

## CULTURE WARS AGAINST RELIGION AND A GATHERING OF TRIANGULATED RESPONSES TO THEM

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### Abstract

This article brings together four triangulated sets of core values and beliefs as tools that religious adherents, or believers, can use when faced with culture wars or social attacks against them. The principles contained in the sets of ideas can transcend faiths and denominations, but they were developed within Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, and are credited to St. Benedict's rules of monasticism, the individual teachings of Anglican theologians Richard Hooker and C.E. Raven, and the modern *cursillo* movement within the Roman Catholic and Episcopal denominations. While the expression "culture wars" is considered to be a modern phenomenon, social attacks against religions are not, and can be considered as elements of social conflict with one notable exception. Traditional social conflict theories make ample use of such expressions as groups, parties, and coalitions, suggesting united memberships, united beliefs, and coordinated efforts. Modern culture wars against religion, however, seem to be waged by amorphous bodies of critics without uniform beliefs between them, trying to discredit an equally unshaped body of believers with diverse theological, liturgical, and canonical traditions.

### INTRODUCTION

The social conflict paradigm did not begin with the combined writings of Marx and Engels even though Zeitlan (1968) declares that much sociology after the mid-1800s has been a continuing debate with their legacies. No effort is made here to review all their thoughts, but attention is paid to the semantic differential Marx used when he identified some methods to end the strife and the disparities between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (1848/1954) because such two-sided membership boundaries are rarely evident when culture wars against religion are discussed.

Whether or not there are actual antagonisms of this type is a matter of speculation using an abundance of circumstantial evidence without proof of orchestration, but some scholars suggest that there are several specific targets of such attacks. Messner, for example, a Fellow at a conservative think tank, identifies three issues that seem to be at the center of culture wars against religion (2011). They are abortion and the right to life, co-religionism in social organizations, and opposite- vs. same-sex marriage, and more items could be listed. No effort is made here, though, to delve into specific debates; instead, several sets of instructions illustrating how people of

faith can respond to attacks against them are offered, and this process occurs in several stages. First, comparisons between traditional social conflicts and culture wars are made because they are similar, yet different. Second, four historically separate and triangulated theological reactions to social attacks are set forth. Those responses come from St. Benedict (ca. 530 A.D./1975) who outlined monasticism's tenets of *pax, ora et labora*; from the Middle Ages there is the "three-legged stool" of dedication to reason, scripture, and tradition of Richard Hooker (1539/1994). Following them in mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, C.E. Raven (1943) wrote about the need to maintain religious integrity, sympathy, and community in the face of secular and scientific challenges to religious truth and authority; and from the modern redemptive religious movement called *Cursillo* comes its "tripod" of support as piety, study, and action that believers can use to solidify their faith and enhance their worship communities. Taken together, these bodies of ideas represent staples in social psychology's own trilithon of self-identity: Cognition, as that which is known or perceived about the self and all things external to it; affection, as evaluations about the self and all that is outside it; and behavior, as observable or measurable activities in response to that which is believed and felt. The third stage of this study is based on an article by Fagan (1996), also a contributor to a conservative think tank, who says that social scientists have long known the positive effects of social organization; as such, the themes from St. Benedict, from Hooker, from

Raven, and from *cursillo* are formally integrated with ideas about attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief from Hirschi's 1969 social bond theory. A final discussion is an illustrative one, welding academic discussions with practical applications based on the author's recent visit to an all-Hispanic religious congregation in one of Chicago's famous Zone III "neighborhoods" where many social tensions work against the congregants.

The inspiration for this piece began after hearing an Anglican priest disagree with the equality of balance between the three legs of Hooker's stool. Both of their arguments contributed to this discussion about secular disagreements with religion and faithful witnesses' possible responses to them.

## **SOCIAL CONFLICT AND CULTURE WARS**

Culture wars can be placed under the broad umbrella of culture conflict, but they are not identical. It is necessary, then, to identify their similarities and differences.

### **Traditional Views of Social Conflict**

The conflict paradigm has a detailed history so several meanings for social conflict are reviewed. A popular but unfiltered electronic encyclopedia says that "Social conflicts are perspectives... that emphasize... inequality of a social group..." but they "...do not refer to a unified school of thought" (Wikipedia n.d.). Early American sociologists Park and Burgess (1924:505) state that social conflict is unfair competition without safeguard-

ing it and eventually ending it in the [institutional] sector of society. Conflict is personal, conscious, emotionally-laden, a concentrated effort, dissociative, dualistic, and based on "hatred and envy, want and desire" they further say (574-583), to which we can add ethnocentrism, greed, and the grasp for power or influence. A few years later House (1936:120) reported a simpler idea, that conflict is "opposing social tendencies." Finally, Coser (1956:8) comments that social conflict is "...a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents [especially the aggressors] are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate... rivals," making it a dyad of antagonists and their vested interests.

Most recreational readers do not wade through detailed reports and data on disparities between divergent groups. Outside such sources, however, there are many accounts of social conflicts that casual readers can enjoy. Novelists make good, imaginative, and successful use of controlled power based on gender, economic, cultural, wealth, religious, legal, and ethnic variables as R.G. O'Sullivan (2002) reviewed. So, regardless of which definition a person chooses, social conflict can be summarized in this tongue twister: "There are the haves and the have-nots, and the have-nots want to have what the haves have, but the haves do not want to give what they have to the have-nots, because then the haves and the have-nots would switch places, reversing who has what" in a dialectic process of social change; but are there rules of conduct in the tensions? Not

for social conflict, answer Park and Burgess. When it comes to social conflicts, there are no codes that determine fair or foul play, and much the same can be said about modern culture wars.

### Culture Wars

The *inter alia* or battlefields of culture wars are the opinion-editorial sections of local and major newspapers, legal venues including political assembly halls, and the airways of the broadcast media. Their weapons are not guns with bullets, but words: Aspersions, epithets, and character assassinations; data and reports that resemble Orwell's *newspeak* (1949/1961); and speeches that are selectively edited by opponents. Culture wars against religion, for example, contain changed expressions in official and unofficial national anthems, revisionist history that redacts sources of national character and resolve, the renaming of religious holidays to accommodate political correctness, and civil medical regulations that are imposed on faith-based health care providers.

Culture wars' victims seem to be entire categories of people and the *moral nets* (Davis and Stasz 1990) they hold dear. Victors in military wars are those forces that inflict the most physical damage upon the enemy, whereas the populist victors in culture wars seem to be those who most effectively sway public opinion against their ideological enemies. The purposes behind culture wars then are the demonization of opponents and the neutralization of their political influence as Hunter (1991) discusses in

his groundbreaking book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*.

Standard discussions about social conflict have assessed one category of people pitted against another. Culture wars are different because they are voiced public arguments about core social values, including morality: "...discussions about what is fundamentally right and wrong about the world we live in— about what is ultimately good and what is finally intolerable in our communities" entailing such "words and phrases as truth, justice, the public good, and national purpose..." (Hunter 32-33). Should we be tradition-bound or progressive, backward-thinking or forward-thinking, conservative or liberal? These are the types of questions raised in culture wars.

Hunter had unlimited space as he wrote his book, but I do not have that same luxury, so I can only present some excerpts from his pages capturing the essence of his themes. Both sides of culture wars are involved with the opposing processes of image-making and image-tarnishing— making themselves look good and the others bad (143). Each portrays the other as being extreme— outside the mainstream of society (146). Both sides try to monopolize legitimacy— portraying themselves as the keepers of the faith and the others as moral outsiders (147). Each side portrays the other as being intolerant of diversity therefore dangerous to society (149-150). If the expressions of disfavor could be viewed by non-partisan observers then the allegations and charges they contain are virtually identical (152). Neither side can tolerate desecration

of its visions or defamation of its advocates (153). The conflicts are not about specific bodies of people, Hunter argues, but about which vision of moral parochialism will survive and is better for society (156, 158), where, borrowing a line from the popular novelist Suzanne Collins (2010:133) "both truth and justice will reign."

Hunter acknowledges the importance of Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912/1954) as an early account about culture wars against religion that are concerned with the *sacred* which can be holy, traditional, and socially conservative, and the *profane*, or the secular, that is directed toward this-worldly issues, the modern, or the progressive. Viewed this way, culture wars against religion are based on the moral dualisms of the sacred vs. the secular as proponents of each try to preserve their institutional visions over the encroachments of the other.

Religion and politics are core social institutions, and even though we have legal principles that disallow the creation of a church-state or a state-church, there is a latent alliance between them. Based on the work of Hooker, House (42) calls that relationship "ecclesiastical politics" and Hunter calls it an "isomorphism" (120) where there is a prevalent belief that all members on each side of the traditionalist-progressive, sacred-secular stances have common world views as they ponder public discussions and elections. Religio-political conservatives and religio-political liberals each want to earn public support, so each side exalts itself while demeaning the other by extending morphed moral

appeals— pro-sacred anti-secular or pro-secular anti-sacred to various audiences, and there are no editors to vet the veracity of their claims. Political victory akin to the struggle of good vs. evil may be the claim made by the winners.

If Hunter is correct can individuals in targeted populations respond without specifically getting into the fray of public exchange and becoming cannon fodder for the attackers, and if so, how? "History" provides affirmative answers to these concerns and the selected versions of them are offered, next.

### A GATHERING OF RESPONSES

One of the primary functions of social conflict, says Coser, is that opposing groups, especially the ones reviled, can reaffirm their histories, traditions, beliefs, and morals as they face opposition. Such restrengthenings are historically frequent as various religions face their adversaries and adversities, and four examples of reaffirmations in Christianity are offered here with appropriate background information. It is important to note, however, two related items about the four sets of responses: First, none of the three items in each set stands alone, but receives strength and meaning from the others; and second, their common linguistic, structural, theological, and purposive biases are impossible to avoid.

#### **Saint Benedict's *Pax, Ora Et Labora***

Benedict of Nursia, Italy (b. 480 A.D.—d. 547 A.D.) was canonized in 1807 for his healing ministry and resultant medical miracles, but he was

born into a family of considerable financial means in an era of social decline. He was disappointed with the secularism that prevailed by choosing a life of spirituality and eventually founded the monastery at Monte Casino (Seasoltz 1987:98). He is not the founder of monasticism as a way of life, but he is credited with being the "Father of Western Monasticism" (Spencer 1965:117) based on the writing of his *S. Benedicti Regula Monasteriorum* or *The Rule of St. Benedict* (ca. 530/1975), just as Comte was later called the "Father" of modern sociology. Each laid appropriate principles for their successors.

Benedict's guidebook (henceforth *Rule*) identifies the various ways that monasteries, as a type of total institution (Goffman 1961), are essentially surrogate families dedicated to the spiritual fulfillment of their residents and to the glorification of God. These tasks are partially accomplished by creating satisfactory divisions of labor, by having formal conduct norms, by shaping levels of authority, by determining membership criteria, by scheduling allotted times for work, for prayer, for community involvement, and so on (Benedict; Seasoltz; Southern 1970:217-240; and Spencer). All these types of partitions were later identified by Weber (1947) as elements of bureaucracies that were idealized in the in the secular Walden Two community designed by novelist and psychologist B.F. Skinner (1948/1962).

Early European Christian monasticism was made possible by three events: The Christian Baptism of Roman Emperor Constantine I gave

the religion legitimacy in a this-worldly, pagan, and secular society; developing beliefs that faith and piety should be orderly, rational, and responsible—not random; and, the invasions of barbaric hordes following the decline of the Roman authority opened new possibilities for, and challenges to, religious outreach, possible conversions, and maintenance of faith (Meisel and del Mastro 1975:12-14; Spencer 14-15). *Rule* contains seventy-three chapters that prescribe the daily activities of monasteries and their residents that revolve around the three precepts that are attributed to Benedict.

### **Pax**

This Latin word for *peace* has mixed meanings. One of them refers to the end of hostilities between enemies. Another suggests a personal comfort that can be derived from a number of variables, including a satisfaction, a reconciliation, or a balance of maturity between one's aspirations, expectations, and achievements. It can also be a product of attachment to family and close friends, a product of solid beliefs and commitments to traditional moral nets while rejecting alternative others, or a product of active involvement in community affairs.

*Peace*, however, also has purely theological value as an ideal that has several defining qualities. The religion of the New Testament is one of victory over all, with which people align themselves; it is freedom from enticements, hindrances, and moral conflicts; or, it is internalization of external religious traditions as "the restfulness

of a surrendered will" (all Ottley 1919: 700-701). A reading of Benedict's *Rule*, however, shows that word *peace*, and its qualities, are in scarce supply allowing the interpretation that it is more than a mere product of human existence, possibly found in its derivative word *pact* meaning an agreement between consenting parties.

One form of idolatry, as discussed again later, is placing the self on a level with the object or the person of adoration, but that is antithetical to subservience and obedience, and may be an act of sin depending on theological constructs. Avoidance of such self-elevation is made possible through acts of contrition or humility that are detailed in *Rule's* Chapter Seven— "Humility." In it, Benedict makes an allusion to the Biblical story of climbing Jacob's ladder that contains twelve rungs as steps toward God's exaltation, not the individual's. Those steps are: Obeying God's commandments, avoiding self-pleasure; not imitating God; accepting travails as tests of the will; confessing wrongful behavior and lustful thoughts; working obediently for, and according to, God; *believing* in the oral confessions; striving to avoid their causes; obeying the rules and authorities of the monastery; refraining from joviality; speaking infrequently, only with material purpose, and quietly; and being so diligent that actions speak louder than words (Benedict 56-61). *Pax*, then, is produced by obedience and subservience as humility to something greater than the self.

### **Ora**

A direct translation of this Latin

word means by mouth, or speaking, and. Benedict presents two methods of delivery. They are prayer and study. Prayer has been defined as a verbal expression of oneself with God (Macquarrie 1977:493) wherein thoughts on adoration (praise), expiation (forgiveness), love (charity), petition (spiritual assistance), and thanksgiving (appreciation) are offered. Daily monastic life is scheduled around prayer and worship services taking place from “no sun to no sun,” as the approximate saying goes.

The other side of *ora* is the active study of holy scriptures as they were then written. Christianity in the time of Benedict was more of an oral tradition than a written one, and that which was written was scarce, manually transcribed, and in Latin or in Greek. The physical process of study was arduous, but was also contained in monasteries' daily schedules as the only direct and personal means to comprehend the words of God.

### **Labora**

The multiple tasks of monastic life required work. Monasteries are physical residences that need regular maintenance, the provision of sustenance for the inhabitants, the establishment of balanced economic reciprocity (Polanyi 1946; Sahlins 1972) with patron manors and local communities, and so on. Some of their tasks were menial, some were agricultural, and some were profitable. Some involved distilling potent potables from the fruit of the vine, and others were mainly esthetic. Monasteries became the repositories for existing art, safe-

guarding it from plunder while simultaneously becoming studios for new art, for good reason.

Written religious literature was basically useless for non-literate people, and oral exhortations are hard to imprint without experiential or visual frames of reference. Consequently, much high art of the era was created in monasteries as tangible depictions of salvation vs. perdition.

Further, Christianity was newly-legitimized in Benedict's time but it was still implausible to, and distant from, the commoners. Roman statuary may have changed but secular habits were replaced with those from invaders. There were few changes for rural enclaves as they led their lives in that which Redfield (1956) calls “the little tradition.” Cities and monasteries, however, were populated by the *literati* of artists, medical specialists, and clergy that Redfield calls “the great tradition.” One of duties of *monastics*, then, was to take the specific great tradition of Christianity into the little tradition of the rustics, blending the *ora et labora* as community outreach.

Benedict's *Rule* was written for monasticism, but does it have any direct relevance to members of the then- or the now-laity? All believers at all times are faced with visions of life that run counter to their beliefs, just as they are assailed for their principles. The three settlements behind *Rule* – *pax* as humility, *ora* as prayer and study, and *labora* as work in, and for, God's domain– still prevail and variations of them are offered in the later section on *cursillo*, but it is now time to fast-forward about twelve centuries.

### Hooker's *Three-Legged Stool of Reason, Scripture and Tradition*

Richard Hooker (b. 1554–d. 1600), the “judicious Hooker” (Holmes 1993 15; Raven 62) is credited with publishing *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (henceforth *Laws*) around 1594 as guiding principles for the emerging Anglicanism of the Church of England. Hooker was born into a family of modest means, but was sponsored for study at Oxford University. A scholar, vicar and pastor, and family man, Hooker's greatest notoriety seems to have come from *Laws*.

Not all culture wars are waged by forces outside religion, and the nascent Church of England had detractors and competition from other denominations. Roman Catholicism was unhappy with King Henry VIII's departure from its sacramental traditions, authority, and taxing power; and Puritans felt that Anglicanism was too episcopal, liturgic, iconic, and lacking inerrancy or infallibility of sacred texts (Holmes 1993; Massey 1987; Russell 1994). Roman Catholics wanted to overthrow the new church while Puritans just wanted to reform it (Moorman 1980:208), so Hooker's designs were intended as a *via media* or middle way of worship.

“[A]rguing that Roman Catholics had added too much [theocracy and political power] to traditional Catholicism and that Puritans had subtracted too much, *Laws* affirmed Anglicanism's continuity with the Catholic Church of its fathers” (Holmes 15).

*Laws* was written in high Tudor

language, so Russell is the summarist for the three-volume edition used here, and in that role, he offered two sets of observations. The first shows there were and there are still internecine struggles against Anglicans' orthodoxy, identifying these struggles on p. I-1 of *Laws* Volume I.

1. Lay and clergy divide themselves into parties and acrimoniously attack one another.
2. Clergy defy existing collegial structures by forming conventicles for disciplined study of Holy Scripture.
3. Parties identify the structures of the church as ungodly, then generate proposals for alternate structures.
4. The authority of Church decisions gets challenged with proof texts from Holy Scripture.
5. The national Church's power of independent decision making gets challenged.
6. Bishops find their very existence questioned by those who promote an alternative ordering of ministering.
7. Ultra-Protestants pull the church in one direction, ultra-Catholics in another.
8. Groups propose special ecclesiastic structures to accommodate their conscientious objections to the existing order, all causing him ask if anything had changed from the 1590s to the 1990s.



A few pages later (I-13-14), Russell cites seven strategies that critics in Hooker's day used against him when they launched their opposition. These methods are listed as:

1. Existing leaders are easy targets. Attacking them with sufficient severity imputes righteous zeal to the attackers;
2. People who sling enough mud will eventually hit something;
3. People with a grievance will happily project it upon a target already smeared with someone else's mud;
4. People upset with one thing will more easily accept some new or untried thing as a remedy...;
5. Dissidents overly simplify complex issues in order to narrow people's viewpoints, deliberately creating a closed or circular system of argumentation;
6. They drape themselves with untestable claims of illumination by the Holy Spirit, and;
7. They use the freedom and hospitality offered by the hosts to undermine them, clearly showing that culture wars against religion are not new.

Like Benedict's *Rule*, Hooker's *Laws* remains a mainstay of its denominational tradition; but just as only the broadest visions of *Rule* were offered only synopses of *Laws* can be set forth here. Whether or not Hooker

actually coined the expression "three-legged stool" is uncertain and moot, but the phrase and its alleged authorship remain with us.

### Reason

In some ways, says House (42-43), the contributions of Hooker *prelect* Hobbes' and Locke's ideas on social authority, except Hooker addressed ecclesiastical authority (*Laws* Vols. II and III) rather than civil leadership. All, however, believed in the inherent ability of people to ponder and compare their experiences, coming to their own conclusions by engaging in the process of reason.

There are several ways to define *reason*, and one is "the human capacity for (or practice of) seeing, forming, and investigating cognitive relations (Finch 1987:223). Another is "the relational element in intelligence, in distinction from the element of content, sensational, or emotional" (Smith 1919:593); and then Russell (I-9) says that Hooker's orientation toward reason is specifically directed toward things ecclesiastic.

Hooker writes in *Laws* (Vol. 2:19) that "no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths" or allegations made about it, requiring a person of reason to investigate the forms, functions, and validity of internal truths as well as the forms, functions, and validity of external claims made *about* religion. Such concentrated effort is called *study*, but the reasonable person runs the risk of being too rational, too objective, and ambivalent especially when study becomes ongoing without commitment to any ideal. The metaphoric question "Are you going to

fish or cut bait?" could easily have been Hooker's own, yet there comes a time, Hooker would hope, when the person finally says "I believe..." and further study affirms that commitment.

### Scripture

This is the word divine as revealed through holy documents. Russell (*J-10*) says about Hooker that "Scripture is the perfect end for which it was created: to impart knowledge needed for salvation that people, because of their sinfulness, can no longer find through the use of their reason." On his own, Hooker writes that holy documents, as recorded by humankind, represent the witnessing of the sacred: "The voice and testimony of the church acknowledging Scripture to be the law of the living God, is for the truth and certainly thereof no mean evidence" (*Laws Vol. II:89*).

Scripture must be studied diligently because its truths may not be directly stated but are often hidden in symbolic stories, parables, and proverbs, just as the moral codes or laws they contain may not be found as easily as Benedict's *Rule* delineates his. Theological truths must be discerned as they sometimes offer different revelations. Christianity's Gospels of Sts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, for example, are called the *synoptic* Gospels because they contain parallel and co-sequential synopses of Christ's life, whereas the Gospel of St. John can be called a *theological* one because it mainly addresses the purposes of Christ's life, not its chronology of events.

Discernment is acquired through diligence, but Hooker and others contend that the real purpose of such ef-

forts is to take that which is learned, and that which is learned from it, to others. There is an adage that says that we can reflect on our lives, but we must live them forward, and that premise can be rephrased in the modern question "What would Jesus do?" Both thoughts support Hooker's work since holy scriptures are templates for any now-modern population when facing the secular and the unknown.

This article was inspired by a chat with an Anglican priest and by a term paper that he wrote for his seminary degree (Doubet 2010). He disagrees with the premise that elements in Hooker's triune were co-equal, stating instead that their configuration was less like a stable milking stool and more like Mattell's Big Wheel tricycle with scripture being the driving force of movement. Without scripture, Doubet argues, there are no moral issues to ponder [Hooker's reason], just as there are no bases [Hooker's tradition] for ethical decisions. Doubet concludes his paper by saying,

"Scripture is the driving force to matters ecclesiastical, it also steers the vehicle.

Tradition and reason keep things running smoothly, with tradition having the ability to slow things down when interpretation or reason get out of control."

### Tradition

Tradition, Hooker states, is the totality of scriptures, prophets and prophecies, biographies, beatitudes, acts of dedicated advocates, letters of support and advice to isolated disciples, miracles, symbolism, parables, prov-

erbs, creeds and all things holy from the time of the Christian Apostles forward. It also contains standardized rites of celebration and incorporation, canons, duties for the clergy and the laity, lyrical psalms and hymns of praise, and organized authority hierarchies, at all time and in all places.

Traditions are always products of social facts preceding them, resistant to change, disparaging of both competition and criticism, ancestral (Fichter 1967; Jensen 1967), learned, and where "Remember" is [their] first commandment..." (Villiers 1987:1). Applying these comments to *Laws*, Russell (I-11) says that traditions "...are the cumulative decisions of Christian people over time. They are the mixture of necessary and accessory things which, with the help of Reason and Scripture, people have cobbled together to give glory to God."

By maintaining dedication to scripture, established ritual, and episcopal authority, congregants can understand how they are linked to the same grounded problem-solving techniques that their ancestors faced, that they face, and that their descendants will face. If Hooker could rise from his grave today and look at the ways that traditional cultural values and practices are redefined rather than reinforced, he might be saddened because "there will always be evils which no art of man can cure, breaches and leaks more than man's wit hath hands to stop" (*Laws* Vol. 2:38). At the same time, however, he might be gladdened because faith "allayeth all kinds of base and early cognitions, banisheth and driveth away evil suggestions which our invisible enemy is always

apt to minister" (*Laws* Vol. 2:168). With those thoughts in mind, it is time to jump forward again about 350 years.

### **Raven's Integrity, Sympathy, and Community**

Title page information from the books of C.E. (Charles E.) Raven (b. 1985-d. 1964) show that he was an Anglican priest, theologian, and a professor of science and religion at Cambridge University. He served as a Canon of Liverpool and was a Chaplain to the King of England. He wrote eight books including *Science, Religion, & the Future* (henceforth *SRF*) and its contents mingle well with others from Albert Einstein (1930, 1939, 1941, and 1948) who also wrote about the relationships between science and religion based on his combined insights and identities of scientist and Zionist.

Raven's *SRF* was written during the middle of World War II, an era that was a military conflagration and a moral one. Democratic capitalism and elements of conservative religious traditionalism were at odds with the civil rulers who tried to "destroy the spirit of humanity" (Einstein 1939) by borrowing selected principles from developing genetic and economic sciences. From Darwin and from Malthus, Raven writes scientists of Hitlerian Germany practiced eugenics and genocide to create a master race void of hereditary contaminants. Raven further writes that Marx and Engels were influenced by Ricardo's ideas on economic distribution, leading to the schemes for social change by Lenin and by Stalin as ideologies

that eventually made their ways into the U.S.

Military wars might be preventable if we listen carefully to the rhetoric of the saber-rattlers before the tensions escalate, but can modern culture wars against religion be avoided? Raven offers some insights into the issue, ideas that can be summarized as "know your enemy." The challenge to ministers and members of the laity alike is to pay close attention to the words of religion's detractors: Overt contempt does not need translation, but expressions of benevolence are often masks or false faces.

As a scholar who studied the history of science and religion Raven offers a three-sided view of enlightenment toward culture wars against religion in his time that can be applied to any era. The process includes: Being open to new cognitive experiences and appreciating them; classifying those experiences into systems of beliefs that are considered as being true; and using those moral nets as personal guideposts in daily life and in the communion of others (5-17). Raven gives all of these views further consideration. Chapter IV, "The Intellectual Task: Integrity" (80-96) discusses the cognitive dimensions of awareness and information comparisons; Chapter VII "The Moral Task: Sympathy" (97-112) discusses the affective element of appropriate moral nets and their comparative efficacy; and Chapter VIII "The Religious Task: Community" (113-125) addresses the call to action.

### ***Integrity***

Raven's interpretation of integrity refers to the demanding task of

intense and directed investigation. The cognitive act of study, Raven advises, is to "learn what is" (80) because counter arguments to those used against religion are weak without viable foundations. He writes, "Open your eyes and see; test and notice the consequences, grasp the significance of your observations; act upon it as a means to further discoveries" (86). Raven would encourage believers to become like Socrates, to "...puncture the pretensions of his contemporaries, to insist upon strict investigations of the meanings of the words [and the accusations] that they used and the ideas that they professed" (95), not as an accused anarchist or a martyr, like Socrates, but as an informed unifier and reconstructionist. Three related questions are then raised: "What is studied?", "Why study?", and "Whose values?" The first of these is answered immediately.

Like Benedict and Hooker, Raven feels that believers should study holy scriptures that are appropriate to the religion, related scholarly and filtered commentaries and histories, as well as annals of religious archaeology. It is also incumbent for the adherent to study the beliefs of the critics. If attacks come from other religions, gnosticisms, heresies, theosophy, scientology, cosmology, secular humanism, social gospels, libertarianism, atheism, ecumenism, inclusive language, cultural relativity, and so on, then the same types of literatures from them about them need to be studied. In order to affirm "what is" there is need to know "what is not" and how that is used against the known. The investigations are not just academic exer-

cises, Raven argues. If the first question has a cognitive quality, the second has an affective value: "Why study?"

### **Sympathy**

Informed opinions about "what is" and "what is not" give rise to what *should be* (Einstein 1939) as the articulation of moral nets for the individual and the collective. Scientists and theologians have competed for audiences by offering alternative answers to questions of ultimate meaning, definitions of truth, and the shape of morality as they often tread [or plod] into realms outside their respective domains of expertise (Einstein 1948). Still, science and religion are not necessarily incompatible: "Science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind" writes Einstein (1941), and Raven would likely have agreed with this statement.

The evolutionary sciences of Darwin's and of Raven's times were not as sophisticated as they are now, but there was still a general belief that geological, biological, and cultural evolutions occur together. Whatever the processes, Raven writes, the results have been humanity with "heroes, artists, thinkers, and saints" (103) impacting "the scope and character of moral issues... [including the opposing issues] "good and evil" (106) and liberalism and conservatism (1). Culture wars against religion can be fought successfully, Raven would argue, if critics of religion are debated reasonably by informed believers, lending the third question, "Whose beliefs?"

### **Community**

Cultures and societies are created by people living together cooperatively, but there are usually exceptions to this rule. A form of idolatry, says Raven, is the *superindividuated* self who is self-segregated from the community, replacing a "we not me" ethos (Campus Ministries n.d.) with "me not we" egocentrism. Since religious mores are products of collective reason and traditions say Hooker, Raven, and Einstein, personality cults can threaten local and global stability.

Raven writes: "... we become what we love, and finding a common loyalty and a common service with our fellows discover our organic unity with them" (122), where personalities develop, and where creeds, as essential statements of belief, are formed and shared. These creeds can be found in national anthems, national pledges of allegiance, oaths of office, or promises made before legal testimonies where they all promote civil cohesion.

Creeds can also define religious heritages, as found in the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed in Christianity, even as they contain different elements of historicism. There is a difference in voice, for example, in the Nicene Creed contained in the prayer books for the Church of England (C. of E.), the Episcopal Church in the U.S. (TEC), and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury under King Edward VI, was summoned to compose a book of prayer suitable for the common people of England to use in their local par-

ishes. *The First English Prayer Book* was published (1549/1999), and in 1662 the *Book of Common Prayer* was designated as the official prayer book of the denomination.

Cranmer had protestant Lutheran leanings, so when he translated scripture from Greek to English he used the voice of the first person singular, rather than the more catholic first person plural. The beginning of Cranmer's version of the Nicene Creed states, "I believe..." (24), and that tradition was maintained in the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) for TEC. The 1979 version of the BCP changed the voice to the "We believe..." translation (358) for two reasons. It better reflects the original Greek from which it was derived, and the plural voice mirrors the body corporate of TEC, and that same reasoning and wording is used for the *Common Worship* missals that are found in many congregations of ACNA in the U.S.

Raven would likely agree with the adage that there is "strength in numbers" since no military battle or war has ever been won, outside mythology or political leaders' claims, by one person acting alone. Religions are *sui generis* communities of believers who stick to the habits of study, moral stances, and themselves because each faces the bewilderments, the corruptions, and the derelictions (Raven 124) of the culture wars against them in their times, allowing us to move forward about a decade.

### **Cursillo's Tripod of Piety, Study, and Action**

*Cursillo* was born in Roman Catholicism but now appears in other de-

nominations under different names with appropriate structural modifications. Dragostin (1970) criticized *cursillo* by calling it secretive and cultic, but it was given a friendly review by Marcoux (1982). A few years later, it was assessed four different ways with sociological insights by R.G. O'Sullivan (1988, 1989, 1997, and 1999), and this article relies on his 1988 publication.

The word *cursillo* is Spanish, meaning "a short course in Christianity," and the movement began in Mallorca during the mid-1940s. It was migrated to the U.S. during the mid-1950s when many were flirting with the ideas that gave rise to the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Korean War.

Socialization into *cursillo* normally takes place during its "weekend" that lasts from Thursday night to Sunday evening, and for reasons of modesty they are divided into weekends for men and weekends for women. The meetings are intense and sequestered opportunities for personal reflections and inspirational talks called *rollos* that are presented by staff members from the clergy and from the laity. Each full day is oriented to a particular leg of the tripod: Friday to Piety, Saturday to Study, and Sunday to Action.

Most of the attendees, or candidates, are already Christians and members of the host denominations, wanting to renew or revitalize their beliefs. Conversions are rare, but they, dramatic personal events, as well as pranks, take place. Worship services and scheduled opportunities for reverence and contemplation are frequent, as are times for small group

discussions about spiritual journeys, obstacles to faith, and personal epiphanies.

The entire weekend prepares the candidates for the "Fourth Day" of cursillo as re-entry into the world of opinions and habits that oppose religious principles— the secular vs. the sacred. Cursillo's contents are similar to the themes in Benedict's *Rule*, in Hooker's *Laws*, and in Raven's *SRF*, but differ in one remarkable way: They are co-equal in value but not co-temporal in development, as is explained next.

Mead (1934) gave us the *preparatory*, *play*, and *game* stages of cognitive development that Denzin (1986) modified as the *preparatory*, *interactional*, and *participatory* stages of involvement in recovery groups. R.G. O'Sullivan (1988) used Denzin's orientations and stages of development as they apply to cursillo's thematic weekend. Friday is the *preparatory* or infra-structural day, with its promises of things to come. Saturday is the *interactional* day because the candidates begin to feel some unity and lose inhibitions. Sunday is the *participatory* day because the candidates are given specific suggestions about using their learned skills in home parishes and neighborhoods, doing social good for others. R.G. O'Sullivan's first analysis, then, can be adjusted to fit the context of this article: Just as military basic training, or boot camp, prepares recruits in successive stages of development for potential combat roles, cursillo prepares candidates in successive stages of development for culture wars against religion, but there is a major difference between them— military recruits are resocialized into new be-

havior habits, whereas most cursillo candidates reaffirm existing ones. It is now time to look at the legs of the cursillo tripod and the weekend's developmental stages.

### **Piety**

There are several ways to define this sentiment, including a developed or a developing relationship with God; humility, in the Benedictine sense; and an A-B conversation, or a dyadic dialogue, with God. Using an idea expressed earlier it can be typified as a balanced reciprocity of redemption for obedience to God; and, going one step forward, or backward, we can borrow from Rousseau's 1762/1947 civil social contract to call piety a *theological* contract or covenant with God.

The initial *rollo* of the first day is called "Ideal," and it does not specify any particular one, but it invites candidates to reflect upon priorities in their lives. As R.G. O'Sullivan (1988) says, the theme of the first day is partially destructive— reminding the candidates that many of the "ologies" in their lives are only academic sciences, and the various "isms" in their lives are economic and political realities to which they can adapt. Neither those "ologies" nor "isms" have, as adapted from Einstein (1939), *super-institutional value* worthy of religious-like adoration. The candidates are encouraged to evaluate their orientations toward the sacred, the secular, cultural materialism, and our meritocracies, but such self-reflections can be unsettling as many find comfort in their daily beliefs, goals, and achievements. As a point of irony, R.G. O'Sullivan recalls that he was a cursillo candidate in 1982 just three days

after defending his doctoral dissertation. Salvific hope and promise are offered, however, toward the end of the day in the rollo entitled "Piety" as a reminder that good things come to faithful witnesses.

### **Study**

Study is dedicated investigations into relevant literature. The rollo on this subject offers specific methods and resources that are compliant with the host denomination, making them beyond the scope of this article. Study also involves emotional and participatory appeals. The rollo called *Sacraments*, for example, itemizes rites of incorporation and membership, religious vocations, atonement, bonds of commitment and attachment, and movement through the lifecycle. Personal solace is possible during the recitations of the creeds as well as in public and private confessions. Saturday is also a time when the weekends' leaders hope that the candidates lose their suspicions and shyness, develop a sense of belonging with fellow *seekers* (Lofland 1966), gel as a group, and start to have fun. The day concludes with a special candlelight service showing the candidates that they are supported by their sponsors and fellow members of cursillo.

### **Action**

This day provides several guidelines for committed involvement. It is important for the candidates to be active members in their home congregations and denominations, but they should also become involved in local residential communities. Evangelism is a calling of all religions if they are to

grow and be viable, but the word is reviled and its "evangelicals" are de-based as being religious fanatics by those who fuel culture wars against them. Nonetheless, members of the cursillo community, or any religious group, are asked to engage in community involvement helping others, serving as role models and inspirational leaders for those who are helped. The allures drawing people away from religions are always present and real, but culture wars against religion can be fought using such strategies and tactics as are taught in cursillo, especially in the rollo entitled "Christian Community in Action" where specific suggestions for outreach are also outside the range of this article.

The combined offerings from Benedict, Hooker, Raven, and cursillo contain similar and redundant defense weapons that religious believers can use in respond to culture wars against them. The twelve recommendations can be summarized by borrowing two expressions: The first is attributed to Oliver Cromwell during a campaign against the Irish when he said "Put your trust in God, but mind to keep your powder dry;" and the second is assigned to Lt. Col. William Barrett Travis, commandant at the battle of the Alamo, when he said "Never retreat ...just reload." Both of these leaders encouraged soldiers in their ranks to stay true to their convictions and be prepared to defend themselves.

## **A SOCIOLOGICAL INSPECTION**

This article is published in a sociology journal, not a publication in religious history or theology. As such, ele-



ments of Hirschi's social bond theory and juvenile delinquency are scattered throughout these pages, so it is now time to fully integrate them with responses to culture wars against religion.

Those sets of recommendations contain overlapping and repetitive themes allowing them to be collapsed into four grounded categories: Personal attachment to groups of like-minded disciples, commitment to religious ideals, involvement in community outreach, and a deep-seated belief that religious ideals are just. These are the same categories and meanings that Hirschi uses in discussions of social bonds and juvenile delinquency.

The premise of his work is that differential degrees of social integration have some impact on the juvenile conformist-delinquent dichotomy where bonding has four elements. *Attachment* is alignment with compatible others, and *commitment* is "stick-to-it-iveness" to social and cultural expectations. *Involvement* is engaging in wholesome and constructive community activities, and *belief* is internalizing external traditions—owning them.

It may be simplistic to state that juvenile delinquency occurs with the absence of moral guidons, just as it may be facile to state that juvenile delinquency is avoided when moral nets are present. Nonetheless, there is something intriguing about the absence-presence thesis when stated as propositions about inverse correlations: The lower the conforming social bonds the higher the likelihood of juvenile delinquency, and the higher the conforming bonds the lower the

likelihood of juvenile delinquency, that F.D. O'Sullivan (1928), R.G. O'Sullivan's 2009 revival of F.D. O'Sullivan's work, and Stark (1987) all substantiated, just as Messner and Fagan each argued that religious integration and social cohesion are entwined yet endangered by culture wars against them.

Taking these terms and applying them to culture wars against religion there are inverse correlations that are nearly identical to Hirschi's. The lower the attachment to religious traditions and religious communities, the lower the commitment to sacred moral nets, the lower the level of outreach as involvement in local areas or to those in need, and the lower the internalization of moral ideals the higher the impact of the secular over the sacred. The opposing proposition states that higher the religious attachment to likeminded others, the higher the commitment to sacred moral nets, the higher the outreach as involvement in local areas or to those in need, and the higher the internalization of moral ideals the lower the impact of the secular over the sacred. In summary then, the social bonds identified by Hirschi can be heavily laced with the combined contributions of St. Benedict, Richard Hooker, C.E. Raven, and cursillo communities for all times and in all places, as illustrated in the next section.

## A WELDMENT OF THEORY AND ILLUSTRATION

People of faith often face many overt and covert attacks against their lives in religious dignity. Sometimes

specific areas of tension can be identified as was accomplished here earlier. At other times, though, the conflicts between the sacred and the secular elude specificity, are multiple, and can be environmental rather than campaigns.

The author recently saw such interactive distractions during his visit to the Anglican congregation in the "Pueblcito" neighborhood of Chicago. He had already witnessed its members' religious dedication and he wanted to visit them, so he accompanied the diocesan bishop on a trip to the congregation. The bishop's purpose was to administer the sacramental rites of Confirmation and the Eucharist, and first communion, to about forty-five people, mostly teenagers, upon completing their catechism.

The neighborhood is comprised almost entirely of Hispanics from Mexico and from countries in the Caribbean and Central America. Many in the neighborhood are undocumented residents so a census is fluid, as is the size and the composition of the church's congregation. The local economy is comprised of specialty stores, currency exchanges, laundromats, and store-front lawyers, and the unadorned church sits in the middle of them. Seating capacity is limited so it was standing room only for the two services' confirmands and their families, other congregants, and guests, totaling 425-450 people.

The bishop's sermon to the two groups was offered in Spanish as it addressed the topic of culture war as it addressed them, but only in aggregate form, as well as parts of Hirschi's social bond theory, but also outside

academic verbiage. The bishop's sermon praised them for the achievement of completing a year of dedicated religious study and instruction, urging them to continue their studies. He praised them for their commitments to the congregation and involvement in community affairs, asking them to be living testimonies for others to witness. Finally, he praised them for dedication to their religion's traditions and beliefs that have many vexations.

This congregation is an Anglican one, so another sacramental denomination that is more commonly associated with Hispanics debases the group and its beliefs. The area is multi-cultural with different practices, but intercultural conflicts are set aside when the congregants enter their church. Local and federal police officers prowl for non-legal residents, but members of the congregation can receive legal assistance as they seek residential legitimacy and social acceptance. There are opportunities to engage in subterranean economies but many of them are shunned as the congregants try to avoid legal problems or violate their religious commandments. Finally, there is a contingent within the national hierarchy of the church's denomination that looks disparagingly at the composition and the complexion of the congregation and at the social activism of its priest, but to little avail. It is the fastest-growing congregation in an equally-enlarging diocese as each faces the culture wars of moral, theological, administrative, and legal challenges that could defile their faith.

## CONCLUSION

The U.S. has undergone many battles "on" things. We have seen the "War On Poverty," the "War On Drugs," the "War On Illiteracy," the "War On Terror, and we will likely see more. Some distinguishing features of such efforts include official and schooled expertise, funded agencies, and strategic campaigns to eliminate their harmful effects.

Wars on things have been replaced with culture wars *against* things, such as perceived culture wars *against* religion, *against* women, *against* fossil fuels, and *against* capitalism where goals seem intentionally divisive rather than cohesive, corroding fundamental beliefs, morals, and traditions by replacing them with new and expedient ones. There is, however, a latent backlash difference between culture wars against religion compared to other targets of derision. Many religious groups have amassed and reloaded well-stocked arsenals of cognitive, affective, and behavior response weapons, including inspirational hymns that were written about culture wars against them to use as defensive devices that other targets of scorn may not have as armaments.

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