, religious, tightly knit communities with low levels of technology to complex, rational, impersonal societies marked by industrial activity and city life. Thus, in time theorists and developers viewed modernization and secularization as processes that loosened ties to pre-rational dependence on tradition and the supernatural paving the way for scientific thought and internal choice. Consequently, this shift away from a traditional religious worldview was seen as progress.²³ Nonetheless, as Curtis points out, periodic awakenings and revivals devoted to “Christianizing” American public life serve as reminders that making people modern cannot completely erase the urge to find spiritual meaning to a supreme, supernatural force in the universe.²⁴ Beyond the evangelical revivals, one finds additionally the sixties counterculture variety of various personal creeds lie “Sheilaism” as explored by Robert Ballah and others²⁵ notwithstanding the more flamboyant phenomena of Tele-Evangelism of the eighties or the “Jesus waves” of the nineties. There is a tension between the two opposite poles: the state’s neutrality of religion and

the importance of religion in the lives of many Americans. Curtis asks can we make sense of religious phenomena within a framework of secularization. How can modern and presumably secular nation in the Twentieth century find itself so consistently in the throes of religious turmoil? What are the alternatives to overarching theories like modernization and secularization that do not account for the persistence of religion? Some alternatives point to discover the ways that sacred and secular ideas interact and shape one another, to recognize the layered quality of collective and individual life and to view religion as an integral part of culture. Phillip Hammond's work on the Protestant presence in the Twentieth century Americas suggests that one can insist on the importance of religion in two ways: through "sovereignty" and "centrality" and that making such a distinction provides a way of appreciating the coexistence of individual beliefs and collective principles. Sovereignty essentially means authority; in contrast, centrality is personal. One thread in Hammond's work is the recognition that Protestantism in particular and religion in general are inseparable parts of culture.²⁶ A cultural approach to the study of American religion moves one outside the modernization, secularization framework and includes important values, a way of life, familiar customs, as well as abstract expression and the fine arts conversely, one must also recognize the power of religious ideas, images, symbols and moral systems to add depth and meaning to other aspects of cultural life.²⁷ Curtis demonstrates that the interplay between various dimensions of life can have a positive effect for the future. She cites the example of rather than seeing churches' appropriation of the commercial idiom, one could see it as a new moral investment of importance, a new metaphor for religious community. She is speaking of times that reflect religious discourses such as "a cross to bear", "wearing sackcloth" or the "the bitter cup" which are not uncommonly used in purely secular discussions.²⁸ This interpenetration of descriptions of everyday life, metaphoric expression, mythmaking and the desire to express the meaningful makes it difficult to identify the boundary between the secular and the sacred. The cultural approach may aid in making those distinctions.

What are often lacking in the analysis of American religion are the distinct cultural differences of the "other", the minorities. The Spanish-speaking Catholic worshipper, for example, approaches the ritual of the mass in very distinct ways as the upper urban Catholic. It goes beyond a distinction in worship, into linguistic differences and a different sense of the sacred.

Historically, English religion has emphasized the static recurrent aspects of worship. However, between 1530-1660m "English became conscious of acting a sacred history as opposed to reenacting it" suggestions that religion "was changing from devotion to deliberation."²⁹ Secularization was to take hold in view that English colonists believed that the essential features of their religion could not only survive the separation from other aspects of culture but would be purified in the process. It was the ostensible conversion of Constantine much earlier that has originated the absorption of the secular.³⁰ Thereafter, sacred monarchs and church executives dominated municipal, regional and even imperial affairs. It was the very privilege and power of the monarch that gave impetus to the process of re-secularization in England in the name of Henry VIII. It was the Henrician intimidation and confiscations of the 1530's that gave it the name of the "age of plunder."³¹ Generations of church officials were helpless to stop the march from Henry VIII to Thomas Hobbes. Nothing was sacred anymore. It was more a spiritual

and reflective religion that relinquished its social role and political influence. The first reforms often featured a repudiation of political compromise, religious formalism, and sacred object; no state, rite, or thing was sacred. Some studies have focused on the apparent psychological cost of “individualized faith” regarding pastoral care as a kind of tyranny and inward journeys at tours of hell, Calvinist cruelties and the tentacles Calvinism could extend to the individual psyche. Consolation was there but the price was affliction.³² It was as Peter Kaufman describes religion on the run that was identifiably Protestant and early modern.³³ Jean Delumeau’s study of both Protestant and Catholics that practiced *la pastorale de la peur* across the channel where each could be tyrants on either side of the confessional divide. He concludes that piety often depended on culpabilization.³⁴ Often, it was the contrite Calvinist’s route readiness and submission, less a spiritual state than a spiritual exercise. In the end the church during the 1530’s lost its power, not only over the laity, but even over itself. On the other hand, Calvinism’s “sillie base minstrie” exercised something of a tyranny over the souls of the faithful.

Secularization and the decline of religions are connected to the idea of modernity. Religion receives a whole new revision in the nineteenth century with Hegel, Feurbach, Marx and Comte. Hegel viewed history as progressive, as a dialectical process in which-

In searching for a new definition of the sacred with parallel philosophical and metaphysical systems, one must look at the past great civilizations in their zenith of development. There are two characteristics that are predominant in the ancient civilizations (e.g. Greek prior to 500 BC and the pre-Columbian Americas): (1). the unity of the universe where all changes arose from the cyclic interplay of opposites and this pair of opposites was seen as unity and (2). Respect and a profound understanding of nature in it’s wholeness as a mirror of a larger reality. Current cultural information about Pre-Columbian civilizations was distorted early by the Spanish invaders to the Americas, whose hegemonic mission assured the destruction of “the other’s”worldview.⁴⁹ Censorship and the inquisitorial councils were the tools for distortion for 300 years. Since, modern scholarship has largely reiterated the new imposed colonial mythology of the Spanish regarding the native peoples of the Americas. Fortunately, oral history and tradition has kept alive most of the metaphysics of pre-Columbian America.⁵⁰

In Native-American tradition, there were no ideas of finality or fragmentation of the universe. This model is decidedly Western and has its beginnings with the Eleatic school of philosophy circa 500 BC. After 500 BC, the universe for Western man/woman no longer possessed the unity of the universe where all changes arose from the cyclic interplay of opposites, which was seen as part of that unity. Now there was a personal God standing above all other Gods and directing the world. This led to the separation of spirit and matter, a dualism that is characteristic in Western philosophy.⁵¹ For the pre-Columbian mind, none this personalization and fragmentation existed. Instead, they believed in a basic unity of the universe as well as an awareness of unity i.e. a mutual interaction of all things. Pre-Columbian man/woman unlike the Western model, were not isolated individual selves. Rather, the idea was in the end, to transcend the self and identify with ultimate reality. There was no division of nature into separate categories. It was fluid and had an ever-changing character. The pre-Columbian worldview was

intrinsically dynamic and contained time and change as essential features. The cosmos for them was one inseparable reality forever in motion, alive, organic, spiritual and material at the same time. Their worldview was not religious in the traditional sense but metaphysical and was based on a high scientific knowledge that was passed to them by other great and civilized contacts.⁵² Thus; their view of the cosmos was scientific. This is why science (mathematics, astronomy, biology, medicine, agriculture etc.) and metaphysics for the pre-Columbian cultures were in harmony with each other. Their worldview was not linear as with Western man. It was cyclical in all of its manifestations to humankind. Even death was not seen as finality. It was merely a transition to more life. Thus, unlike the Western Judeo-Christian tradition, there were no hells, damnations, rewards or punishments at the end of one's transitory stage called life. The idea is that nothing dies, all is transformation.

The pre-Columbian idea of communal organization appears to have existed in all of the native peoples of the Americas prior to the arrival of the Europeans. It was a concept that was in accord with philosophy and cosmic principles of the Native-American, whether Maya, Aztec, Lakota, Algonquin, Inca, Toltec, Hopi, etc. It had a connection to nature and an understanding of her laws. The communal concept in society produces the idea of sharing and not competing. The ideas of competitiveness and individualism have their roots in primitive man. Inherent is the idea of survival. The latter was later manifested in aggressive imperialistic societies, best expressed cyclically in Roman cultures, the Middle Ages and to a degree, modern countries as well. The idea of the empire is of Roman/European origin. This led to the idea of conquest, which has its origin in the Middle Ages.⁵³ While the U.S. established a democratically structured republic, it did not lose many of the European ideas relating to conquest, racism and exploitation.

In the pre-Columbian model, the idea was to establish communal oriented confederations of many tribal nations in which all goods produced were for the all and not the individual. The fact that confederated nations were allowed to have their own elected officials, their own languages and spiritual practices, obviates any possibility of an imperialistic and exploitative empire as has been seen in the Western model. The pre-Columbian Confederations mark the beginning of non-intervention with the social and governing structures of the confederated nations.⁵⁴ It began with the local level with the *Kalpultin* (family units working together) which was autonomous, autarkic and self determining and progressed in the same manner to the regional and national levels. This follows another universal principle that relates to their idea of humanity. This is best expressed with the Maya *In Lakesh* and the Aztec *Tloke-Nauake* which projects the harmonious bond of all humankind: *In Lakesh* (You are my other self), and *Tloke-Nauake* (*Tloke*, close; *Nauake*, together) which expresses (humanity) close together bonded like the fingers in our hands. The allusion to the hand is to be seen at the socio-cultural level. In Aztec metaphysics, *Tloke-Nauake* is a primordial force that "has all the cosmic power within" and with reference to humankind on this planet, it is the force that bonds all humanity.⁵⁵ Since the pre-Columbian man/woman understood his tie with his fellowman/woman and understood that all living things within nature are sacred, they developed a society that communally shared the fruits of Mother Earth and man's artistic and creative expressions in society. While there was immediate ownership of clothes, house, lot, tools, ownership of Mother Earth was unthinkable. Thus, it was not right to

own land, people or animals. All beings on earth are linked to one another and they must share and live harmoniously. Consequently, any Western or European reference to private property, economic exploitation, tribute, slavery, usurpation of lands, economic and social classes based on economy and power are the characteristics of the Western paradigm and are totally inappropriate in the pre-Columbian world. The inherited knowledge and wisdom in astronomy, mathematics, botany, engineering, etc. gave the pre-Columbian cultures a scientific understanding of the universe. Rather than the simplistic anthropomorphic mythology created by ignorant clerics in which there is a recreation of the Christian paradigm, they revealed through linguistic and cosmological analysis hidden messages about creation.⁵⁶ *Tepeu, Gucumatz, Huracan* are symbols for the elements that produce matter. *Hunab-Ku* is the creator of measurement and movement through which this force gives form and energy. It is asserted that all things have a spirit/energy because all things have form. Thus, the Mayas in the *Popol-Vuh* established a scientific base for their understanding of the life i.e. there is not cell or molecule that is not subject to the geometric forms maintained within the mold of energy. In Mayan cosmology, the Creator is represented by a circle and within it a square from which man is a synthesis, which thinks, creates and does as his Creator, that Supreme Architect whose mental energy gives form. This Mayan philosophy, like other pre-Columbian civilizations of the Americas is based in geometry, on numbers and mathematics. It was understood that the creative forces, humans and numbers are one and the same.⁵⁷

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- ¹ Paul Bock, review of *Religion in the Secular City* by Harvey Cox, *USA Today*, V (May 1995): 113.
- ² See Harvey Cox, *Religion in the Secular City* (N.Y. Simon and Shuster, 1994) 304.
- ³ George Moyser, review of *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics*, *Journal of Church and State*, v.39, n3 (Summer 1997) 580-581.
- ⁴ David R. Gress, "The West': Religious or Secular?" *Current*, n.386 (October 1996): 15-17.
- ⁵ Allen C. Guelzo, review of *Selling God in America*, *Christianity Today*, v39, n5 (April 24, 1995): 27-40.
- ⁶ Arnaldo Carlos Vento, *Tres civilizaciones del mundo medieval* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998) 14.
- ⁷ Arthur McCalla, review of *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* by Wouter Hanegraaff, *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion*, v36, n4 (December 1997): 628-631.
- ⁸ David R. Gress, "The Modern Western Identity: its fit in World Politics", *Current*, n398 (December 1997): 7-12.
- ⁹ Keith A. Roberts, review of *Between the Sacred and Secular: Research and Theory on Quasi-Religion*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, v34, n4 (December 1995): 534-42.
- ¹⁰ David R. Gress, "The Modern Western Identity" ...92.
- ¹¹ Arnaldo Carlos Vento, *Mestizo: The History, Culture, and Politics of the Mexican and Chicano* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998) 111-112.
- ¹² David A. Noebel, "The Religion of Secular Humanism", *Free Inquiry*, v16, n4 (Fall 1998): 7.
- ¹³ Matt Cherry, "10 Myths of Secular Humanism", *Free Inquiry*, v18, n1 (Winter 1998) 25-34.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*
- ¹⁵ David A. Noebel, *ibid.* Citing the *Humanist Manifesto* and Paul Kurz.

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- ¹⁶ *ibid.* Noebel citing Senior Editor Gerald A. Larue.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.* Noebel cites the 1979 Humanist of the Year and former editor of the *Humanist*.
- ¹⁸ Lloyd and Mary Morain, *Humanism as the next step: An Introduction for Liberal Protestants, Catholics, and Jew* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954).
- ¹⁹ David A. Noebel, citing Irving Kristol, *Commentary Magazine* (August 1991).
- ²⁰ Arnoldo Carlos Vento, *Mestizo* ...135.
- ²¹ Gordon Graham, "Religion, Secularization and Modernity," *Philosophy*, v67, n260 (1992): 184. See also Don Cuppitt's book *The Sea of Faith* (London: BBC Publications, 1984) who states: "The process of secularization has been going on very slowly for a very long time. Its beginning, at the height of Christian civilization in the twelfth century, seems to be connected with the fact that Christianity makes a sharper distinction than other faiths between the sacred and the secular. The faith itself tended to push political and economic man away, out into a non-religious realm. In time, the secular realm of politics, economics, science and technology outgrew and overwhelmed the sacred. Religion lost its influence in public life and in the past century or so has even lost much of its influence in private life as well." (31).
- ²² Susan Curtis, "The Sovereignty of the Power of Religion," *American Literary History*, v8, n2 (Summer 1996): 328. See also Perry Miller. *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1953).
- ²³ Susan Curtis, "The Sovereignty...", 329. For works on modernization see C.E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (1966) and Richard D. Brown, *Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865* (1976). On becoming modern, see David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (1974).
- ²⁴ Susan Curtis, *ibid.* For the Second Great Awakening in the Nineteenth Century, see Paul Johnson's *Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*. (1978). See also Jon Butler's *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (1990).
- ²⁵ For more information on "Sheilaism," see Robert Bellah, et.al. *Habits of the Heart: Introduction and Commitment in American Life* (N.Y.: Harper, 1985).
- ²⁶ Susan Curtis, "The Sovereignty...", 331.
- ²⁷ See Phillip E. Hammond, *The Protestant Presence in Twentieth Century America* (N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1992).
- ²⁸ Susan Curtis, "The Sovereignty...", 338.
- ²⁹ Peter Iver Kaufman, "Religion on the Run," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, v25m n1 (Summer 1994): 53. See also John Bale, *The Image of Bothe Churches* (London, 1550), John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1563), Edward Dering, *A Sermon preached before the Queens Majesties* (London, 1586), William Dell, "The Building Beauty, Teaching and Establishment of the Truly Christian and Spiritual Church," in *idem, The Works of William Dell* (New York: 1916; delivered 1646), 98-109.
- ³⁰ See John H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (Evanston, 1962), 40-42, Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 16-17.
- ³¹ See Walter G. Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder: King Henry's England, 1500-1547* (London, 1976).
- ³² Peter Iver Kaufman, "Religion on the Run," 1-10.
- ³³ *ibid.*, 46.
- ³⁴ See Jean Delumeau, *Le peche el la peur: La Culpabilisation en Occident, XIIIe-XIIIe Siecles* (Paris, 1983), 244-245, 315-316, 568.
- ⁴⁹ Arnoldo Carlos Vento, *Mestizo* ... 49-52.
- ⁵⁰ While the U.S. scholars began to listen to the U.S. Native-American elders (e.g. *Black Elk Speaks*) and their oral history after the sixties, the academia in Mexico and the rest of Spanish-America has resisted due to three hundred years of colonial inculcation within the educational system. There is, and has been since the 1500's, a live and rich oral tradition that followed the dictate of *Kuautemok* to preserve the culture and language. Unfortunately, Spanish-American academics as well as American have not properly recognized this oral history. Recent German scholars have taken the lead, following many of the ideas of the oral history and are proving the wholesale distortion and falsity of post-Conquest documents written by the Spanish on pre-Columbian cultures. e.g. human sacrifice.
- ⁵¹ Arnoldo Carlos Vento and Daniel Estrada, *Lucha: The History, Culture and Politics of the Mexican and the Chicano* (Unpublished book manuscript), Chapter II.
- ⁵² There are several theories regarding the acquisition of knowledge by the great cultural and scientific societies (*Teotihuakan, Toltek, Maya, Aztekah, Incah*): (1) Knowledge was passed on progressively from

previous high cultures e.g. *Teotihuakan* to *Toltek*, *Toltek* to *Aztekah* (2) the knowledge appears to be present at a very early stage e.g. the knowledge of the zero was present in pre-Mayan cultures in Mesoamerica antedating the West by almost 1,000 years. What was its origin? Some have conjectured (and with some reason) that there existed a very high culture in a pre-historic landmass in the Caribbean area before it disappeared due to a cataclysmic occurrence. This was known as *Aztlan* among the Aztec oral and written history. (3) In the folk legends of the Maya, there are references to “visitors from the sky” and as such, the idea of extraterrestrial contact. In esoteric literature, however, there are references to what are now hot weather balloons that existed in the times of *Aztlan*. This would explain contact from the sky and from an advanced civilization.

⁵³ Arnoldo Carlos Vento, *Tres civilizaciones del mundo medieval* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998) 87-93. See also *Mestizo ...*45.

⁵⁴ Arnoldo Carlos Vento, *Lucha...*, Chapter II.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Domingo Martinez Paredes, *El Popol Vuh tiene razón* (Mexico: Editorial Orion, 1976) 12, 128. See also his excellent work entitled *Hunab Ku*.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* 17.