

# JOSIAH ROYCE AND 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY<sup>i</sup>

Gregory Holmes Singleton  
Professor of History Emeritus  
Northeastern Illinois University

When Josiah Royce died in 1916 he was in the most elite constellation of American Philosophers. Within a decade his reputation began its descent into obscurity. In 1985 John Clendenning published his excellent study of *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*.<sup>ii</sup> While it did stimulate some renewed interest, the work of this imaginative and innovative philosopher remained largely ignored. For example, Royce is relegated to a single passing reference from a quote by W. E. B. Du Bois in Cornel West's 1989 *The American Evasion of Philosophy*.<sup>iii</sup>

More recently we have witnessed increasing interest in Josiah Royce. Some contemporary scholars in philosophy and related disciplines are finding the voice of this proper Victorian American thinker remarkably prescient and prophetic in addressing many of our most pressing twenty-first century concerns. It is in that mode that I offer these brief exploratory musings of a historian of American religion as a modest addendum to Jacquelyn Ann Kegley's *Royce in Focus*, Randall Auxier's *Time, Will, and Purpose*, and the collection of essays gathered in *Josiah Royce for the Twenty-First Century*.<sup>iv</sup>

There are many quotes from Royce's works that resonate with present day theological explorations, but the two that strike me most immediately are these:

. . . God wins perfection through expressing himself in a finite life and triumphing over and through its very finitude. . . our sorrow is God's sorrow. God means to express himself by winning us through the very triumph over evil to unity with the perfect life; and therefore our fulfillment, like our existence, is due to the sorrow and the triumph of God himself. These two theses express, I believe, what is vital in Christianity.<sup>v</sup>

And

We can look forward then, to no final form, either of Christianity or any other special religion. But we can look forward to a time when the work and the insight of religion can become as progressive as is now the work of science.<sup>vi</sup>

As I began work on this essay I ran these quotes (without identifying the sources) past 53 friends and colleagues who are either theologians or specialists in

the recent history of Christianity. To my great delight I received 47 responses, all but one of which validated two hunches I had before I began writing this essay:

- 1) Contemporary theologians and historians of Christianity are often unfamiliar with Royce's work (although most can, for better or worse, tell you that he was an idealist and a friendly enemy of William James)
- 2) Some of Royce's writings anticipated with great precision the concerns of a significant number of Christian theologians in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Responses to the first quote (from "What is Vital in Christianity?" - 1909) offered guesses that it was written anywhere between the 1960s and the present. Several opined that the author was clearly influenced by the current renewed interest in *theosis*, a doctrine of atonement that sees salvation as a healing restoration and completion of all creation in marked contrast to the "Jesus died for your sins" individual salvation doctrine of substitutionary atonement. For the past three decades, this ancient eastern alternative to conservative Evangelicalism has been explored by Tuomo Mannermaa and his colleagues at the University of Helsinki.<sup>vii</sup> Still others identified this as a recent re-statement of process theology.

Respondents to the second quote (the last paragraph in *The Problem of Christianity* – 1913) hailed these two sentences as a prophetic call to an expansive ecumenism that extends not only beyond Christianity, but beyond religion in general and invites us to explore commonalities with both non-theistic and skeptical perspectives. A half dozen asked for the author's e-mail address.

To amplify a bit on my second hunch—and to confess that it was more than just a hunch—let me briefly summarize my research on recent ecclesiology (that branch of theology concerned with both the doctrine and empirical history of the church). Starting with Peter Berger's slim but provocative *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* in 1961 and Hans Küng's hefty 1967 tome, *Die Kirche*, the emphasis for ecclesologists has shifted from institutional structures to sustained relationships in communities, and from the church as exclusively an extension of Christology (with an emphasis on the body of Christ) to a more nuanced perspective that also conceives of the church as a community created by the Spirit.<sup>viii</sup> Both "community" and the "Spirit" are central to Royce's characterization of the church in *The Problem of Christianity*. Community, of course, is scattered through all of the 405 pages, whereas a specific treatment of the Holy Spirit is confined to Section IV of Chapter IX, "The Community and the Time-Process." Royce asserts, ". . . the central problem in our present attempt at a theology must be that problem which traditional Christian theology has so strongly neglected—the problem of what the religious consciousness has called the Holy Spirit." In that brief section Royce makes the huge claim that the phrase from the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints," is ". . . in many respects, the really distinctive and therefore the capital

article of the Christian creed. . .” He further argues that the Fourth Gospel “. . . identifies the *Logos* with the spirit of the community.”<sup>xix</sup>

This is particularly important for the work of more recent ecclesialogists such as Ephraim Radner and Diana Butler Bass, both of whom use the phrase “End of the church” in the titles of their most popular books.<sup>x</sup> Radner claims that Christian community can transcend the end of the church from which the Holy Spirit has withdrawn while Bass sees the community as a network of relationships constituting the real creature of the Spirit rather than the church as an institutional structure. Thus, I would suggest that these two polar opposite approaches can be more effectively considered by engaging Royce in the conversation.

There are many nooks and crannies where Royce could help shed more light on recent ecclesiological concerns and I will explore them in the larger project of which this essay is a part,<sup>xi</sup> but for the present let me simply observe that all but the most traditionalist contemporary ecclesialogists are struggling to find a way of thinking beyond the institutional church. Ironically their major obstacle is a rootedness in a blend of institutional framework and uniform doctrine that was unknown for the first three centuries of Christianity and then imposed in the fourth century by the imperial state in incremental steps through decrees by the Emperors Constantine and Theodosius.<sup>xii</sup> That institutional assumption still dominates Christian thought, the past three centuries of official dis-establishment and secularization notwithstanding. As a result, contemporary theologians often look for ways to fix an institutional culture when the major problem may simply be that it is an institutional culture and thus it inhibits the realization of the relational community envisioned in the Christian scriptures. For those familiar with the work of Royce’s contemporary Ferdinand Tönnies, think of the communal and relational church as *gemeinschaft* and institutional and dogmatic church as *gesellschaft*. This is consistent with Royce’s perspective in *The Problem of Christianity*.<sup>xiii</sup>

The great contribution Royce can make to these ongoing 21<sup>st</sup>-century conversations—these communities of interpretation—is grounded in his conceptualization of Christianity as a generator of communities as well as being formed and constantly reformed by the interpretive conversations of these communities. He either never faced the conceptual conundrum experienced by so many of our contemporary theologians or he faced it early enough in his life that he thought his way through and beyond the institutional quagmire and thus it never found its way into his writings.

Ironically, that which explains why Royce anticipated—and indeed thought beyond—many current ecclesiological concerns that arose during the century following his death, also explains why Royce was relatively ignored by theologians and ecclesiastical bureaucrats in his own time. At this point I’ll yield to my professional bias and invoke “historical context” as the proper vehicle for

developing an explanation for this situation, with the caveat that this particular historical context is labyrinthine and I will unavoidably smooth over some complex twists and turns in this brief exploration.

Royce was born in the midst of and lived his entire life during a long period of economic, social, and cultural change in American life.<sup>xiv</sup> The changes, including (but certainly not limited to) modernization, industrialization, secularization, geographic expansion, and rapid population movement had a profound and radical impact on community and religion, arguably Royce's two major obsessions. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century the experience of community was constantly reconfigured by a rapidly changing set of phenomena—even for those who were not part of the constantly moving population.<sup>xv</sup> From the perspective of most social theorists and commentators, both community and religion (at least as far as they have traditionally been conceived over the past few centuries) have been on the wane. Indeed, the status of religion in the United States has been a matter of ongoing multiple re-evaluations in both political and religious discourse (and more than a little conflict) since the late eighteenth century.

While there are still echoes of earlier conceptualizations of community and religion (think of Lynchburg, VA, and Salt Lake City, Utah), ours is a remarkably different time than the era in which *The Problem of Christianity* first appeared. Although the United States was founded as a nation without an established religion, several factors combined to create—or more precisely to perpetuate—a quasi-established religion defined by a handful of denominations. Some British colonies in North America were founded as missionary sites of the established Church of England (such as Virginia, North and South Carolina, New York). Others were founded in part in reaction to the established Church of England (Plymouth, Pennsylvania). And yet others created newly established churches based on a Calvinist reformation of the Church of England (Massachusetts Bay and the other New England colonies except Rhode Island). After the separation from England, most of the former colonies (now states united in limited ways by the Articles of Confederation) retained their established churches.<sup>xvi</sup> The reorganization of the United States was accomplished in 1789 with the ratification of the Constitution. In 1791 the First Amendment to that document began with a clause with which we are all familiar: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. . .” This, of course, does not prevent any state from either perpetuating an existing established religion or creating a new one.<sup>xvii</sup> That did not become a matter of constitutional mandate until the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868, in part making the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution binding on state and local governments as well (although all states with established religions had severed those ties by the 1840s through legislative action).<sup>xviii</sup>

The idea of an established religion might have eventually died (or at least atrophied) in the United States if it had not been for a strong tendency toward rationalistic deism among the cultural and political elites of the new nation. The first six presidents of the United States had varying degrees of deist leanings. This was noted and commented upon with great frequency by members of the Trinitarian denominations stemming from the British Reformation (Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists—and later the Disciples of Christ).<sup>xix</sup> In reaction to the deist elites, and in response to the decision of legislatures in an ever increasing number of states to disestablish churches, and stimulated after 1820 by the growing number of non-protestants entering the United States through escalating rates of immigration, these Anglo-American protestants formed a host of inter-denominational voluntary associations which either provided services (such as the American Sunday School Union and American Home Mission Society) or advocated reforms such as temperance and abolition. The rhetoric in the publications of these organizations made it clear that one of the intended outcomes of their efforts was to re-establish and maintain cultural and political hegemony in the midst of perceived challenges and to restore a sense of communal stability for Anglo-Americans in the face of profound changes.<sup>xx</sup>

The efforts of the voluntary associations were augmented by inter-denominational revival movements (limited, of course, to those churches derived from the British Reformation). Unlike the later revival movements of Dwight Moody and Billy Graham, which emphasized a message of individual salvation to an audience assumed to be in the thrall of alienation and anomie, the early and mid-nineteenth-century revivalists such as Charles Grandison Finney stressed the need for revitalization of the Christian community.<sup>xxi</sup>

Both advocates and critics of the Evangelical United Front (as this combination of revivalism and voluntary associations came to be called by the 1840s) agreed that hegemony had been achieved.<sup>xxii</sup> Twentieth century historians (both evangelicals and secularists) have concurred. Symbolically, this quasi-established status reached its apex in 1893 when Congress granted a charter for the (then yet to be built) Episcopal Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul as the “National Cathedral” to be available for religious events at the request of the President of the United States and the Mayor of Washington, D.C. This took place two decades prior to the publication of *The Problem of Christianity*, but the privileged-all-but-established status of this cluster of denominations persisted well into the 1960s.<sup>xxiii</sup> Thus, during Royce’s entire life this was the status of religious life in the United States. Clearly, the perspective he presented in *The Problem of Christianity* called for radical re-conceptualizing of some basic tenets that went against the dominant tide.

Royce's institutional Christian contemporaries were constantly rethinking the nature of their faith and of the structures of their churches. The challenges of rapid and profound social and intellectual change yielded plenty of movements of both conservative fundamentalists and progressive modernists forging new ways of being church. However, all of these involved either continuing, or recovered, or reconditioned, or reformed institutional structures.<sup>xxiv</sup> In response to this widespread reality, Swami Vivekananda at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago told a group of reporters that in America he faced the greatest temptation of his life. When asked "Who is she?" the worldly mystic laughed and answered, "It isn't a woman. It's organization."<sup>xxv</sup> Organization, of course, had seduced Christians as far back as the 4<sup>th</sup> century when the Roman Empire essentially incorporated the church into the complex hierarchical structure of the state. Royce lived at a time when Anglo-Christians in the United States tacitly (and sometimes not so tacitly) still retained that vision in principle, and even those outside the various Christian British reformation traditions acknowledged (even if grudgingly) that reality.

Royce's *The Problem of Christianity*, however, presents a perspective on the nature of the church that is quite different from the historical experience of the vast majority of British Reformation origin Protestants at the time that book was written. There are no bishops, priests or deacons in Royce's conception of the church. There are no moderators, presidents, or even clergy. There is the *supra persona* of the church itself, a community of interpretation engaged in perpetual conversation through which insights on faith are progressively realized, and thus remarkably fluid. In this reader's eyes, at least, the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" would have little or no meaning in Royce's ecclesiology. Perhaps there would be an "orthopraxis," which would involve a heavy dose of *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. And there would likely be an "orthoprocess" in the open-ended and progressive character of the ecclesial communities of interpretation informed by the discussions of science and religion in Book II of *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*.

Clearly, the various institution-laden American Christian denominations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would have difficulty finding any utility in such an ecclesiology. Just as clearly, the religious establishment had no conceptual foundation for seriously considering such radical re-thinking by someone who opted to explore the faith outside the limits of formal membership in any church.

This overview is necessary historical context, but does not really answer the crucial question: How did Royce come to occupy such a marginal place in relation to the religious phenomena so clearly important to him? John Clendenning, Robert Hine, and Jacquelyn Kegley have all properly called attention to Royce's early life

on the western frontier.<sup>xxvi</sup> The mid-nineteenth-century California experience is indeed important, but we need to be more specific. It is the Northern California experience and even more precisely the mining frontier experience. Unlike Southern California where the Evangelical United Front was transplanted with remarkable success (particularly in the Los Angeles area), in Northern California the denominations stemming from the British Reformation were marginal, even to the life of most Anglo-Americans.<sup>xxvii</sup> This was particularly the case in mining communities such as Grass Valley (where Royce was born and spent his early childhood) and the Bay Area (where his family moved a bit later and where Royce received his undergraduate education). Given his formative years in such a social and cultural environment, Royce's inclination to follow his religious sentiments in non-institutional, experiential, and experimental paths seems not unusual. In addition, there was a quite conscious professional decision for him to avoid formal religious affiliation. In 1903 Royce published an article in which he opined that anyone engaged in the philosophical enterprise “. . . should consciously avoid all connection with any sect or form of the visible church.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

Royce's stance outside the institutional church, then, is no idiosyncratic quirk. It is based on two foundations: his early formation in an environment where religion was simply experienced more frequently than institutionalized and his personal and professional commitment to loyalty and relationships as the mediating and harmonizing entities that foster both the self of the individual and the shared self of the community.

Institutional Christians a century ago were so mired in the Constantinian / Theodosian wedding of church and society, of dogma and culture that Royce's philosophical agenda seemed incomprehensible at best and heretical at worse. Today the institutional model has sixteen centuries of tradition behind it and thus still shapes our perception of the nature of church, but there are other cultural factors that call the institutional imperative into question. A wide variety of cultural commentators, psychologists, and sociologists over the past few decades have noted strange blends of alienation and *anomie*, idealized individualism and desperate isolation, decline of community and yearning for community in various populations in the United States.<sup>xxix</sup> Thus contemporary ecclesiologists and church leaders are clearly looking through the bars of institutions and longing to break free of them. That claim is based on my reading of works in ecclesiology from a wide variety of traditions over the past five and a half decades, but the most compelling reference is the quotations and paraphrases of a single passage I have encountered in a significant number of books in this body of literature. It is from Peter Berger's 1961 *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies*:

Let there be no uncertainty as to what we are saying: we are suggesting that Christians may choose not to become members of local congregations, not to identify themselves with a denomination, not to join the weekly traffic jam of the religious rush hour on Sunday morning. We are suggesting that these decisions might be directly grounded in the Christian faith as it seeks to relate itself to our situation. And we are contending that such decisions might be the legitimate exercise of a Christian vocation in our time.<sup>xxx</sup>

Engaging Royce would be a useful and likely fruitful undertaking for today's ecclesiologists, but in order to use his insights most effectively they would have to avoid the temptation to adapt his thought as buttresses to shore up faltering institutions. That last paragraph of *The Problem of Christianity* quoted earlier in this essay is an indication that it will take not only thinking outside the box, but also thinking beyond the confines of Christianity and religion itself. Royce invites us into communities of interpretation that will follow wherever the conversation leads. To mandate an outcome (which I would argue the church has done more often than not since the fourth century of the Common Era) denies the power of the Spirit and the dynamic of the community. In a time when Christianity, all other religions, and indeed all cosmologies of any sort must adapt to the reality of an ever increasing and mutating pluralism, Royce can help us recover the lessons to be learned from the more fluid, flexible and variable Christianity that existed in those creative first three centuries—a time when religion was remarkably similar to the pragmatic fluidity of modern science both in Royce's time and our own. It is instructive that Royce ended *The Problem of Christianity* with a hope that “. . . the work and the insight of religion can become as progressive as is now the work of science.” Thus, Royce's vision invites serious consideration beyond the realm of ecumenical and interfaith dialogues and beyond the limits of disciplinary boundaries. But that is the subject for a broader and deeper exploration of which the musings over these few pages have been but a small part.

---

<sup>i</sup> An earlier version of this essay was presented at the American Philosophical Association (Central Division), St. Louis, MO, February 20, 2015 as “Josiah Royce's *The Problem of Christianity* as a Blueprint for a De-Institutionalized Church,” St. Louis, February 20, 2015. I would like to thank Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley (California State University, Bakersfield), Randall E. Auxier (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), and Tanya Francis Jeffcoat (University of Central Arkansas) for useful and insightful comments.

<sup>ii</sup> John Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

<sup>iii</sup> Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 139.

<sup>iv</sup> Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley, *Josiah Royce in Focus* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008); Randall E. Auxier, *Time, Will, and Purpose: Living Ideas from the Philosophy of Josiah Royce* (Chicago: Open Court, 2013);



---

*Josiah Royce for the Twenty-First Century: Historical, Ethical, and Religious Interpretations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

<sup>v</sup> Josiah Royce, “What is Vital in Christianity,” *Harvard Theological Review* 2 (1909) 410.

<sup>vi</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2001; Foreword by Frank M. Oppenheim, S.J.; text and Introduction by John E. Smith published by The University of Chicago Press in 1968; originally published by The MacMillan Company in 1913), p. 405. For reasons that will become obvious, I will concentrate primarily on this work that begs for more serious consideration by ecclesiologists, but many of Royce’s other publications are also relevant; including (but not limited to): *The Hope of the Great Community* (New York: Macmillan, 1916); *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: Macmillan, 1908); *The Religious Aspects of Philosophy: A Critique of the Bases of Conduct and Faith* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1885); *The Sources of Religious Insight* (New York: Scribner’s, 1912); “What is Vital in Christianity,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1909; and *The World and the Individual* 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1899 / 1901).

<sup>vii</sup> On *theosis*, see Mannermaa and his colleagues, see R. Saarinen, *Faith and Holiness: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue, 1959-1994* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); Carl E. Braaten and Robert Jenson (eds), *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005); Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther’s View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); and Tuomo Mannermaa, *Two Kinds of Love: Martin Luther’s Religious World*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010). While he studied with and became part of a Lutheran theological faculty at Helsinki, Kärkkäinen is Pentecostal and is now on the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary, an evangelical institution. His book was published by a prestigious Roman Catholic Benedictine Press. This movement has become truly ecumenical.

<sup>viii</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies: Christian Commitment and the Religious Establishment in America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1961); Hans Küng, *Die Kirche* (Freiberg, Basle, Vienna: Verlag Herder, 1967; English translation published as *The Church* by Burns and Oates, 1967. In the English edition, Küng’s exploration of the implications of the Holy Spirit for ecclesiology can be found in Section C, II, pp. 201-266.

<sup>ix</sup> Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, pp. 233-25.

<sup>x</sup> Ephraim Radner, *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Dianna Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of the Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York: HarperOne, 2012).

<sup>xi</sup> The wide range of specific ecclesiological concerns to emerge in recent years, all of which could be usefully enhanced by a consideration of Royce’s insights (and will be explored in detail in the book in progress) is indicated by this small sampling of representative titles: Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2000); Leonard Boff, *Ecclesiology: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986); Carl E. Bratten, *Mother Church: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998); Guillermo Cook, *The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American Basic Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985); Elisabeth Schüster Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: Critical Feminists Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1933); Hiroyasu Iwabuchi, “An Evaluation of the Non-Church Movement in Japan: Its Distinctives, Strategy and Significance Today” D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1976; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, rev. ed., 2007); Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume Two, The Works of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox, 1933); Phyllis Tickle, *How the Church is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012); Miroslav Volf, *The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998. NB: Some older titles are included

because their arguments are kept current through citation and engagement in in more recent publications. A useful and only slightly outdated overview of this literature is Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002). For a proposed agenda for ongoing ecclesiological discussions see Gregory Holmes Singleton “Discerning Our Unity, Embracing Our Diversity,” *The Progressive Catholic Review* (Vol. 1, No. 2 Pentecost 2010)

<http://www.csfeccc.org/sfvhouse/sfvhpdf/v1n26.pdf>

and Gregory Holmes Singleton, “A Tale of Two Councils and their Significance for the Ecumenical Catholic Communion,” *The Progressive Catholic Review* (Vol. 1, No. 2 Pentecost 2010)

<http://www.csfeccc.org/sfvhouse/sfvhpdf/v1n27.pdf>.

<sup>xii</sup> For the first three centuries, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), Chapters 1-13; Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths we Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); L. Michael White, *From Jesus to Christianity: How Four Generations of Visionaries & Storytellers Created the New Testament and Christian Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2004); Birger A. Pearson, *The Emergence of the Christian Religion: Essays on Early Christianity* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), especially Chapter 9 “Unity and Diversity in the Early Church as a Social Phenomenon”; Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012); Richard P. McBrien *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), Part II Ecclesiology in the New Testament; Francis A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001); and John D. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001). Zizioulas speaks of a communal unity in local churches, each guided by (not governed by) a bishop and a spiritual unity between communal local church through the collegial relationship of bishops but with a fair amount of tolerance for differing interpretations and expressions of faith. Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How it Died* (New York: HarperOne, 2008) surveys the perpetuation of the more tolerant pluralism of the first three centuries in those Christian communities beyond the authority of the Empire and the Imperial Church.

For the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and the development of a hierarchical structure following the pattern of the imperial state, see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine; Volume 1 The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971); Philip Jenkins, *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years* (New York: HarperOne, 2010); James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews; A History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), Part III; McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism*, Part III Ecclesiology from the Postbiblical Period to the Mid-Nineteenth Century sections 2.1 – 2.8; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, Chapters 14-24.

<sup>xiii</sup> While I have found no evidence to conclusively link Josiah Royce and Ferdinand Tönnies directly, they both were graduate students in Germany about the same time and both were manic about conceptualizations of community. Tönnies’ famous formulation of the dichotomy of community and institution (or organization) in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag, 1887) [which was translated by Charles Price Loomis as *Community and Society* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957)] was almost certain to have come to Royce’s attention. Furthermore, both were contributors from time to time to the *International Journal of Ethics*.

<sup>xiv</sup> The following are useful and accessible overviews of these significant changes: Richard D. Brown, “Modernization: A Victorian Climax,” *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976); Richard D. Brown, *Modernization: The Transformation of American Life 1600-1865* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Robert Wiebe, *The Segmented Society: An Introduction to the Meaning of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History*

(New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Michael Kammen, *The Contrapuntal Civilization: Essays Toward a New Understanding of the American Experience* (New York: Crowell, 1971); T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Simon Kuznets and Dorothy Thomas, *Population Redistribution and Economic Growth: United States 1870-1950; Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society vols. 45, 51 and 61* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1957-1964); Douglass C. North, *Growth and Welfare in the American Past: A New Economic History* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966); Robert Higgs, *The Transformation of the American Economy, 1865-1914: An Essay in Economic Interpretation* (New York: Wylie, 1971); Paul A. Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971); James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1991). Christopher Shannon, *Tradition, The Individual, and Culture in Modern American Social Thought* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2006).

<sup>xv</sup> The shifting population along with rapid social and economic change can best be understood through studies of particular localities. For examples see Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations on Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1 (Fall 1970), 29-41; Richard T. Downey, "The Oneida Experiment and Social Change," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1953); Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Merle Curti, *et al.*, *The Making of An American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (Paolo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959) Allen G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Corn Belt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Robert Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Athenaeum, 1968); Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); Gregory Holmes Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles 1850-1930* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005, revised edition); John S. Gilkeson, Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

<sup>xvi</sup> The best analysis of Colonial and Early National established churches is Thomas J. Curry, *The First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For the complex histories of disestablishment, see Steven K. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>xvii</sup> The best guide to the labyrinthine history of the drafting, adoption, and judicial review of the "establishment clause" of the First Amendment is Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment* (New York: Macmillan, 1986).

<sup>xviii</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 165-68, 171, 217.

<sup>xix</sup> For a concise analysis, see John. G. West, Jr., *The Politics of Revelation and Reason: Religion & Civil Life in the New Nation* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1996)

<sup>xx</sup> The voluntary associations and their historical context are the subject of some excellent analysis in Winthrop Hudson, *The Great Tradition of the American Churches* (New York: Harper, 1953); Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper, 1963); John R. Bodo, *The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954); Clyde S Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers: Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1960); and W. David Lewis, "The Reformer as Conservative: Protestant Counter-Subversion in the Early Republic" *The Development of an American Culture*, eds. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970). The argument for cultural hegemony is made in Gregory Holmes Singleton, "Mere

---

Middle-Class Institutions': Urban Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Social History* (Summer 1973) and Gregory Holmes Singleton "Protestant Voluntary Associations and the Making of Victorian America," in *Victorian America*, ed. Daniel Howe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

<sup>xxi</sup> The best single volume on this subject is William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reforms: An Essay on Religion and Social Change, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). The best insight into the early nineteenth-century revival movements are the essays and lectures written and/or delivered in the late 1830s and throughout the 1840s by Charles G. Finney, the most prominent revivalist of that time. Over the past century and a half these have been collected and published a number of times. I highly recommend *Lectures on Revivals of Religion: Revised Edition* (Amazon Digital Services, Inc., 2011) as the most accurate and complete.

<sup>xxii</sup> Charles Foster, *An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960); Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). The notion of a Christian American led to some grandiose claims for American culture, one of which is intelligently assessed in Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). For examples of mid-nineteenth-century criticisms of the Evangelical United Front, see Charles Colton, *Protestant Jesuitism: By a Protestant* (New York: Putnam, 1836) and *The Religious Aspects of the Age, with a Glance at the Church of the Present and the Church of the Future, Being Addresses Delivered at the Anniversary of the Young Men's Christian Union of New York on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Days of May, 1858* (New York: Privately Printed, 1858). The Young Men's Christian Union was a progressive alternative to the Young Men's Christian Association.

<sup>xxiii</sup> See E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

<sup>xxiv</sup> For a detailed overview, see Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion: Volume 1, The Irony of It All 1893-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Also see Paul T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880 – 1940* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) and Ben Primer, *Protestants and American Business Methods* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979).

<sup>xxv</sup> As quoted in Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*, pp. 217-218.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce*, Chs. I and II; Robert V. Hine, *Josiah Royce: From Grass Valley to Harvard* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), Chs. 1-5; Kegley, *Josiah Royce in Focus*, Ch. 1. Also see Gregory Holmes Singleton, "Scholars of Religion in/of California: Observations Toward a Personal History of California Divines" a paper presented at the Symposium on Religion in California, University of California, Berkeley April 25, 2014  
[https://www.academia.edu/9627189/SCHOLARS\\_OF\\_RELIGION\\_in\\_of\\_CALIFORNIA](https://www.academia.edu/9627189/SCHOLARS_OF_RELIGION_in_of_CALIFORNIA)

<sup>xxvii</sup> See Laurie F. Maffly-Kip, *Religion and Society in Frontier California* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Michael E. Engh, S.J., *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels*, Chs. 2-5; and Sandra Sizer Frankiel, *California's Spiritual Frontiers: Religious Alternatives in Anglo-Protestantism, 1850-1910* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1988). A highly useful sociological analysis is T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

<sup>xxviii</sup> Josiah Royce, "What Should Be the Attitude of the Teachers of Philosophy towards Religion?" *International Journal of Ethics* 13, No. 3 (April 1903), 285.

<sup>xxix</sup> Here is a small representative sampling of that literature: Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978); Robert N. Bellah, *et al.*, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of

---

California Press, 1985); John P. Hewitt, *Dilemmas of the American Self* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Barry Alan Shawn, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), especially pp. 320 ff.; Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2013); Hazel Rose Markus and Alana Conner, *CLASH! 8 Cultural Conflicts that Make Us Who We Are* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2013); Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010); David G. Myers, *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); Elias Aboujaude, *Virtually You: The Dangerous Powers of the E-Personality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Matthew B. Crawford, *The World Beyond Your Head: On Becoming and Individual in an Age of Distraction* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015). There were, of course a few prophetic voices with similar messages a few decades before the mid twentieth century, including many of the poems of T. S. Eliot and Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper: A Study and a Confession* (New York: Harper & Row, 1929).

<sup>xxx</sup> Peter Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies*, p, 177.