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Geographies of Religions and Belief Systems

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RELIGIOUS ADHERENCE AND DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES:
A GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Religious diversity in the United States has always set it apart from other countries, but even within the United States, religious composition varies from place to place considerably. This article builds on previous research in geography that has mapped spatial differences in religion by mapping and analyzing clusters of religious adherence and diversity, using the 2000 Religious Congregations and Membership Survey (RCMS). The Lieberman isolation index is used to measure diversity, and global and local Moran's I values are calculated to study patterns of religious adherence and diversity. This article also suggests some ways to categorize religious groups in ways that will promote the integration of measures of religion with other geographic and socioeconomic data. With new ways of organizing and presenting spatial data, social scientists are now equipped with the ability to examine contextual covariates across datasets and to include religion, along with other identities, in a richer discussion of how worldviews affect social behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Previous work that has mapped patterns in religious adherence over the United States has argued that the study of religion is of particular importance in defining cultural regions across the country (Zelinsky 1961; Shortridge 1976). While this continues to be true, it also remains important to consider why understanding religious culture in a geographic context matters to social science research more broadly. Clearly, religious cultures are associated with particular ideas, or worldviews, that influence behavior. Furthermore, religious culture may be associated with opportunities and access to social capital that benefit individuals differently. This makes the U.S. a unique place to study religion for its diversity and the tolerance associated with such religious diversity or pluralism.

Collecting, evaluating, sorting, and mapping spatial data on religion can facilitate its study in comparison to other socioeconomic phenomena. The data and classifications used here will hopefully promote the inclusion of religious dynamics in social research and illuminate some of the spatial characteristics of religious adherence and diversity. First, the complexities of defining and mapping religion in the U.S. are reviewed in more detail. Next, the available data on religion in the U.S. are discussed. Past descriptive works on religion are revisited and updated. Finally, new measures of religious adherence and diversity are summarized and examined using cluster analysis.

DEFINING RELIGION

As with other social identifiers, considerable debate surrounds the definition of religion. Unlike other identity characteristics, such as gender or ethnicity, religion is both an identity and an institution (Levine 1986), which further complicates coming to a consensus on the meaning of the term religion. Religion may simultaneously embody opportunities through social capital, such as volunteerism and participation in community (Campbell and Yonish 2003; Coleman 2003; Wuthnow 2002), and ideas, including concepts of morality and ways of coping with life and death (Durkheim 1899; Park 1994; Saler 2000). Religion involves very personal notions of identity, as well as a way of grouping and understanding larger social identity (Cooper 1992; Wentz 1998). This affects the social scientific study of religion in that religious identity may be fluid, often changing (Kong 2001; Williams 2002), while religious institutions may be more concrete and less flexible.

In the history and theory of geography as a discipline, religion is also considered a “pre-modern” philosophy, which has ultimately been challenged and discarded by modern and post-modern approaches (Peet 1998). This would seem to place geographers in a precarious position to study religion as outsiders. Saler (2000) argues that this seems to be the case with non-religious anthropologists who study religions perhaps only to seek to understand what they are missing. It is the intention of this research, however, to consider how the study of religion can contribute to an understanding of macro-level social behavior in the U.S. – not to present a single “true” depiction of religion in the U.S., but to present an interesting characterization with statistics and maps for visualization.

Definitions of religion typically fall into two categories: substantive and culturalist (Arnal 2000). Substantive definitions define religion as having a particular set of characteristics, whereas culturalist definitions define religion by what it does. This second, functionalist approach is typified by Durkheim’s (1899) use of religion as meaning “sacred,” as opposed to “profane.” Where this dualistic characterization of religion is used to collect and present data on religion, it has been accused of “digitizing” complex social phenomena (Saler 2000). As Saler (2000) argues, the very act of categorizing religious information for statistical summaries requires a binary or dichotomous classification, which bounds and oversimplifies our understanding of religion. Saler then advocates an unbounded definition of religion that uses folk or common everyday usage of the term religion to try to understand what religion may or may not be.

There are two reasons to go beyond folk knowledge of religion and to study statistical characteristics of religion: (1) statistics make it possible to interpret events and behavior on an aggregate or macro-scale of analysis, and (2) statistics are used to present patterns and relationships among variables. Smith (2000, 34) also responds to the relative lack of classification in religious studies:

For many in the study of religion, when not asserting some ethos of uniqueness and locality ..., classification is seen as an instrument of power (Foucault 1970) ... But this is to present the study of religion with an occasion for the rectification, not resignation or renunciation. For the rejection of classificatory interest is, at the same time, a rejection of thought.

The concerns surrounding the definition of religion extend to each classification used in the statistical analysis of religious adherents in the U.S. For example, what is a Catholic or Protestant? Individuals may not fit well into such categorization, instead fitting into multiple

groups or none quite precisely. This, and other shortcomings in the collection of data are discussed below.

DATA ON RELIGION

The lack of quantitative research on religion is often attributed to the relative lack of religion data (Zelinsky 1961). However, the recent availability of extensive, county-level data on religious adherents, members, and congregations in 2000, collected in the study “Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States, 2000” and published by the Glenmary Research Center, make the quantitative study of religion worth reevaluating (Jones et al. 2002). *Church and Church Membership in the United States* studies compiled by the National Council on Churches and the Glenmary Research Center (1952, 1971, 1980, and 1990) recorded religious adherence for a number of Christian denominations (1952; 1974; 1982; 1992). The latest 2000 publication includes the earlier statistics in addition to statistics on non-Christian religion by county (e.g. Jewish, Muslim, Baha’i, Buddhist, Hindi, Jain, Sikh, Taoist, and Zoroastrian), across the United States.

A religious adherent is simply someone who is recorded as being “on the books” for a particular religious group that is reporting to the study on “Religious Congregations and Memberships.” Being “on the books” may not mean they are a full member or a frequent attendee of religious services. All information is self-reported by the religious organizations. Depending on the accuracy of the information held by religious organizations, the data may not reflect adherents who have moved to other counties or who come from other counties to attend services. It is not known how the quality of the data may vary from one religious group to the next. It may also be possible for organizations to intentionally inflate or deflate their information, although it would be difficult to verify the extent of this bias, and it is not known if the information varies in quality over space. One way to verify religious adherence statistics are through comparison with the General Social Survey (GSS) estimates (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 1972-2006), but the specificity and geographic scales identified in the GSS do not provide a perfect frame of verification.

In 2000, religious adherence was voluntarily reported or estimated for each of the 149 groups (Jones et al. 2002). Again, religious adherence is not a measure of the extent or frequency of annual participation; it is simply a measure of the number of individuals that were reported in each group, by county in the United States. As Park (1994) strongly cautions, such measures often overestimate actual religious participation and do not depict the level of commitment and involvement by individual adherents. The Glenmary publication (Jones et al. 2002) also warns of an undercount of black religious adherents since some black denominations chose not to participate. This is of particular regional concern in the Southeast (Vincent, Winsberg, and Warf 2006). Clearly, the measure of county-level adherents is neither comprehensive nor perfect, but it is the best available measure of religious affiliation that is currently accessible for mapping and assessing national trends.

To put the latest county statistics in perspective, Table 1 lists the publicly available multi-denominational, geographic data sets on religion in the United States. Together, the Glenmary publications on religious membership and the early U.S. Census reports offer time series membership data for Christian religious bodies (1890-2000) and

cross-sectional data for a larger group of religious bodies (Christian and non-Christian in 2000). The General Social Survey provides individual survey data, which ask a number of questions on religious affiliation, participation, and beliefs. This data set can be meaningfully summarized at the level of Census Division, and can be used for some comparison with Glenmary data. The National Congregations Study surveys a nationally representative group of religious organizations about the activities and compositions of their members (Chaves 2004). For purposes of spatial analysis, nationally representative samples are not geographically representative at a local scale. The next section discusses how religion in the United States has been previously mapped and analyzed.

Data Set	Information	Scale	Year
Religious Congregations and Membership in the US	Religious adherence, attendance, membership, and congregation totals	County	2000
Church and Church Membership in the US	Religious adherence and membership	County	1952, 1971, 1980, 1990
United States Census of Religious Bodies	Religious membership	County	1890, 1906, 1916, 1926, 1936

Table 1. Multi-Denominational, Geographic Data Sets on Religion in the United States

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH ON RELIGION IN THE U.S.

A few cultural geographers (Zelinsky 1961; Shortridge 1976) and religious scholars (Newman and Halvorson 1980) have pioneered efforts to map and analyze spatial patterns of religion in the United States. Zelinsky (1961) first mapped and examined spatial trends with respect to particular religious bodies in the U.S. Using data from 1952 in *Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, Zelinsky mapped membership for Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, and a number of Protestant groups across U.S. counties and Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Zelinsky (1961) explained that the geographic pattern of Catholics in the U.S. was largely established by 1860, even though migration of Catholics from a large variety of origins has increased the number of participating Catholics in the U.S. over the years. He found a strong concentration of Catholics in the Northeast and the West, particularly California, but also in coastal regions of Texas and in Louisiana. Similarly, Zelinsky (1961) traced permanence in the pattern of Latter-day Saints to the 1840s, where Utah, southern Idaho, and portions of other Western states began to host proportionally large numbers of Mormons (see also, (Stark 2005)). Zelinsky (1961) noted that there was a great diversity of religious bodies in the U.S., and that this diversity was matched by the heterogeneity of religious composition at the county level. Further, he found that the religious groups he examined exhibited remarkably different distributions across the country.

Shortridge (1976) expanded on research by Zelinsky (1961) by classifying and mapping liberal and conservative Protestantism, diversity, and intensity of religious adherence. Like Zelinsky, Shortridge relied on data from *Churches and Church Membership in the U.S.* but from the version published in 1974. Shortridge (1976) differentiated liberal from conservative Protestant groups by their participation in larger organizations. For example, he identified liberal groups as those that typically participated in the National

Council of the Churches (NCC, now the National Council of the Churches USA), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the Consultation on Church Union (CCU, now Churches Uniting in Christ) (Shortridge 1976). Conservative groups were identified as those that generally participated in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA), and the Christian Holiness Association (CHA). The main difference between the two groups was that the liberal groups appeared to be oriented more toward objectives of inclusiveness, social justice, and diversity. Conservative groups appeared to be more exclusive and focused, to a greater extent, on conservative policy agenda items such as family values. Liberal groups also tended to have more international linkages. He found that the Northeast and Midwest had proportionally larger participation in liberal Protestant groups relative to conservative groups.

Shortridge (1976) calculated religious diversity using a Gini coefficient, which is equal to zero when there is a perfectly even distribution of the population across all religious bodies and equal to one when the entire population is concentrated in one religion. He found the greatest diversity in the Midwest, Pacific coast, and Florida. Shortridge (1976) also mapped church membership in 1971 as a percentage of county populations. He suggested that membership offered one possible measure of religious intensity in the United States. But, as Shortridge (1976) and Park (1994) discussed, it is difficult to directly equate church membership, or adherence, to religiosity. However, more specific county-level survey data for the U.S. are not available, and it is likely that religious adherence is a good indicator of intensity, if not a direct measure. Interestingly, the map of religious membership appeared in contrast to that of diversity, where the two maps seem to be almost an inverse of one another. The map of membership showed the most participation was evident in the South, the Great Plains, and Utah.

The distinction that Shortridge (1976) drew between liberal and conservative Protestantism is oversimplified and perhaps ahistorical, since Protestant religious affiliations tend to be poor matches for political classification (Wuthnow 1993; Steensland et al. 2000). Other methods for aggregation of Protestant groups have been pioneered by Steensland, et al. (2000). Their methods avoid creating a dichotomous, political distinction between Protestant groups by identifying Mainline, Evangelical, and black Protestant groups separately.

Newman and Halvorson (1978; 1980) reviewed the work by Shortridge (1976) and Zelinsky (1961) and compared changes in adherence over time, between 1952 and 1971. They found remarkable persistence in the geographic patterns of religious adherence over the two periods. They also measured diversity in two ways: by number of denominations per county and by an entropy index. Mapping diversity, or pluralism, by the number of denominations per county coincides very closely with the size of the population. With the entropy index, Newman and Halvorson arrived at findings very similar to Shortridge, where the Northeast, Midwest, Pacific coast, and southern Florida exhibited the most diversity. Most recently, Newman and Halvorson (2000; Halvorson and Newman 1994) have examined the distribution of Christian religious sects from 1952-1990 and also from 1776-1990. However, the research on the geographic distribution of adherence and diversity stands in need of updating for the new millennium and the growing relevance of non-Christian groups. The following section examines more recent data on religion in the United States.

RELIGION IN THE U.S. IN 2000

According to the General Social Survey (GSS) in 2000, approximately 86 percent of the U.S. population declared a religious preference. However, the RCMS county-level religious membership data in 2000 designates half of the U.S. population as religious adherents. This

suggests that around thirty percent of the U.S. population have religious preferences but are not counted as members or adherents in the dataset used in this article. The General Social Survey offers a good reference for comparison because the survey gives interviewees many more options for religious identification, while the RCMS acquires information from a non-comprehensive list of organizations. Therefore, the two reasons that religious adherence rates are lower than religious preference are 1) the religious organizations, not the individuals, reported the numbers for each county, and 2) some religious organizations did not contribute information to the study.

Maps of religious adherence in the U.S. have been published as a supplement to “Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States” (2002). Figure 1 presents a map of religious adherence, across U.S. counties. In contrast to research by Shortridge (1976) and Newman and Halvorson (1980), these data include more religious bodies, with 149 denominations total. Religious adherence appears to be the greatest in the interior of the country and less extensive on the East and West coasts. Other areas that stand out as having regionally higher levels of adherence include: Utah, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and southern Louisiana.

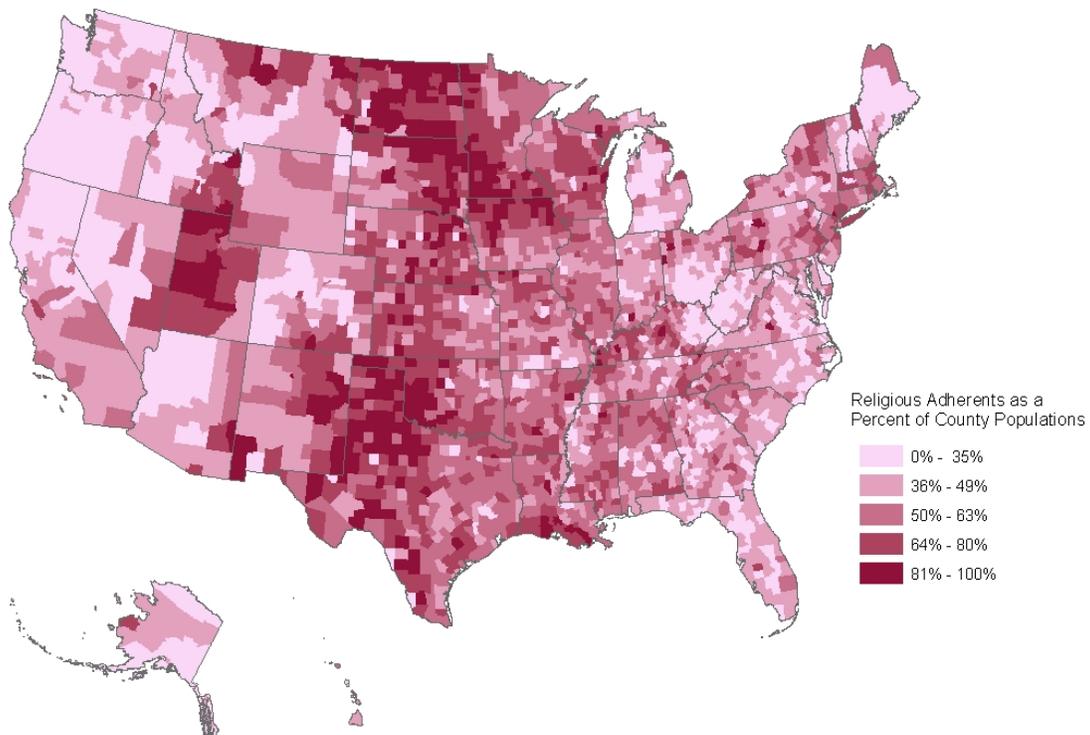


Figure 1. Religious Adherents as a Percent of County Populations, 2000

To use the religious adherence statistics for comparison to other social statistics, or to generate a measure of diversity, the number of denominations can be classified into larger groups. Ten categories for analysis are outlined in the appendix: Protestant – Mainline, Protestant – Conservative/Evangelical, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Eastern, Orthodox, Latter-

day Saints, Utopian, and other Christian. This categorization is designed to aid analysis, since most of the denominations are Protestant. Protestant groups are divided into mainline and conservative, or evangelical, instead of liberal and conservative, so as not to confuse religious with political ideology (Steensland et al. 2000). The categories created here build on the categories or family trees of religious groups outlined by Jones, et al. (2002), which include Adventist, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Apostolic, Presbyterian, several families of Evangelical Protestantism, and so forth, and Steensland et al. (2000), who provide some guidelines for grouping types of Protestant religious groups into three broad categories.¹

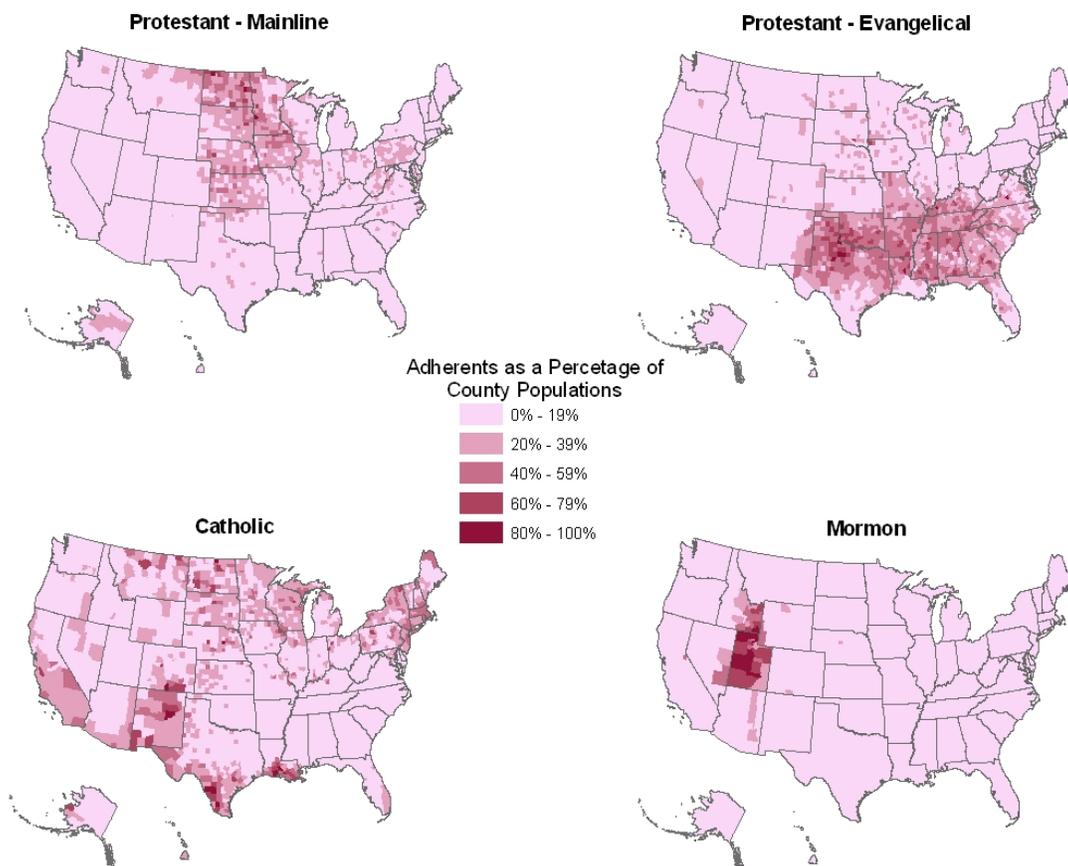


Figure 2. Distribution of Adherents of Selected Religious Categories for U.S. Counties, 2000

Figure 2 maps four populous categories: Protestant – Mainline, Protestant – Evangelical, Catholic, and Mormon adherence. Maps of the other categories, or for any specific Protestant groups, can be constructed through an interactive program on the ARDA website (www.thearda.com). Mainline Protestantism appears to be concentrated mostly in the Great Plains, the Midwest, and the Northeast, and less robustly in the West. Conservative or Evangelical Protestantism is concentrated primarily in the South. Conversely, Catholicism

¹ There has been very little work to examine how religious groups or denominations in the United States might be usefully aggregated for quantitative analysis. The categorization used here relies on the few previous studies that have made such an effort at classification. The classifications defined in the “Religious Congregations and Membership” study are a useful starting point. For the 264 groups examined from 1952 to 2000, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) proposes 54 denomination families. This study proposes 10 religious groupings.

is greatest in the Northeast, Midwest, and the Southwest, while being less common in the South. Latter-day Saints are clearly concentrated in the West, particularly Utah and Southern Idaho.

There are many options for creating a measure for religious diversity, given the county-level adherence data.² Using the ten categories listed in the appendix prevents the division among Protestant groups from overstating diversity. Here, the isolation index, a measure of diversity suggested by Lieberman (1969), is used. Lieberman (1969, 851) defines diversity as “the position of a population along a continuum ranging from homogeneity to heterogeneity with respect to one or more qualitative variables.” In his example, Lieberman (1969, 851) considers a measure that answers the question: “... if all residents of the city are paired together two at a time, what proportion of the pairs combine persons with different religious affiliations?” First, difference, or diversity, is measured as in equation (1), where there are ten religious categories, such that their probabilities sum to 1.00.

$$X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_9 + X_{10} = 1.00 \quad (1)$$

If we take the square of the sum of the proportions, the result is squares of the terms and their cross-products, in equation (2).

$$(X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_9 + X_{10})^2 = X_1^2 + X_2^2 + \dots + X_9^2 + X_{10}^2 + 2[(X_1X_2) + (X_1X_3) + (X_1X_4) + \dots + (X_7X_{10}) + (X_8X_{10}) + (X_9X_{10})] = 1.00 \quad (2)$$

The proportion of pairs with a common religion is denoted by, $S = X_1^2 + X_2^2 + \dots + X_9^2 + X_{10}^2$. While, the proportion of pairs without a common religion (or having different religions) is stated as $D = 2[(X_1X_2) + (X_1X_3) + (X_1X_4) + \dots + (X_7X_{10}) + (X_8X_{10}) + (X_9X_{10})]$, or $1.00 - S = D$. If everyone has the same religion, $D = 0$, if every resident had a different religion, then the index would be one.

This measure is employed to examine diversity across U.S. counties. However, there are two important caveats to consider. First, not every person is assigned to a religious affiliation in Jones, et al. (2002). In fact, because the data are admittedly not comprehensive, assuming that non-religiously affiliated individuals are a homogenous group would be incorrect. But, we can assess the diversity of those who are affiliated with one of the 149 religious groups studied. The second caveat is that the “true” diversity of religious associations recorded in the county-level data is suspect. For example, the Catholic Church is recorded as only one denomination, but there are certainly many variations on how Catholicism is practiced (Newman and Halvorson 1980). No perfect solution to measuring diversity exists, but Figure 3 illustrates one interpretation. Theoretically, maximum heterogeneity occurs when the index is one, or the population is evenly divided into the ten groups. Here, the maximum value for the diversity measure in any U.S. county is 0.79 (Wallowa County, Oregon).

² In addition to the Gini coefficient and entropy index mentioned above, population models from island biogeography have been used to examine religious diversity over time (Vincent, Winsberg, and Warf 2006).

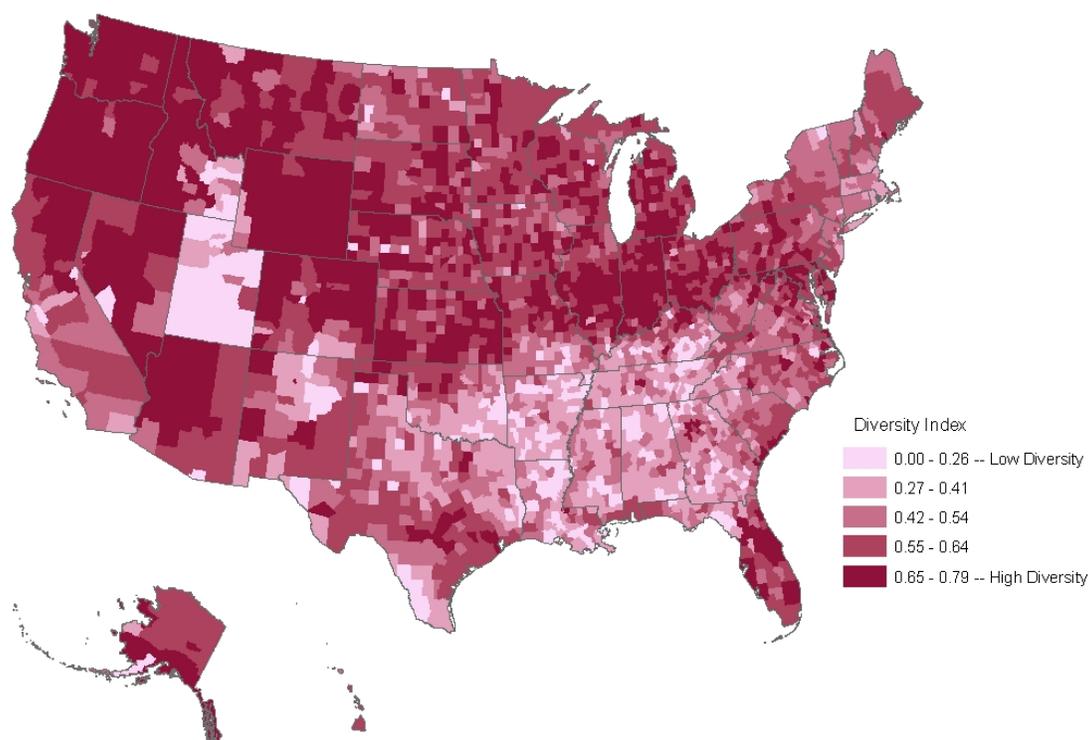


Figure 3. Diversity Index for Religious Adherents, by U.S. County, 2000

The U.S. as a whole is quite diverse, but areas of least diversity include Utah, southern Idaho, and the South. In the Midwest, states such as Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio exhibit relatively high levels of religious diversity. The Pacific Northwest coast, a home to many new, non-Christian immigrant families, shows very high rates of religious diversity. Now, with the data described and presented, it is possible to statistically analyze the data for clusters and correlations.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGION IN THE U.S.

This section examines spatial autocorrelation and spatial clustering, or Local Indicators of Spatial Analysis (LISA), for religious adherence and diversity. Spatial autocorrelation is measured by Moran's I, which correlates a variable with its spatial lag (Anselin 1988). The spatial lag term is calculated for each observation, and provides a value for neighboring observations. In this case, spatial correlation compares each county with the values of immediately neighboring counties. Specifically, the spatial lags were constructed with a Rook's matrix³ using GeoDa, a spatial analysis program created by Luc Anselin, which is available online (Anselin 2003, 2006). Measures of overall spatial correlation may range from negative one to positive one. Negative spatial autocorrelation implies a spatially

³ A Rook's matrix includes contiguous neighbors to the North, South, East, and West of the observation.

dissimilarity among neighboring counties; whereas positive spatial autocorrelation describes similarity among neighboring counties. The Moran's I for adherents as a percentage of the county population is equal to 0.53, and the Moran's I for diversity is equal to 0.54 (both Moran's I values are significant with a p-value less than 0.05). The positive Moran's I value indicates that there is significant positive autocorrelation, or clustering in the variables over space. In other words, counties with higher percentages of adherents are more likely to be close to other counties with higher percentages of adherents. Conversely, counties with lower percentages of adherents are more likely to be close to other counties with lower percentages of adherents.

Figure 4 provides the Moran scatterplot for percent adherents. The correlation between the standardized county-level adherence rate and the standardized value for neighboring county adherence rates is equal to the global Moran's I. The red, high-high quadrant indicates areas where counties with higher adherence rates have neighboring counties with higher adherence rates. The blue, low-low quadrant indicates areas where counties with lower adherence rates are located near other counties with lower adherence rates.

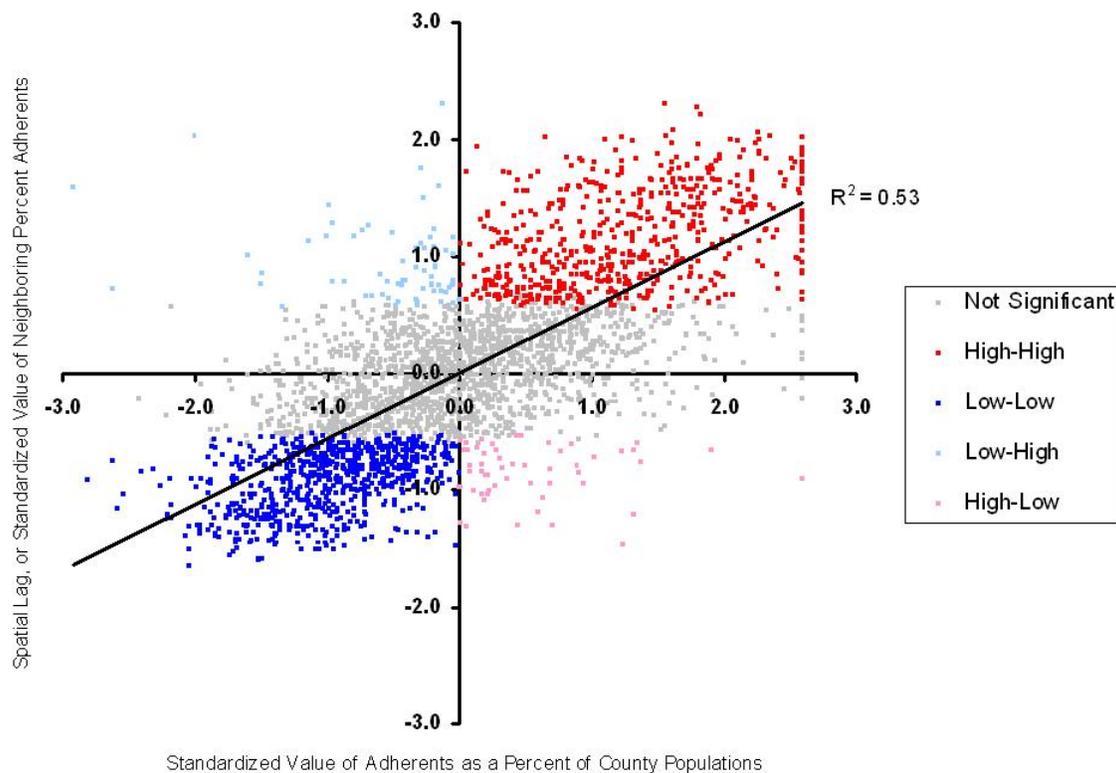


Figure 4. Moran Scatter Plot of Percent Adherence

The four quadrants of the Moran scatterplot are related to the Local Indicators of Spatial Analysis (LISA) that are mapped in Figure 5. LISA statistics are Moran I values for smaller geographic areas and are also referred to as local Moran's I. Only LISA values with a p-level less than 0.05 are displayed. The red, high-high clusters highlight the central portion of the U.S., from North Dakota to Texas, with additional clustering in Utah. Blue, low-low clusters are prominent in the Pacific Northwest and parts of the East Coast as well. The map of

spatial clusters paints religious adherence in the U.S. with broad brush strokes, illustrating a U.S. with a religious center and less religious coast-lines. However, there are notable exceptions. A clustering of higher rates of adherence is found in New England, parts of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey. Conversely, for a number of counties in the Rocky Mountain region, in Colorado and Wyoming, there is a clustering of lower rates of adherences.

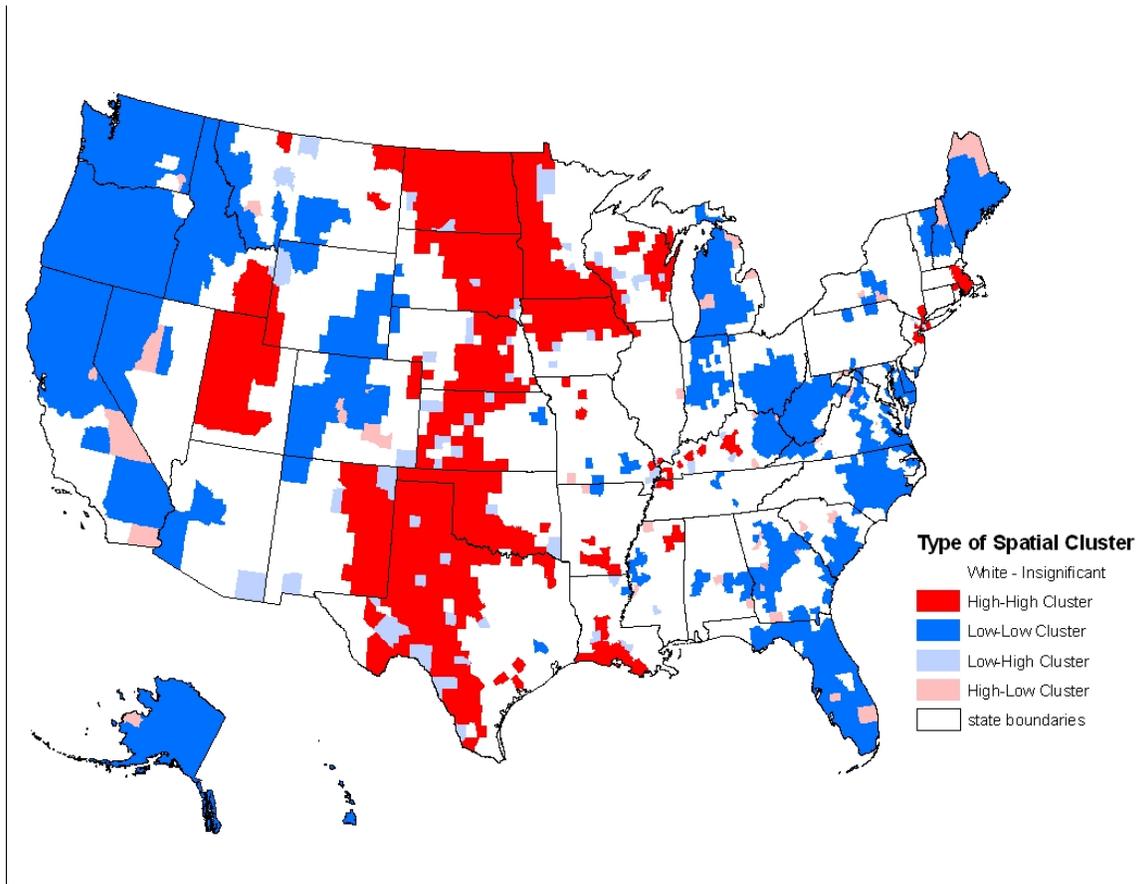


Figure 5. LISA Statistics for Percent Adherence

Figure 6 illustrates the Moran scatterplot for religious diversity, and Figure 7 maps the significant LISA statistics for diversity across U.S. counties. In contrast to the maps of adherence, high-high clusters of diversity are found in the Pacific Northwest, and low-low clusters in Utah. High-high clusters for diversity are also across the country, from the Pacific Northwest, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, through the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic states. Low-low clusters are prominent in the South, New England, Utah, and parts of the Southwest.

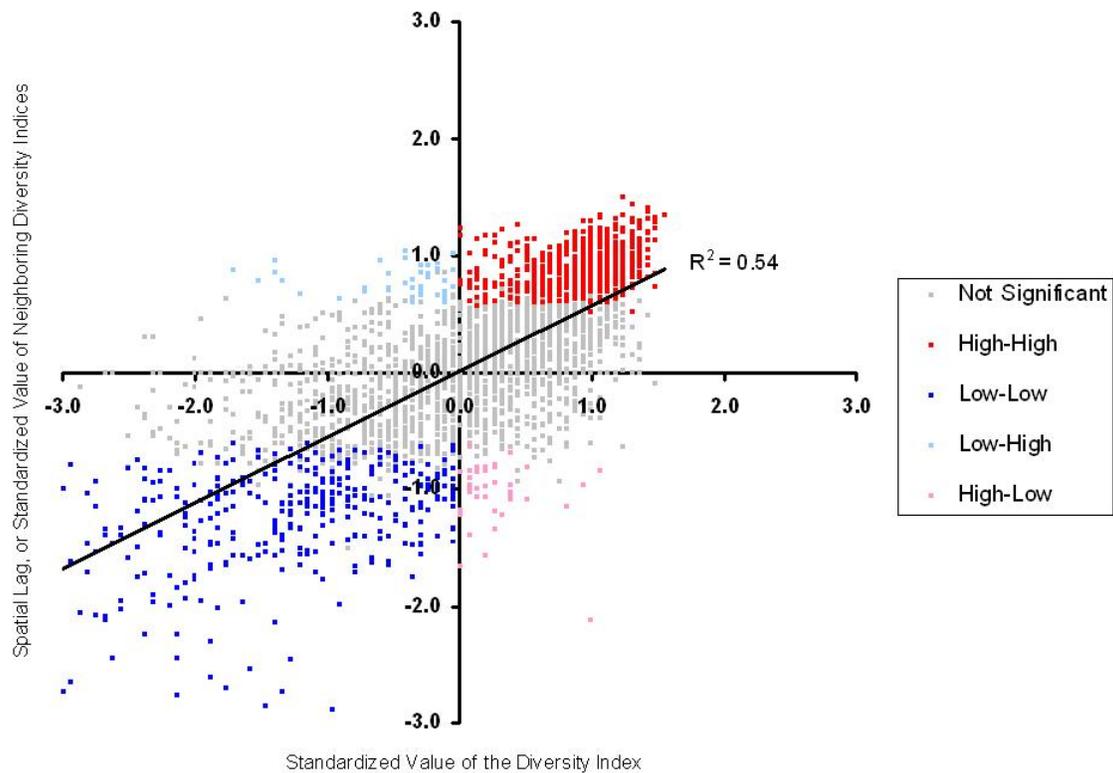


Figure 6. Moran Scatter Plot for the Diversity Index

These results prompt interesting questions about the relationship between adherence and diversity. In fact, the correlation between diversity and percent adherence is -0.19 and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This could imply that diversity counteracts religious adherence. As Wentz (1998, 35-36) explains,

The diversity of religious life in America deconstructs religion itself. The importance of sacred space can only be an attribute of pluralism that understands the American landscape as a sacred refuge for all peoples. ... Whatever community emerges from such a mixed society as this will most likely conflict with patterns of sacred and profane behavior nurtured in the separate religious and ethnic societies before immigration and that must now learn to function as denominations and religious institutions in modern America.

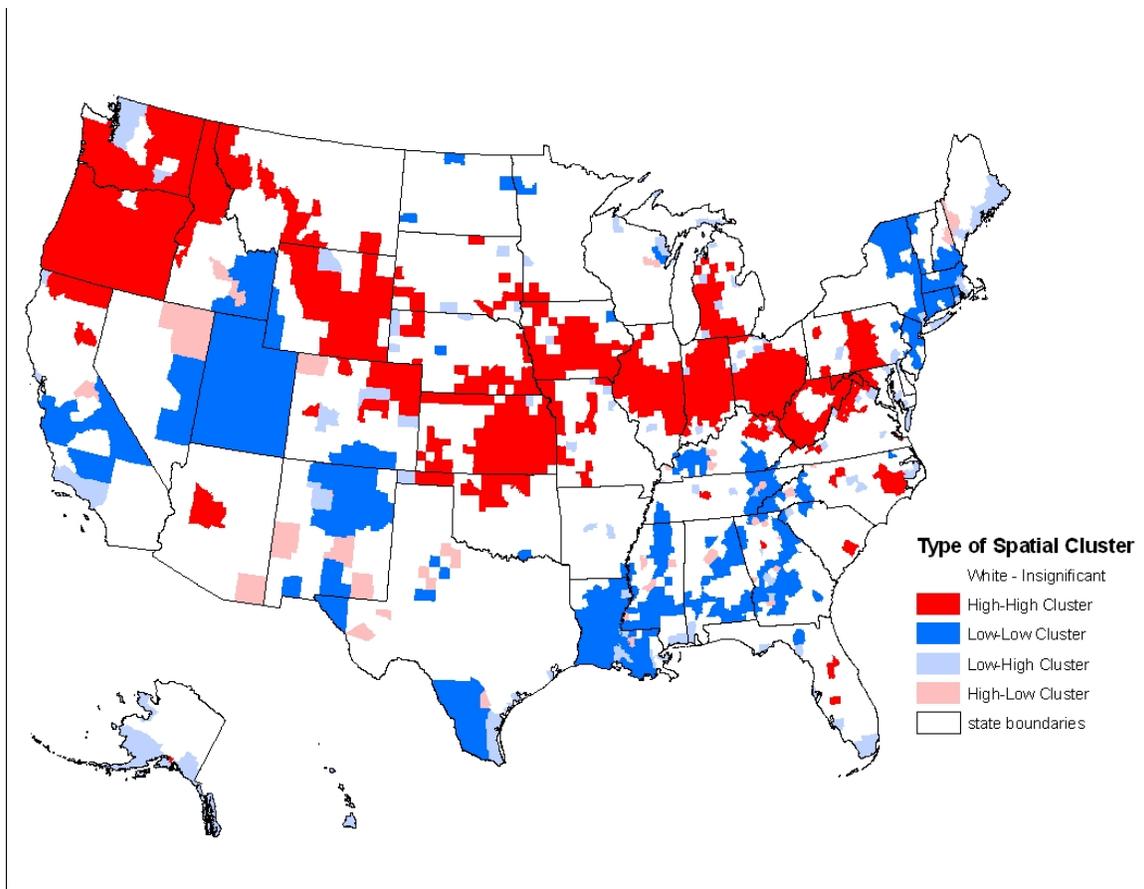


Figure 7. LISA Statistics for the Diversity Index

It would also be interesting to consider how secularization affects both diversity and adherence (and vice versa). Unfortunately, a measure of secularization should not be extrapolated from populations that are simply defined as non-adherent. For example, with better reporting, the South may prove to be more heavily Protestant, with more adherents and not as secular as non-adherence rates might lead us to believe.

Spatial cluster analysis helps to identify areas where significant spatial relationships exist, narrowing the focus the information in Figures 1 (religious adherence) and 3 (diversity index) to relative ‘hotbeds’ or cold areas of religious adherence or diversity. Again, the contrast between religious adherents and measures of diversity raises interesting questions. Also, the patterns of religion in the U.S. further provide context for the study of differences in policies, and social and health behaviors across the country.

CONCLUSION

With the renewed interest in religion by social scientists, it is important to re-examine the available data for its potential in research. Rather than shying away from the topic of religion when confronted with data issues, a clear, honest appraisal of the data needs to be made – then data ought to be brought forth, examined, summarized, mapped, and debated. The county-level statistical studies, despite their shortcomings, offer an extensive county-level data set of religions in the United States. Mapping and methods in spatial statistics,

such as the Moran's I and LISA statistics, offer a means to analyze and even combine multiple sources of geographic data.

The spatial distribution of religious adherence in the U.S. is marked by interesting and persistent patterns. The map of Catholic adherence, for example, resembles Zelinsky's 1952 map of Catholic Church membership (Zelinsky 1961). The maps for religious adherence and diversity overlap closely with the 1971 depictions of religion by Shortridge (1976). In fact, with the exceptions of finding greater religious diversity in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, a discrepancy that is most likely due to migration, the map of religious diversity presented in this article is nearly identical to the map portrayed by Shortridge (1976). For all the discussion of religious change, the similarities in the geographic patterns of religion over the past fifty years in the U.S. are surprising. Further research should investigate this temporal regularity more systematically.

An important contribution of this paper is the proposed categorization of "Religious Congregation and Membership" data so that information on religious adherence can be linked with other data sets to investigate geographic and neighborhood effects of religion. However, it is important to note that the categorization of religions and denominations into particular groups is open for debate, evaluation, and re-evaluation. Further discussion of how to group religious sects in the U.S. for the purpose of research on religion would be interesting and helpful for including religion in other branches of social research.

Now, having shown how religions recorded for county-level analysis are spatially distributed and correlated, and having shown how an index of religious diversity can be calculated using information on county-level adherence, we need to further investigate whether or not these spatial variations in religion influence other social traits: socioeconomic status, demography, voting behavior, social policy, consumption, activism, and so on. Do greater concentrations of certain adherents promote more intense expressions of belief systems in fertility decisions or healthy or risky behaviors, the political arena, or the workplace?

Maps alone cannot decipher the depth of beliefs present in the U.S. today. However, the role of religion spreads beyond beliefs and rituals to how people think and act with respect to the world around them. Further research will hopefully use the data presented in this article to identify relationships between religious characteristics of U.S. counties and county-level demography, health, legislation, and social and human capital.

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APPENDIX

Ten Categories of Religious Beliefs for 149 Groups Enumerated in “Religious Congregations and Memberships in the United States” (2000)

<p>Protestant – Mainline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allegheny Wesleyan Methodist Connection American Baptist Churches in the USA Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Congregational Christian Churches, Additional Episcopal Church Evangelical Lutheran Church of America International Council of Community Churches Moravian Church in America – Alaska Province Moravian Church in America – Northern Province Moravian Church in America – Southern Province National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Presbyterian Church Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations United Church of Christ United Methodist Church United Reformed Churches in North America <p>Protestant – Conservative/Evangelical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Old” Missionary Baptists Association American Baptist Association Apostolic Christian Church of America, Inc. Apostolic Christian Churches (Nazarean) Assemblies of God Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Association of Free Lutheran Congregations Baptist General Conference Baptist Missionary Association of America Brethren Church Christian and Missionary Alliance Christian Reformed Church in North America Christian Union Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) Church of God General Conference Church of God of Prophecy Church of the Brethren Church of the Nazarene Churches of Christ Churches of God, General Conference Conservative Baptist Association of America Conservative Congregational Christian Conference Cumberland Presbyterian Church Duck River and Kindred Baptists Association Enterprise Baptists Association Evangelical Covenant Church Evangelical Free Church of America Evangelical Presbyterian Church Free Methodist Church of North America Fundamental Methodist Conference, Inc. General Association of Regular Baptist Churches General Six Principle Baptists Independent Charismatic Christian Churches Independent Free Will Baptists Associations Independent Non-charismatic Christian Churches International Church of the Foursquare Gospel International Churches of Christ International Pentecostal Church of Christ International Pentecostal Holiness Church 	<p>Protestant – Conservative/Evangelical, cont’d</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lankmark Missionary Baptistis, Independent Associations and Unaffiliated Churches Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Midwest Congregational Christian Fellowship Missionary Church National Association of Free Will Baptists National Primitive Baptist Convention, USA Netherlands Reformed Congregations New Hope Baptist Association New Testament Association of Independent Baptist Churches and other Fundamental Baptist Associations / Fellowships North American Baptist Conference Original Free Will Baptists Orthodox Presbyterian Church Pentecostal Church of God Presbyterian Church in America Primitive Baptist Church in the USA Reformed Baptist Churches Reformed Church in America Reformed Church in the United States Salvation Army Separate Baptists in Christ Seventh Day Adventist Church Southern Baptist Convention Southwide Baptist Fellowship Strict Baptists Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists Vineyard, USA Wayne Trail Missionary Baptist Association Wesleyan Church Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod <p>Catholic</p> <p>Jewish</p> <p>Muslim</p> <p>Eastern Religions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baha’i Buddhism Hindus Jain Sikhs Taoists Zoroastrians <p>Orthodox</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North American Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, North American Dioceses Armenian Apostolic Church/ Catholicossate of Cilicia
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<p>Interstate and Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptists Association Jasper Baptist and Pleasant Valley Baptist Associations</p>	<p>Armenian Apostolic Church/ Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin Bulgarian Orthodox Diocese of the USA Coptic Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America</p>
<p>Orthodox, cont'd</p> <p>Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Vassilopoulos Holy Orthodox Church in North America Macedonian Orthodox Church: American Diocese Malankara Archdioceses of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church: American Dioceses Orthodox Church in America: Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese Orthodox Church in America: Bulgarian Dioceses Orthodox Church in America: Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America Orthodox Church in America: Territorial Dioceses Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA (New Gracanica Metropolitanate) Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA</p>	<p>Utopian</p> <p>Amish; other groups Beachy Amish Brethren in Christ Church Bruderhof Communities, Inc. Church of God in Christ, Mennonite Conservative Mennonite Conference Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church Evangelical Mennonite Church Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches Friends (Quakers) Hutterian Brethren Mennonite Brethren Churches, U.S. Conference of Mennonite Church USA Mennonite, other groups Old Order Amish Church Old Order Mennonite Old Order River Brethren Reformed Mennonite Church</p>
<p>Latter-day Saints</p> <p>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Community of Christ</p>	<p>Other Christian</p> <p>Calvary Chapel Fellowship Churches Christian Churches and Churches of Christ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches</p>

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The Geotheological Imagings of a Trans-Irish Sea Scottish Community, 1560-1690

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have considered how sixteenth and seventeenth-century Scottish and Irish Presbyterians influenced each other in developing and attaching a sense of sacredness to their institutions, people and land. By applying the georeligious lexicon crafted by J. K. Wright to extant English Puritan records, Avihu Zakai added depth to our understanding of their migrations to colonial New England. Building upon Zakai's work, this research demonstrates that trans-Irish Sea Presbyterian leaders, who saw themselves as spiritual brothers to English Puritans and Reformed believers everywhere, not only sacralized people, land, and institutions, they also desacralized them. This arguably encouraged political dissension, ecclesiastical schisms, and geographic relocations back and forth across the Irish Sea. Their religious thought worlds, including their understanding of the connections between the worship of God and space (geotheology), helped them to create a self-conceptualized Ulster Scots community.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2005, *The Journal of Historical Sociology* published an article detailing social and institutional linkages between Scottish and Irish Presbyterian ministers.¹ This article extends that study by looking at how their beliefs about spaces and people impacted upon political dissension and the recognition of a Protestant Ulster Scots community. It is clear from a review of the literature that such a study fits into a narrow corpus of historical scholarship, especially as it relates to work connecting Scottish and Irish spatial and community imaginings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, it is an area of study virtually left untouched by historical and religious geographers. Within the discipline of geography, however, older scholars, such as John K. Wright, William Kirk, and more recently Y. F. Tuan have given considerable attention to the interconnections between geographies "real" and "imagined".

Most of the terms and concepts used in this study were coined by John K. Wright to identify the nuances of religious geography², and the research reported below hence owes much to the distinctive, if neglected, coming together of Wright's geosophy and R.

¹ Barry Vann, 'Presbyterian Mobility in the Irish Sea Culture Area, 1610-1690, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 18, No 3, (September, 2005), 227-254. The ecclesiastical body referred to here was called the Army Presbytery (1642-1646) but was renamed the Presbytery of Ulster in 1646. By 1690 the organisation, which did not meet between the years 1661 and 1690, was reorganized and called the Synod of Ulster. That name was used until 1840 when mergers with churches in the south of Ireland led to the adoption of the name Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).

² See John K. Wright, 'Notes on Early American Geopietry,' in *Human Nature in Geography* (Cambridge, 1966), 250-288.

W. Stump's description of religious geography, which, he points out, is distinct from the geography of religions. This difference can be clarified by reference to Stump, who contrasted *religious geography* with the objective, spatial delineations of scholars doing work described as the *geography of religions*. Stump proposes that the latter, including Wilbur Zelinsky's inquiries, is a somewhat different perspective than religious geography. He argues that religious geography "focuses on religion's role in shaping human perceptions of the world and of humanity's place within it; its primary concerns are the role of theology and cosmology in the interpretation of the universe".³ Here it is easy to see that the "world" includes secular forces that influence migration decisions and attitudes toward the occupation and use of profane and sacred spaces. This view is arguably consistent with the school of *humanistic geography* advanced by Y. F. Tuan.⁴ Given the researcher's interest in these immaterial (belief-based) dimensions of diffusion, the research appeals more to Stump's description of religious geography, although it should be admitted that Lily Kong sees religious geography as a perspective shaped by the thought world of the researcher and not the object of study per se.⁵ In writing this research, the hope is principally to illuminate these substantive questions, but also to contribute a novel example of what can be most logically cast as "historical religious geography" building upon the still valuable examples set by the likes of Tuan and J. K. Wright.

BACKGROUND

Between the years 1590 to 1638, according to David George Mullan, Scotland witnessed a growth in a 'Puritan-Presbyterian' ethos that contributed to an existing belief in Scottish national divinity.⁶ That time frame ended with the drafting and signing of Scotland's National Covenant, which was certainly a pledge seething with geotheological attributes.⁷ While many Erastian-supporting Episcopalians held similar feelings about their country, the movement was largely directed by Presbyterians. Fuelling intense

³ R. W. Stump, 'The Geography of Religion – Introduction', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, Vol. 7, 1-3.

⁴ Y. F. Tuan, 'Humanistic Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (1976), Vol. 66, 266-76.

⁵ Lily Kong, 'Geography and Religion: Trends and Prospects', *Progress in Human Geography* (1990), Vol. 14, 355-71. See also Lily Kong, 'Religion and Technology: Reconfiguring Place, Space, Identity and Community', *Area* (2001), Vol. 33, No. 4, 404-1.

⁶ This time period roughly overlaps with the period of the Crown-imposed first episcopacy in Scotland 1610-38. However, during the Kirk's first episcopacy (1610 to 1638), its theology was firmly Calvinist. See David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), 13-44. Cf. Walter Roland Foster, *The Church Before the Covenants: The Church of Scotland 1596-1638* (Edinburgh, 1975). David Stevenson, *The Covenanters. The National Covenant and Scotland* (Saltire Pamphlets, New Series 11), (Edinburgh, 1988). Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh 1996), 93-122.

⁷ As discussed in this paper, many religious writers in the seventeenth century felt Scotland was especially chosen by God for work in the unfolding drama of providence (geoteleology). Geoteleology is a sub-part of geotheology which is a broader concept that embraces all aspects of the worship of God and its connection to space. Geopiety is also a subpart of geotheology. It captures the emotional aspects of religion and associates it with space. See Wright, 'Notes on Early American Geopiety,' 250-288. The idea of sacred space from a philosophical perspective can be explored in Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred & the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, translated from the French by William R. Trask, (London, 1959), 20-67.

loyalty to the National Covenant, wrote Gordon Donaldson, was a ‘national conceit with a theological foundation’.⁸

Along with migrating Scottish ministers who were recruited to Ulster by planters such as William Edmonston, James Hamilton and Hugh Montgomery as well as by bishops of the established Church of Ireland such as Andrew Knox of Raphoe, their belief system spread to Ireland more than a decade before the formation of the Army Presbytery on 10 June 1642. This was accomplished initially through the ministries of Edward Brice, Robert Blair, John Livingstone, Josias Welsh, James Glenndinning, Henry Colwart, John Ridge, Robert Cunningham, James Hamilton and George Dunbar. Through chain migration facilitated by institutional and social networks, at least 125 others followed them and served in Church of Ireland parishes or nonconforming Irish Presbyterian congregations before the inception of the Synod of Ulster in 1690.⁹

When they were in Ulster, the earliest divines felt that they had cut their teeth on religious-political oppression that reinforced a sense of being persecuted for the sake of righteousness.¹⁰ The depositions of Scottish ministers like Blair, Livingstone, Dunbar and Hamilton from the Church of Ireland encouraged them to relocate to Scotland in 1638. There, widespread resistance (though not in the North and North-east) to the Erastian policies of Charles I provided them with public forums from which to speak.¹¹ From a number of pulpits, including some in Edinburgh, they fed parishioners a steady diet of sermons that some felt were ‘foolish and seditious’.¹² A number of these divines relocated back to Ireland and lived there for the remainder of their lives.¹³ Others returned for short visits. John Livingstone, despite being fully employed as a minister at Stranraer and Ancrum (Wigtonshire and Roxburghshire respectively), crossed to Ireland to conduct services in 1643, 1645, 1646, 1648, 1654 and 1656.¹⁴ The Irish Sea basin, thus, experienced waves of dissenting ministers sailing back and forth, both east and west, as the political forces of the emerging British imperial power impacted on their lives and imaginary thought worlds.

To appreciate more fully the influence of Presbyterians in the trans-Irish Sea area, it is important to examine their geotheological beliefs articulated in their doctrinal positions, letters, and autobiographies. Because of their belief in the role of divine providence in the unfolding of secular events, many of the ministers in the region agreed with Andrew Melville’s (theocratic) vision of two kingdoms. For some ministers whose

⁸ Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V-James VII* (Edinburgh, 1965), 316.

⁹ Vann, ‘Presbyterian Mobility’. For an overview, see Finlay Holmes, *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin 2000), 9-48. For an excellent work on General Munro and the establishment of the Army Presbytery, see David Stevenson, *Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates: Scottish-Irish Relations in the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (Belfast, 1981).

¹⁰ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 303.

¹¹ With the appointment of Thomas Wentworth as Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1632, the Church of Ireland increasingly insisted upon conformity to the episcopalian state church among its ministers. These ministers were deposed for their refusal to conform.

¹² Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 303.

¹³ Vann, ‘Presbyterian Mobility’, 246.

¹⁴ John Livingstone, *A brief Historical Relation of the Life of Mr. John Livingstone, Minister of the Gospel, Containing Several Observations of the Divine Goodness Manifested in Him, in the Several Occurrences Thereof* (Edinburgh, 1848), 112-50.

appointment in Ulster was intended to be lengthy, their relocations were seen as a situation providentially provoked by a sovereign God, even if the secular catalyst for their movements was a political policy and its implementation.¹⁵

RATIONALE FOR STUDYING SCOTTISH GEOTHEOLOGY

Images of Scotland's geotheological place in sacred history reinforced a sense of nationhood among most Scots, including those who adhered to beliefs associated with Puritan-Presbyterianism.¹⁶ There was a psychological reason for the people living in such a small country on the periphery of Europe to sacralize themselves and their land. 'Scotland might be a small and poor nation but, mysteriously', writes David Stevenson, 'she had been specially favored by God to provide a model for others'.¹⁷ Mullan writes that 'for Scotland, this sense was exacerbated by its northerly setting. Antiquity portrayed the north as a dangerous, unruly, even satanic place'.¹⁸ Being in the north of Europe and on the north-west coast of Great Britain, residents of the Irish Sea coastal area arguably had an intense psychological need for adopting exalted national ideas. At the other extreme, Avihu Zakai has shown that Puritans from England were able to sacralize and desacralize the land of their birth in order to justify relocating out of the country.¹⁹ Zakai makes excellent use of Wright's lexicon to show how religious thought worlds can facilitate transatlantic migrations.

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

This study extends Zakai's observations on geotheology (the general relationship between the worship of god and space) among English Puritan settlers in America and David George Mullan's writings on Scottish national divinity by focusing specifically on how the perspectives of Scots in the southwest of Scotland and Ulster may have influenced Scottish geotheology and the possible formation of a self-conceptualized Ulster Scots community. In doing so, three questions arise: first, did Scots and Irish Presbyterian ministers in the trans-Irish Sea area view Scotland and its institutions as tools in God's plan of salvation for humanity? Second, do their writings demonstrate a willingness to desacralize the nation, its land and its institutions to justify political dissension and/or relocating to other places? Third, did leaders of the trans-Irish Sea community of Presbyterians regard their Ulster colleagues as Scots?

SCOTTISH GEOTHEOLOGY

For many Lowland Scots, 28 February 1638 was 'the glorious marriage day of the Kingdom with God'.²⁰ That day marked the beginning of the signing of the Scottish

¹⁵ This notion is developed below.

¹⁶ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 13-44.

¹⁷ David Stevenson, *Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland*, 4.

¹⁸ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 265.

¹⁹ Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge, 2002), 156-206.

²⁰ Archibald Johnston of Wariston quoted in Stevenson, *Covenanters*, 1.

National Covenant. Members of the Scottish ‘ecclesiastical intelligentsia’²¹, to which returning Ulster ministers who had been deposed by Lord-Deputy Thomas Wentworth certainly belonged, had high expectations and standards for the Scottish nation. The National Covenant was sacred to them. It signified God’s sovereignty and election of Scotland as ‘the original godly nation-even before England and Rome’.²² It also signified Scotland’s geoteological place, which refers to the perception among seventeenth-century divines of the nation’s relationship to providential end-times scenarios in fulfilment of sacred history.²³ As Archibald Johnston and Alexander Henderson wrote in the National Covenant of 1638, Scotland and its Kirk would lead all kirks in defending the true faith. And, as they explained in the National Covenant:

We believe with our hearts, confess with our mouths, subscribe with our hands, and constantly affirm, before God and the whole world, that this only is the true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God, and bringing salvation to man, which now is, by the mercy of God, revealed to the world by the preaching of the blessed evangel; and is received, believed, and defended by many and sundry notable kirks and realms, but chiefly by the Kirk of Scotland, the King’s Majesty, and three estates of this realm, as God’s eternal truth, and only ground of our salvation; as more particularly is expressed in the Confession of our Faith, established and publickly confirmed by sundry acts of Parliaments, and now of a long time hath been openly professed by the King’s Majesty, and whole body of this realm both in burgh and land.²⁴

The confession of faith referenced in this passage is the King’s Confession or the Negative Confession that James VI subscribed to in 1580. The theological statements in the Negative Confession were taken from *The Scots Confession* of 1560.²⁵

The authors of *The Scots Confession* claimed for their Kirk a place in the continuance and history of the true Church of Christ, and they believed that future generations would look back to the example of the Scottish Kirk in the same manner that they would behold the first generation churches established by the Apostle Paul. Thomas F. Torrance wrote that ‘throughout the theology of the Scottish Reformation, there is the strongest sense of the continuity of the Christian Church with Israel, the Old Testament people of God’.²⁶ Torrance states that the reformers believed as follows: ‘The temple here is not tied to place or to the institutions of history. It is the blessed society, which was wondrously joined to Jesus Christ. It is the Church as *community* which takes the place of the Old Testament people’.²⁷ The Scottish Reformers saw themselves as directly connected to the people of the Old Testament as if sacred history was suspended

²¹ Donaldson, *James V-James VII*, 149.

²² Simon Schama, *A History of Britain: The British Wars 1603-1776* (London, 2001), 89.

²³ Wright, ‘Early American Geopiety’, 252.

²⁴ Archibald Johnston and Alexander Henderson, *The Confession of Faith of the Kirk of Scotland: or The National Covenant with a Designation of Such Acts of Parliament as are Expedient for Justifying the Union after Mentioned*, (Edinburgh, 1640). See also, John Morrill, ‘The National Covenant in its British Context’, in John Morrill ed., *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context 1638-51* (Edinburgh, 1990).

²⁵ *The Scots Confession, 1560*, G. D Henderson ed., (Edinburgh, 1937). *The Scots Confession*, XVIII, in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, ed. Arthur C. Cochrane (Philadelphia 1966).

²⁶ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 28.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

after the resurrection of Christ until their time. From what John Knox and his colleagues wrote in the *Scots Confession*, it is clear that the characters and events of the New Testament, especially the ministry of the Apostle Paul, served to connect the Old Testament people to the Scots reformers who would in turn pass on the Gospel for future generations to achieve the fulfilment of God's providence:

Then wherever these notes are seen and continue for any time, be the number complete or not, there, beyond any doubt, is the true Kirk of Christ, who, according to his promise, is in its midst. This is not that universal Kirk of which we have spoken before but particular kirks, such as were in Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, and other places where the ministry was planted by Paul and which he himself called Kirks of God. Such Kirks, we the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland confessing Christ Jesus, do claim to have in our cities, towns, and reformed districts because of the doctrine taught in our Kirks, contained in the written Word of God, that is, the Old and New Testaments, in those books which were originally reckoned canonical.²⁸

Like the National Covenant (1638), the foundational Reformation document in the kingdom, *The Scots Confession*, written 78 years earlier, provides a vivid illustration of the ministers' sense of their place in sacred history. Furthermore, because of the widespread support for the National Covenant, the divines who made up the Scottish ecclesiastical intelligentsia and their parishes in the south-west of Scotland swore oaths of loyalty to documents that stressed Scotland's role in the continuity of sacred history. As a participant in the unfolding drama of sacred history (that is, salvation history) the land holding the Scottish people and their Kirk also became sacred, although John Knox arguably saw 'Reformed' Scotland as an apostate place – a desacralized land. This anticipated some of the later remarks of Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie.

The National Covenant stressed geoteleological (a theology of spiritual and national destiny) and geopious (emotional religious thoughts attached to place) feelings that sacralized or conversely desacralized their country, Kirk and people. Just before the Church revolt against Laud's Liturgy at St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh during the summer of 1637, Samuel Rutherford referred to the Scottish Kirk as his 'harlot church mother'.²⁹ In 1625, William Narne wrote that the Scots made up a 'sinfull nation'³⁰ and as a result, God had a great controversy with Scotland.³¹ In 1637, George Gillespie wrote this about the Kirk and nation:

The Church of Scotland was blessed with more glorious and perfect reformation than any of our neighbour churches ... But now, alas! Even this church, which was once so great a praise in the earth, is deeply corrupted, and has 'turned aside quickly out of the way' (Ex. 32:8). So that this is the Lord's controversy against Scotland: 'I had

²⁸ *The Scots Confession*, XVIII, in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, ed. Arthur C. Cochrane (Philadelphia 1966), 177.

²⁹ Samuel Rutherford, 'Samuel Rutherford to Mr. J. R. 16 June 1637', *Rutherford Letters*, 3rd ed. (London, 1675), 200.

³⁰ William Narne, *Christs Starre: Or, a Christian Treatise for our Direction to Our saviour, and for Our Conjunction with Him* (London, 1625), 1.

³¹ William Struther, *Scotland's Warning, or a Treatise of Fasting* (Edinburgh, 1628), v. See also, Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 273.

planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me' (Jer. 2:21).³²

Gillespie's attitude, like that of Rutherford, reflected what Gordon Donaldson called a 'national conceit with a theological foundation'.³³ Scottish divines were capable of desacralizing the land of their birth, but they were also keen to resacralize it. Rutherford wrote this remark in a letter some four years earlier during more optimistic times: 'Scotland whom the Lord took off the dunghill and out of hell and made a fair bride to Himself ... He will embrace both [of] us, the little young sister, and the elder sister, the Church of the Jews'.³⁴ After the National Covenant was signed, Rutherford aired this thought to his country and nation, 'Now, O Scotland, God be thanked thy name is in the Bible'.³⁵ Archibald Johnston wrote that 'the desire of true knowledge wrought by it [National Covenant] in the hearts of the people may approve it bee a speciall meane appointed by God for reclaiming this Nation to himself'.³⁶ The jubilant Johnston wrote in his diary: 'thou haist confirmed to thyselfth the people of Scotland to be a people unto thee for ever (according to thy servands Wischart, Knoxs, praedictions) and thou, Lord, art becom thair God'.³⁷ In expressing a degree of amazement yet tempered by a touch of national humility at his country's lofty place in salvation history, Alexander Henderson wondered how and why God would choose wicked Scotland as his dwelling place over some mighty nation.³⁸ Scotland's favored position in providence, however, was based on merit earned in satisfying the nation's bi-lateral covenant with God. And Rutherford feared that God would leave Scotland for 'an inn where He will be better entertained'.³⁹

In discussing the Kirk and its place in sacred history, Johnston of Wariston observed that there was a 'verrie near parallel betwixt Izrael and this churche, the only two suorne nations to the Lord'.⁴⁰ He also declared that the signing of the National Covenant signified the 'glorious marriage day of the kingdom with God'⁴¹ and that 'Scotland, like Israel, was God's chosen land, and its people, like the Israelites, were God's chosen people'.⁴² These geopious and geoteleological beliefs are important to consider because 'this is what the likes of Blair, Dickson, and Rutherford and countless other ministers [in the south-west] preached, and this is what their flock fervently believed'.⁴³

³² George Gillespie, *Dispute Concerning the English Popish Ceremonies obruded upon the Church of Scotland* (1637), 269.

³³ Donaldson, *James V-James VII*, 316.

³⁴ Rutherford, *Letters*, No. 28.

³⁵ Rutherford quoted in Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 272.

³⁶ Archibald Johnston of Wariston, *A Short Relation on the State of the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1638), B4v.

³⁷ Archibald Johnston of Wariston, *Diary 1632-1639*, G. M Paul, ed. (Edinburgh, 1911), 301.

³⁸ Alexander Henderson, *Sermons, Prayers, and Pulpit Addresses, 1638*, in R. Thomson Martin ed., (Edinburgh, 1867), 381.

³⁹ Rutherford, *Letters*, No 44.

⁴⁰ Archibald Johnston of Wariston, *Diary 1632-1639*, G. M Paul, ed. (Edinburgh, 1911), 344; Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 299.

⁴¹ Wariston, *Diary*, 322

⁴² Stevenson, *The Covenanters*, 1.

⁴³ Schama, *The British Wars 1603-1776*, 92.

Scottish theologians believed it was of the utmost importance to keep covenants with God, especially as the country was seeking restoration from being a ‘sinfull nation’.⁴⁴ Many ministers before the National Covenant was signed believed like Knox before them that Scotland had experienced decay in piety and religion.⁴⁵ Robert Rollock feared that if Scotland fell from grace, God would not give her a second chance.⁴⁶ It was imperative to keep and defend the true religion as defined in the National Covenant and its supporting documents, for, as Samuel Rutherford wrote, ‘The breaking of the staff is the breaking of the covenant: the staff itself is the word of God and covenant’.⁴⁷ Struther warned the people of Scotland that their sense of ‘securitie’ was ‘odious to God’ and that they must not assume that he would ‘dwell with obstinate and impenitent sinners, whom his soule abhorreth: & to keepe his covenant with them who prouddie breake it’.⁴⁸

In the midst of the political turmoil of the 1630s that led to the signing of the National Covenant, the emerging Puritan ethos added a providential, geoteological flavor to all events and gave validity to the belief that they and their land would be used by God in his providence. Although the events leading to the signing of the National Covenant, as well as the consequences of that event, were mostly of a political nature, the ministers working in the trans-Irish Sea community of Puritan-Presbyterians saw them as the unfolding of God’s plan. Through cross-channel migrations by impassioned church leaders, Ulster took on aspects of sacredness through the settlement of Presbyterian Scots.

SCOTTISH GEOTHEOLOGY IN THE SCOTTISH-ULSTER NEXUS

Through social contacts and relocation, beliefs about the sacredness of the Scottish nation diffused to the north of Ireland with manifestations of geopious and even geoteological attributes. Robert Blair believed that providence was at work in bringing ministers and members of congregations alike to Ireland. He wrote that, in addition to himself and a few other godly people, ‘The Lord was also pleased to bring over from Scotland, Mr. Josias Welsh ... I meeting with him in Scotland and perceiving of how weak a body and of how zealous a spirit he was, exhorted him to haste over to Ireland, where he would find work enough, and, I hoped, success enough’.⁴⁹ Blair also felt the same way about George Dunbar’s situation, which was clearly precipitated by political events:

Also, the Lord brought over to Lern (Larne) the ancient servant of Christ, Mr. George Dunbar, who was deposed from the ministry of Ayr by the High Commission of Scotland, and by the Council was banished to Ireland. So careful was the Lord, and bountiful towards that Plantation of his in the north of Ireland, that whoever wanted, they might not want.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ William Narne, *Christs Starre: Or, a Christian Treatise for our Direction to our Saviour, and for our Conjunction with Him* (London, 1625), 1.

⁴⁵ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 273.

⁴⁶ Robert Rollock, *Certaine Sermons, Upon Severall Texts of Scripture* (Edinburgh, 1634), 272.

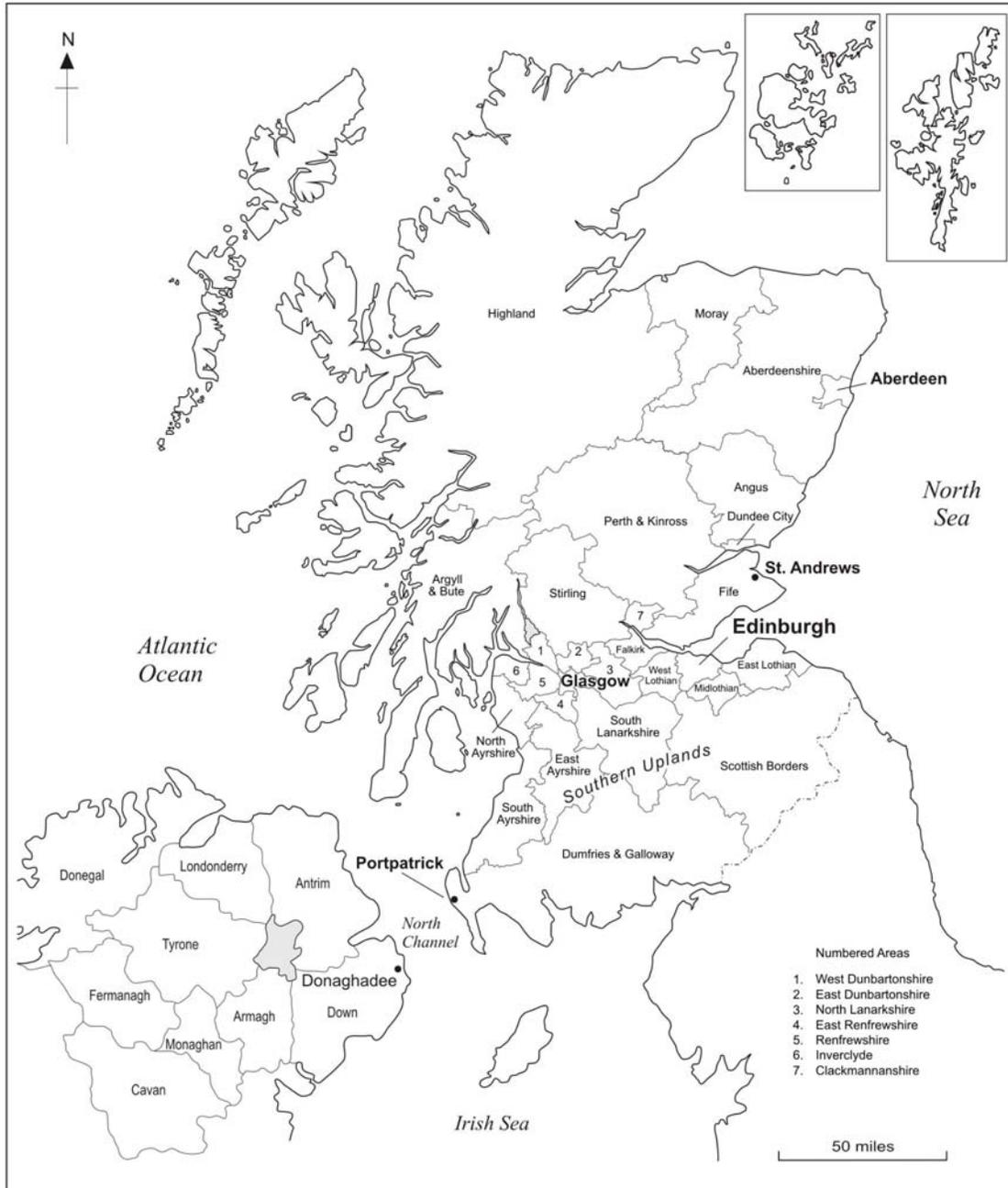
⁴⁷ Rutherford, *Sermons*, 149.

⁴⁸ Struther, *Scotland’s Warning*, 39.

⁴⁹ Robert Blair, *Life of Mr. Robert Blair: Containing his Autobiography, from 1593 to 1636*, T. M’Crie, ed. (Edinburgh, 1848), 76.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* see also John W. Lockington, *Robert Blair of Bangor* (Edinburgh, 1996), 5-17.

Dunbar’s arrival in Ireland, incidentally, was the only reliable example of a Scottish minister resettling on the island because he was banished to it.⁵¹ Nevertheless, as far as Puritan-Presbyterians were concerned, the north of Ireland, like Scotland, took on geotheological significance (See map 1).



Map 1: Scotland and Ireland, drawn by Les Hill

⁵¹ Blair, *Life of Mr. Blair*, 5.

Once in Ulster and seeing the land and their roles on it as part of the divine plan, Scottish ministers were quick to recruit others into their ranks of anti-Erastian Presbyterian leaders whose geographic region transcended both shores of the Irish Sea. Although John Livingstone was offered a charge at Killinchy, which was under the supervision of the Bishop of Down, Lord Clandeboye sent him to Bishop Andrew Knox of Raphoe for ordination.⁵² The Bishop of Raphoe, wrote Livingstone, ‘told me he knew my errand, that I came to him because I had scruples against episcopacy and ceremonies, according as Mr. Josias Welsh and some others had done before; and that he thought his old age was prolonged for little other purpose but to do such offices’.⁵³ Lord Clandeboye’s nephew James Hamilton, who served his uncle as chamberlain, was another recruit. As Blair wrote about Hamilton’s recruitment, ‘Mr. Cunningham and I put him to private essays of his gift, and being satisfied therewith, invited him to preach publicly at Bangor in his uncle’s hearing, he knowing nothing until he saw him in the pulpit ... But having heard him publicly, he put great respects upon him that day’.⁵⁴ Like Blair, Hamilton later moved to Scotland and became involved in the adoption of the National Covenant. Also like Blair, Hamilton was among the Scots who returned to Ireland to help establish the Army Presbytery.⁵⁵

Those returning ministers certainly reinforced the established beliefs in the sovereignty of God. For instance, when Livingstone and Blair returned to Scotland in 1637, David Dickson asked them to preach from his pulpit at Irvine. However, Livingstone learned that a local man had warned Dickson not to allow the Ulster divines to preach in his pulpit for fear that the bishops would put him out of his ministry. He told Dickson that they did not want to cause him trouble. Dickson declared, according to Livingstone, ‘I dare not follow their opinion so far to discountenance you in your sufferings, as not to employ you as in former times, but would think rather so doing would provoke the Lord, that I might be on another account deposed, and not have so good a conscience’.⁵⁶ Dickson and Livingstone feared God’s sovereign rule more than that of the magistrate.

Livingstone’s return to Scotland followed a chain of events that convinced him and other Ulster Presbyterians of their role in God’s plan for their nation. In February 1634, John Livingstone and William Wallace, Livingstone’s boyhood teacher who had relocated to Ireland, were selected by Irish friends to visit New England to determine the suitability of resettling there.⁵⁷ The two men planned to set sail from Ireland for London with the intention of making an Atlantic crossing from the south of England in the spring. Wallace was two days late in joining Livingstone, during which time the weather was fair. However, upon arrival at their point of departure, Livingstone and Wallace were then delayed for a fortnight because of contrary winds. When they arrived in England, all but three ships had left for America. Again, contrary winds arose and delayed their departure for nearly two weeks. Wallace fell ill and was advised by doctors not to go to sea. Friends also advised Livingstone not to go alone, so they returned to Ireland. ‘When

⁵² Andrew Knox was a nephew of John Knox.

⁵³ Livingstone writes that Larne’s minister George Dunbar recruited him to Ireland. See John Livingstone, *Life of John Livingstone: Memorable Characteristics* (Wodrow Society; Edinburgh, 1845), 77.

⁵⁴ Blair, *Life of Blair*, 65.

⁵⁵ James McConnell, *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church 1613-1840* (Belfast, 1951), 8.

⁵⁶ David Dickson, *Life of Livingstone*, 96-7.

⁵⁷ Lockington, *Blair of Bangor*, 21.

we were coming back', Livingstone wrote, 'I told him I apprehended that we would get our liberty in Ireland: and accordingly when we came, we found that we four who had been deposed were restored by the Deputy's letter in May 1634'.⁵⁸ Despite their reinstatement lasting for only six months, Livingstone happily believed that his initial attempt to reach America was redirected by God. He wrote: 'Therein I perceived, howbeit I trust the Lord did accept and approve our intentions, yet wonderfully he stopped our designs'.⁵⁹

In 1636, Blair and Robert Hamilton, like Livingstone, had little prospect of being reinstated in their Ulster charges. They convinced each other to attempt another trans-Atlantic resettlement.⁶⁰ The ill-fated crossing nearly cost them their lives. The raging seas that caused the failure of the party, which included 140 of their Ulster followers, to reach New England on board a ship called the 'Eaglewing' was interpreted by them as a sign of God's desire for them to work to achieve a Christian society in Ireland that would eventually impact Scotland as political circumstances allowed. By so naming their ship, the leaders of the group hoped to claim the promise God made to the children of Israel in Exodus 19:1-7.⁶¹ The adoption of the name 'Eaglewing' for the ship that would have carried them into the wilderness of North America was consistent with the English Puritan use of the words 'wings' and 'wilderness' in reference to seeking exile during times of oppression.⁶²

To Robert Blair, William Row and John Livingstone, the potentially calamitous consequences awaiting them if they had continued their Atlantic crossing made returning to Ireland seem theologically clear. To the members of their community, God ordained the storms that caused them to turn back on the high seas. Being similarly convinced of God's plan for their earthly work, many English Puritans undertook passage into the wilderness of North America. Unlike their English counterparts who had successfully desacralized England, making it easier to leave the land of their birth, the geothological importance of Scotland, and to a lesser extent of Ulster, arguably kept deposed Presbyterian divines near their sacred land and people. As the returning Eaglewing and its passengers came in sight of the Irish coast, Blair's son-in-law William Row wrote this account of their perception of the situation:

When they came near to Ireland, they began to consult what to do for the future. The major part inclined to set to sea again the next spring, beseeching themselves that they set to sea, the winter approaching; but Mr. Blair said, that though he was the last man that was induced to return, yet they having made a fair offer, not only of their service, but of themselves to God, to spread and propagate the gospel in America, and the Lord had accepted their offer, yea, and of themselves, he thought they had done enough to testify their willing mind to glorify God; and for himself, he for the present resolved never to make a new attempt, seeing the Lord, by such speaking providences and dispensations, had made it evident to them that it was not his will they should

⁵⁸ Livingstone, *Life of Livingstone*, 87; Lockington, *Blair of Bangor*, 19.

⁵⁹ Livingstone, *Life of Livingstone*, 85-7.

⁶⁰ In January 1635, John Winthrop's son visited Livingstone and Blair in Ulster. See Lockington, *Blair of Bangor*, 21.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 21.

⁶² Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 143-54.

glorify him in America, he having work for them at home. All the company of passengers hearing Mr. Blair thus express himself, both ministers and others were of his mind.⁶³

Like Livingstone and Row, Blair was convinced of God's providential plans for Ireland, England and Scotland. He wrote that:

As the Lord has given us a wonderful proof of his omnipotence and kindness to us in stilling the noise of the seas and the noise of their waves, so shall the Lord as evidently give us proof of his sovereignty and dominion over the unruly spirits and tempers of wicked people, in stilling and calming the tumults of the wicked people to whom we are going, and among whom we are to live a space.⁶⁴

Row expressed the view that God made a way for their work to continue in Scotland. Row's reflection shows their belief that political events were caused by God in accordance with his plan:

The Lord fulfilled the word of his servant that not only the wicked; yea, the prelates and their followers were much dismayed and feared at their return. But neither the prelates and conformists, nor they themselves, knew that within a year [by the end of 1638] the Lord would not only root out the prelates in Scotland, and after that out of England and Ireland, but make some of them, especially Messrs Blair, Livingstone, and Maclellan, &c., to be very instrumental in the work of the reformation.⁶⁵

Livingstone clearly believed that his safe return to Scotland was providential. As he wrote: 'It pleased the Lord to bring he and his family safely to Lochryan and Stranraer'.⁶⁶ To Livingstone, this experience, coming on the heels of all the other portentous events that he and his colleagues experienced, was solid confirmation of Scotland's place in salvation history, for on a trip to London three years earlier, Alexander Leighton, an English Puritan, had prophesied to Livingstone that 'He was confident of the downfall of the bishops in Scotland; which came to passe within three years'.⁶⁷

Despite relocating to Scotland where he and his colleagues contributed to the National Covenant movement, which Row called 'the work of the reformation', Livingstone remained committed to ministering to Scots living on both shores of the North Channel of the Irish Sea. In 1638, Livingstone was presented with several employment opportunities in Scotland. Faced with a choice to make with respect to selecting a Scottish charge, he consulted with six divines whom he felt understood true religion. Although he was first inclined to move to Straiton, Livingstone wrote that 'they all [his advisors] having heard both parties, advised me to hearken to the call of Stranraer, being a thoroughfare way within four miles of Portpatrick, and so nearer for the

⁶³ William Row, quoted in Robert Blair, *Life of Mr. Robert Blair: Containing his Autobiography, from 1593 to 1636*, T. M'Crie, ed., Wodrow Society (Edinburgh, 1848), 145.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 145-6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 146.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 103.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 88.

advantage of our people in Ireland'.⁶⁸ His advisors were David Dickson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Blair, William Livingstone (his father), Alexander Henderson, and Andrew Cant.⁶⁹ Livingstone's mentioning of "our people" indicates that a fair portion of Scotland's leading Presbyterian divines recognized the existence of a Scots-Irish community of Presbyterians. Indeed, Livingstone regarded the Scots who lived on both shores of the North Channel or in Atlantic-facing areas such as Derry and Donegal, as residents of one community, and believed that he was called by God to minister to both south-western and Scots-Irish portions of it. In the summer of 1656, he visited Killinchy and made a number of trips to Dublin. A church session in Dublin offered him a stipend of 200 pounds sterling per year to entice him to stay on as its minister. Livingstone recalled that 'I was not loosed from Ancrum, and if I had been. I was resolved rather to settle at Killinchy, among the Scots in the north (Ulster), than anywhere else'.⁷⁰

Although reinstated in Scotland, he was deposed in 1662 by Charles II and went into exile. He died in Rotterdam in 1672, and his death in exile made a martyr out of him. As such, in the eyes of the south-west's post-Restoration Covenanters, his example encouraged their notion of trans-Irish Sea migration for the sake of religious expression, if not theocratic impulses with political consequences.⁷¹

Like Livingstone, Samuel Rutherford who was an admiring friend of Robert Blair and Livingstone, was convinced of God's providence in the personal lives of people as well as their communities and realms. To Rutherford, the south-west of Scotland was especially geoteological. In a letter to William Dalgleish dated 16 June 1637, Rutherford expressed a belief that the Lord was using Galloway to 'make a new kirk unto himself'.⁷² Rutherford also believed that Scotland's role in providence would be shaped by punishment, and so, less than a month after writing to Dalgleish, he presented a letter to his parishioners at Anwoth in Galloway warning them that 'heavy, sad and sore is that stroke of the Lord's wrath that is coming upon Scotland. Woe, woe, woe to this harlot-land'.⁷³ With the churches in Galloway fed a diet of geoteological expositions on their place in sacred history, it is easy to understand how the later Covenanter movement found some fertile soil in the south-west of Scotland.

With the encouragement of numerous offers of indulgences to deposed ministers, a number of the region's divines were ready to give up forcing their beliefs upon a nation that was relatively content with compromises over polity issues, for governance structure probably made little difference to the average parishioner. The merciless campaigns of the Covenanters during the Civil War, together with their threats to those social classes that traditionally held power, contributed much to the Covenanters' inability to capture a wide appeal in Scotland.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the south-west of Scotland remained a schismatic region. The geoteological aspects of Scottish national conceit were carried

⁶⁸ Livingstone, *Life of Livingstone*, 103.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 160-61.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 139.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Rutherford, *Letters*, Nos. 12, 18, and 33.

⁷³ *Ibid.* No. 40.

⁷⁴ T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (London, 1998), 63.

no higher than when a Covenanter during this time remarked that ‘Scotland is the betrothed Virgin: We are espoused to Jesus Christ, and joined to Him, by a marriage covenant, never to be forgotten’.⁷⁵ With the Sanquhar Declaration (22 June 1680) in which the Covenanting element of the population in the south-west declared itself to be the representatives of the true Presbyterian church and the covenanted country, the government, following its Erastian impulses, had little choice but to suppress the movement with more ruthlessness than was shown in prior efforts that featured numerous offers of indulgences to non-conforming divines.⁷⁶ Still, the pervasive belief that God had a special plan for Scotland was maintained. In 1683, at the height of the ‘killing times’, James Renwick, the young and highly controversial leader of the south-west’s Covenanters, wrote these geopious sentiments about both his country and God’s orientation toward it:

The Lord is wonderfully to be seen in every thing and assists in what he calls unto; for, in coming through the country, we had two field meetings, which made me think, that if the Lord could be tied to any place, it is to the mosses and moors of Scotland.⁷⁷

Despite Renwick’s geopious perception of Scotland’s landscape, a new era of intense repression began. Partisans and innocent people alike were forced to submerge into the mass of peasantry that prevailed across Scotland’s south-western Lowlands.⁷⁸ ‘Hard pressed by the official church, often stripped of their livings, such men had become itinerant preachers, taking refuge with their equally fierce Presbyterian Scots brethren in Ulster [where dissenting expressions of Protestantism were tolerated], across the North Channel’.⁷⁹ Likewise when circumstances in Ireland became unpleasant or when circumstances in Scotland permitted, those who fled to Ireland from Scotland would reverse their sails and venture back across the Irish Sea.⁸⁰ They were now outlaws everywhere and were an embarrassment to the Ulster Presbytery, since it was keen to show loyalty to the monarchy. The non-partisan resident in the region was also compelled by the government and his/her own neighbours to keep a low profile or leave. It is, of course, difficult to know how many people immigrated to Ireland simply to stay out of the fray.

In the 1680s, Alexander Shields became a leading minister in the region. He held that Scotland was sacred land and its people blessed. In London during January 1685, he preached a sermon entitled *Naphtali is a Hind Let Loose*. In the sermon, ‘He equated those suffering in south-west Scotland to the tribe of Naphtali—born with great wrestling, blessed with God’s [favor] and beautiful Word, promised lands south and west of the Sea of Galilee, and connected to Judah at the Jordan towards the rising sun’.⁸¹ The Irish Sea thus took on the sacred, geothological qualities of the Sea of Galilee.⁸² The

⁷⁵ Alexander Shields, *Hind Let Loose* (1744), 742, quoted in Donaldson, *James V-James VII*, 316.

⁷⁶ Stevenson, *The Covenanters*, 66-9.

⁷⁷ James Renwick to Loudoun, September 1683, in E. N. Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage: Covenanters’ Struggle for Unity in Truth* (Ross shire, 2000), 102-3.

⁷⁸ Moore, *Covenant Heritage*, 66.

⁷⁹ Schama, *The British Wars 1603-1776*, 89.

⁸⁰ McConnell, *Fasti*, 4-84; See also Vann, ‘Presbyterian Mobility’.

⁸¹ Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage*, 114.

⁸² Alexander Shields, *Hind Let Loose*, (1744), 742, quoted in Donaldson, *James V-James VII*, 316

waterway facilitated the perpetuation of interactive social networks among dissenting Presbyterians, as well as featuring heavily in their geotheological imaging.

According to James Nisbet in *The Private Life*, on 26 April 1685, 'it pleased God in his good providence to send that great man Mr. Alexander Peden to the gentleman's house where I was'.⁸³ The next day, Nisbet records that Peden spoke at great length about the application of biblical truths to the present time. After he finished, Peden seemed to go into a meditative state. 'Then with great emotion of spirit, [he] broke silence and said with a loud voice, "Cursed be those in the name of the Lord that speak of my being come to Scotland" (for he was but come from Ireland a few weeks before)'.⁸⁴ As it turned out, Nisbet wrote that he learned afterward that 'a wicked, malicious woman did, at the same very hour that he pronounced the curse upon her, go and inform the enemy ... where he was'.⁸⁵ Like Nisbet, Peden was chased by dragoons from that and many other places.

While Nisbet and Peden successfully eluded the king's justice, Nisbet's father was not as fortunate. He was executed in the Grassmarket at Edinburgh on 4 December 1685.⁸⁶ Prior to his execution, John Nisbet wrote a letter to the Countess of Loudoun, and after mounting the scaffold he gave a testimony in which he warned that the 'Covenanted God of Scotland hath a dreadful storm of wrath provided, which he will surely pour out suddenly and unexpectedly like a thunder-bolt upon these covenanted lands, for their perfidy, treachery, and woeful apostasy'.⁸⁷ Similarly, Alexander Peden predicated that a seven year famine would strike the land for Scotland's apostasy.⁸⁸ Indeed the famine of the late 1690s must have convinced some residents of the south-west that God had indeed sent his wrath on Scotland. In 1698, Andrew Fletcher estimated that there were 200,000 beggars roaming about in Scotland.⁸⁹

The Nisbets and Peden were not alone in predicting God's wrath on a sinful Kirk and its nation during the later seventeenth-century. Even those who opposed the Covenanting movement, in the wake of the execution of Charles I, were not against calling upon Scottish geopious sentiments for their own purposes. James Sibbald, acting as sort of a prophet against the Covenanting movement, called upon Scottish geopietty in his published sermons of 1658:

Lastly, we have yet another pregnant motive to perswade us to sorrow and repentance at this time, that is, the danger of our Church and countrey. Who seeth not a fire kindled in the Wrath of God, which threatneth this Church and Land with desolation

⁸³ Nisbet, *Private Life*, 102-03.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See James Nisbet, 'A True Relation of the Life and Sufferings of John Nisbet in Hardhill,' *Select Biographies*, William K. Tweedie ed. 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845-47), 24. See also Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage*, 130.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Moore, *Our Covenant Heritage*, 181.

⁸⁹ Andrew Fletcher, quoted in David Ross, *Chronology of Scottish History* (New Lanark, 2002), 70.

... Oftentimes we have foretold you that God would visit for the sinnes committed in this land, and that he would be avenged on such a nation as this.⁹⁰

Unlike Scotland, however, Ireland in the late-1600s was not subject to God's wrath as warned by Puritan-Presbyterian divines. As David Stevenson wrote, 'many accepted and glorified in the developing national myth of their church as the 'best reformed' of all churches, and this myth was becoming attached specifically to the Presbyterian party'.⁹¹ The Kirk's offspring, the Presbytery of Ulster, despite not meeting between 1661 and 1690, was alive and flourishing.

In the last half of the seventeenth-century and for much of the first decade of the eighteenth, Ireland was indeed regarded by many as a blessed land for dissenting Protestants. With the influx of Covenanters, Ulster Presbyterianism, already Puritan, took on the rigidity of that theology.⁹² It must be noted, however, that many of the newcomers eventually turned to theological liberalism, enlightenment theology; Arianism, Deism, and a number of others were decidedly against subscription to the confessions of faith. Of course, many Puritan-Presbyterians continued migrating; and, by 1776, some 250,000 Ulster-Scots were living in the middle and southern colonies of North America.⁹³

CONCLUSION

In the minds of Scottish and Ulster-Scots Presbyterians, Scotland and its Kirk were critical participants in, even leaders of, the works of the invisible church, which they hoped to make more visible. The conviction that God had called their country to lead the reformation in the pursuit of true religion was not limited to Scots. That lofty, geoteological goal was shared by English Puritans, who like their seventeenth-century Scots counterparts, believed that greater opportunities to build 'a shining city on a hill' existed. Unlike seventeenth-century Scottish Puritans, however, many English Puritans believed a Christian commonwealth was to be built in the wilderness of America. To a number of Scots divines who served in Ulster, it was God who placed them and their country in their role to lead all kirks of every realm in establishing the true Christian faith. That belief was expressed in the National Covenant and sworn to by many Lowlanders.

The underling ethos that influenced the contents of the document was preserved in both the south-west of Scotland and Ulster by the ebb and flow of political pressure that pushed disaffected Puritan-Presbyterian ministers back and forth across the North Channel. Being on the fringe of Scottish political and social power, the religious leaders in the area were encouraged to embrace the Covenant's geoteological vision of their country's place in sacred history. The Puritan-Presbyterian vision of Scotland's and Ireland's geoteological significance nurtured, as described by Donaldson, a 'national

⁹⁰ James Sibbald, *Diverse Select Sermons* (Aberdeen, 1658), 183. For a standard text on the apocalyptic tradition in the covenanter movement see Katherine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979).

⁹¹ Stevenson, *Covenanters*, 8.

⁹² James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1962), 132.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

conceit' among the members of that community which made ecclesiastical compromise difficult, if not impossible, with Episcopalians.

Avihu Zakai points out that seventeenth-century Puritanism was a supra-ecclesiastical power. More importantly, it was a 'strong social and political force able to disturb and divide communities with its uncompromising plea for full social and religious reformation'.⁹⁴ Zakai further explains that the Puritan failure to achieve reformation through the creation of 'a godly, Christian society and the increasing strife between the 'godly' and the 'profane' at the local level caused, in large measure, thousands of English Puritans to emigrate to New England in order to realize in the American wilderness their vision of the holy Christian society.'⁹⁵ The Scots ministers who served in Ulster were likewise eager to establish a sanctuary for themselves and Christ's kingdom; and, while the depleted environs of Ulster presented Scots with something of a wilderness, the geopious basis of their perception of Scottish land further encouraged them to stay closer to the scared soil of home. Relocating to New England may have also meant that they would have had to become 'New Englishmen' (an anathema to Scots and Irish folk).⁹⁶ At any rate, Zakai's description of the schismatic tendencies of Puritans, as well as of their desire to establish 'a shining city on a hill' can also be applied to Scots who settled in Ulster as well as to English pioneers in New England, for they certainly embraced geotheological notions that either sacralized or desacralized their land, Kirk, and people.

As Livingstone's comments show, a significant portion of the southwest's leading Presbyterian ministers regarded those living in Ulster as part of their Scottish community. Since he and Blair were former residents of Ulster and indeed frequent visitors to Ireland, it is likely that they were echoing the thoughts of many of the Scots living inland of the western shores of the Irish Sea. Nonetheless, by 1718 political events in Ireland caused members of the Ulster-Scots Presbyterian community to view America as a sacred land on which to continue God's work.⁹⁷ Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it should be mentioned that the 250,000 Ulster folk, who lived mostly in the middle and southern colonies, contributed their sense of geotheology to the politically influential southern region known as the American Bible Belt.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 211.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Barry Vann, *Rediscovering the South's Celtic Heritage* (Johnson City, 2004), 1-60.

⁹⁷ Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, 1985), 159; Barry Vann, 'Irish Protestants and the Creation of the Bible Belt', *The Journal of Transatlantic Studies* (2007), 5(1), 87-106.

⁹⁸ Vann, *Rediscovering the South's Celtic Heritage*; Barry Aron Vann, *In Search of Ulster-Scots Land: The Birth and Geotheological Imagings of a Transatlantic People, 1603-1703* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

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Book Reviews

Yorgason, Ethan R. *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region*. Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 2003. 280 pp. \$32.50

Ethan Yorgason describes *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region* as a work in the “new regional geography.” Explicit in this approach is the integration of social theory and cultural studies with the tradition of identifying a region by one or more unifying characteristics. The title of the book draws forth from our collection of mental maps an area somewhere in the Western states focused on, but not limited to, Utah. *Transformation* covers several aspects of evolving Mormon culture between 1880 and 1920, and builds on the work of Donald W. Meinig’s 1965 article, “The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West: 1847-1964” (Meinig). Whereas Meinig’s definition of the Mormon region is essentially the area under the influence of the Mormon church, Yorgason’s more nuanced approach focuses on the social and cultural conditions driving the creation of regional differences.

From the Introduction through the Afterword, the text runs 192 pages. In the Introduction, Yorgason states that “understanding the Mormon culture region, its current conservative cultural characteristics, and its place within the American West, depends on understanding the struggles over and transformation of the cultural values of the region’s inhabitants since the nineteenth century” (3). In Chapter One, The Region as the Unit of Analysis, Yorgason elaborates the notion of “region” in the context of the “new regional geography,” explains his methodology, and discusses the various historical resources used in the study. As to the cultural values that are the focus of his thesis, these are covered in Chapters Two through Five: Moderating Feminist Imaginations; Privatizing Mormon Communitarianism; Re-presenting America; and A New Type of Home. There are an additional 24 pages of end notes and a copious 34-page Works Cited list. Well-researched and articulate, it has the feel of a published doctoral dissertation.

In Chapter Two, Yorgason elucidates evolving gender roles by analyzing the female youth literature for the four decades under study. He examines the relationship between Mormon polygamy and women’s rights, and sheds light on the notion of Mormon feminism. Throughout the book he explores the dynamic relationship between Mormon and non-Mormon communities, and in this chapter considers the importance of Mormon feminism to regional feminism.

Chapter Three, Privatizing Mormon Communitarianism, considers the Mormon culture region in terms of its economy, in particular, its evolution from a self-sufficient, group-centered economic philosophy with a spiritual undercurrent to a situation in which spiritual and secular interests were balanced. Along the way, the head of the church, Joseph F. Smith, divested the church from a number of businesses. While *Transformation* is essentially a work in qualitative analysis, Yorgason used U.S. Census data to compute a “vulnerability index,” essentially a location quotient, in order to determine the degree to which the region produced what it consumed.

Non-Mormons in the Mormon culture region often accused the Latter-Day Saints of being un-American, that is, not loyal to the federal government. Yorgason explores this theme in Chapter Four, cleverly titled Re-presenting America. The question about one’s greater loyalty to church or state reminds us of John F. Kennedy’s 1960 presidential campaign, or whose interests would be greater served by a Catholic president—the American polity or the Vatican. As Yorgason points out, in the 1880s the Mormon interpretation of national loyalty “implied loyalty

to the Constitution and the principles upon which they felt the country had been created (especially religious freedom)” (131). Over the course of time, this narrow view expanded to include obedience to and support for the federal government as well as conformance to dominant social and cultural practices.

In Chapter Five, A New Type of Home, we are reminded that the transformation of the region between 1880-1920 was due in large part to the struggles between Mormons and non-Mormons. The result is a socio-cultural region that is distinct from both mainstream Protestantism and the American system. The divergences along the interdependent lines of gender, economics and national loyalty work in concert to create a strong Mormon sense of place. To describe the process as the “Americanization” of the Mormon culture region is both accurate and misleading for reasons well-documented in *Transformation*.

Yorgason closes *Transformation* with a personal and speculative commentary on how Utah and the Mormon region are perceived today. He contemplates the continuing dynamic between Mormon and non-Mormon interaction, the unifying thread through each of the thematic chapters.

Although well-researched and highly informative, as a work in regional geography—new or traditional—one would expect to see a graphic rendering of the region, that is, at least one map. If the “new regional geography” is indeed geography, then should not one’s spatial hypotheses find expression through the geographer’s primary tool of communication? We are left wondering if the evolution of the interdependent variables of gender, economics and national loyalty over time result in shifting boundaries to the Mormon culture region, or if the initial regional boundaries are static and thus not really terribly germane to the thesis.

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Waldau, Paul and Kimberley Patton (Eds). *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science and Ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. 686pp. \$60.00

In many ways *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science and Ethics* is a key volume for the Geography of Religion and Belief Systems. One might say that it does for the sub-field what Emel and Wolch's (1998) *Animal Geographies* did for social and political geography: it develops geographic concerns *through* (rather than simply about) the animal realm in such a way as to display the centrality of this "more-than-human" world to all facets of life, including spiritual and ecological alongside political, economic, cultural, aesthetic and somatic.

Yet with the notable groundbreaking achievements, we find it surprising that the discipline of geography seems to have been overlooked as a realm of potentially valuable academic inquiry. "Geographic concerns" are present – e.g., the regulation of human-environment relations, the co-constitution of identity and space, the social construction of self and "other" through places and/or through nature – but these concerns have been couched as the interests of a grouping of multi-disciplinary scholars from which geographers seem to be an omitted class. This absence does not really limit the volume's applicability to the geographic study of religion, but it does restrict vital theoretical input to the very task that the volume claims to inaugurate.

A Communion of Subjects is a collected volume through which over forty scholars explore issues as diverse as animal sentience, biotechnology and religious sacrifice. Indeed, despite the absence of geographic scholarship, the volume offers, through a multiplicity of epistemological perspectives, a thorough and thoughtful collection of works from scholars of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Daoism, Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, as well as numerous indigenous traditions. Many of the individual chapters sensitively detail one or more of these world religions focusing on specific issues relevant to both written texts and placed practices. These chapters are individually fascinating; moreover, when assessed as a whole, another type of contribution comes to light especially relevant for geography: a new and epistemologically pointed pattern of phrasing and language.

Geographers in and outside of the study of religion (e.g. Bondi 1997, Kong 2004, Slater 2004) have insisted on the need to pay attention to academic expression and phrasing for a variety of ethical, political, and intellectual reasons. The rationale for the new pattern of words and phrases that develops in this volume is twofold: not only does it aid in clarifying the multiple roles that animals play in religion, but also, and more broadly, it allows for a robust, persuasive mode of argumentation (which is in continual development by the originators of this volume) regarding an urgent need to take better care of the Earth. This new language is perhaps epitomized in repeated phrases like "interconnectedness" or "a multiplicity of intelligences" but it extends well beyond these examples and, due to its manifold voices (e.g., biologists, theologians, veterinarians, philosophers) would seem to be translatable across diverse epistemologies. Yet, while varied, this new language has not developed randomly; it has emerged from the particular

challenge extended by cultural historian Thomas Berry that all scholars begin to address animals, and indeed all aspects of the universe, as “a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects.” Each of the contributors uses this challenge to weave a new means of scholarly exchange that could prove useful for geography in both a pragmatic (communicative) and a rhetorical (persuasive) sense.

The volume is too long to comment here on each of the essays separately. The works have been organized into eleven parts, supplemented by an introduction (from both editors) and a conclusion by scholar Mary Evelyn Tucker, whose Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE) at Harvard provided much of the impetus for the book. Part I serves as a grounding of sorts, with essays that attempt to outline the interdisciplinary field of ‘Religion and Animals’ and suggest some points of contention. Parts II-V most directly detail the role of animals in the world’s varied religious traditions, ending with a discussion of philosophical and cultural merging of East and West. Parts VI, VII and VIII cover animals in myth, ritual and art, respectively, using these themes to touch such foundational questions as: How have animals been central to the human construction of meaning? How can personhood and animal-*being* be understood in the context of hunting, sacrifice, and ritual? And, what does it mean to conceive of a mutuality of knowing between humans and non-humans? Finally Parts IX-XI examine relationships between animals, science, and ethics including consideration of life sciences, agriculture, animal ‘mentation,’ law, and social and environmental policy. Essay abstracts are offered at the beginning of the volume for all papers from the eleven parts; while potentially useful, these abstracts are organized alphabetically, making the logic of the volume’s structural organization hard to detect.

The editors of *A Communion of Subjects* note that the volume is a small beginning and encourage more work in the delineation of the field of Religion and Animals. Hopefully, this future work will find ways to cross over with geography. We will take a few moments here to note some of the potential fields of cross-fertilization we encountered in the book. First, potential linkages are evident throughout the volume with recent geographic work on emotion and affect in religion (e.g., Holloway 2006). Although the contributors tend to discuss emotions and feelings in classic representational or humanistic ways, the tone of the volume as a whole maintains a keen awareness of a more-than-representational, affective relationality between humans and non-humans, which is (or could be) “put to task” in religious/spiritual settings to carry humanity through difficult eco-social challenges¹. Associated with this attention to affect is a fluctuating attentiveness to bodily and sensory (haptic) ways of knowing in the volume. Although some contributors focus on mental epistemologies, maintaining a (mind-body) dualistic approach, others (especially John Grim in his eloquent discussion of indigenous understandings of “being known” by animals) introduce alternative theoretical lenses by making room for nondualistic cosmologies.

Beyond recent trends of affect and embodiment this volume makes available numerous new linkages between the geography of religion and topics of concern in other geographic sub-fields. At the top of the list may be the in-depth discussion of agribusiness and the politics of the agro-food sector, a topic of increasing concern to

social and political geographers, which FORE frames as an issue of religion and spirituality². Equally important may be the volume's discussion of ecofeminism, which reveals a need to pay attention to the interlocking oppressions of humans and non-humans in the study of religion. Finally, multiple assertions, such as E.N. Anderson and Lisa Raphals's suggestion that Daoist thinking could be crucial for ecosystem management, illustrate the volume's continual, inviting flow of somewhat haphazard or rhizomatic associations made among and between varied topics, approaches, and subfields in the geographic study of religion and beliefs systems.

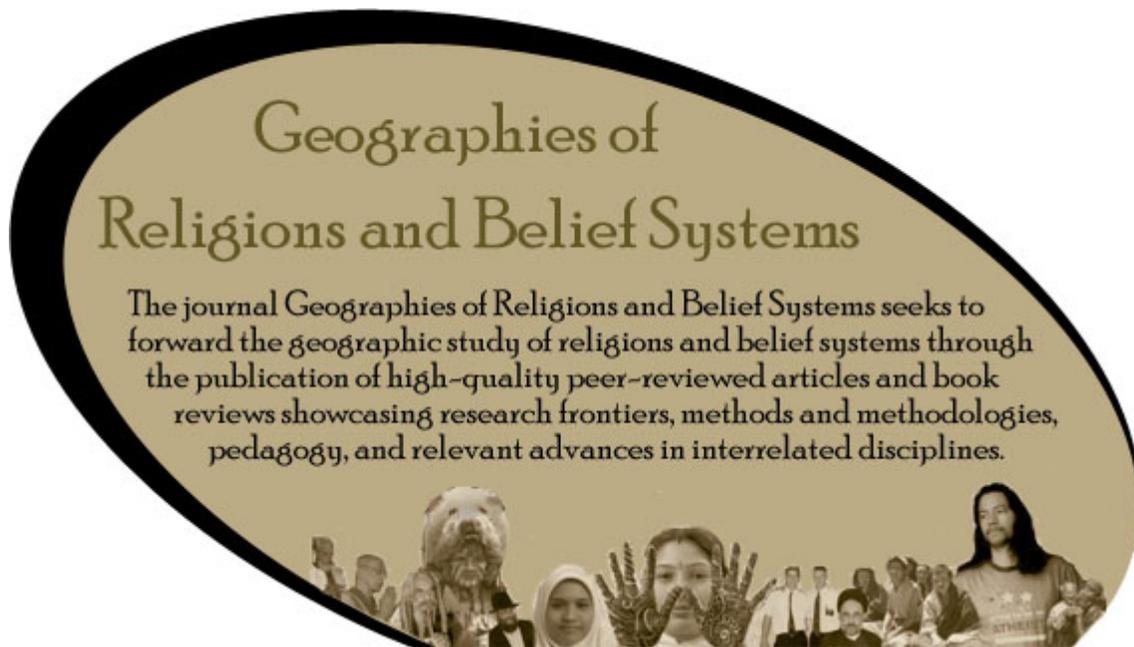
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¹ Mitch Rose's (2002) Landscape and labyrinths (*Geoforum* 33) and others broadly following non-representational theory (NRT) have used the term "put to task" to refer to the catalytic capacity of the material world to create varied forces that may inspire a diversity of actions.

² FORE conferences held in 1998 and 1999 at Harvard University and Yale University, respectively, were two of the first to integrate the issue of agriculture as a central issue in the study of religion and ecology. Those and subsequent conferences witnessed the conception and planning of this volume, with the integration of agriculture as a key theme.



AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Geographies of Religions and Belief Systems seeks to forward the geographic study of religion and belief systems through the publication of high-quality peer-reviewed articles and book reviews showcasing research frontiers, methods and methodologies, pedagogy, and relevant advances in complimentary disciplines. The journal seeks to publish via the World Wide Web one issue per year with substantive articles concerning the broad range of topics in the geography of religions and belief systems.

Geographies of Religions and Beliefs Systems publishes articles with diverse topical foci, variable epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches, and a range of researchers, from accomplished senior scholars to those in early career stages. Hence, the following four types of articles will be considered for publication:

1) Full length articles

Full length articles should be no more than 10,000 words and should describe fully developed research with final conclusions.

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Essays should be no more than 4,000 words and may describe beginning or ongoing projects. They do not necessarily have to report final conclusions.

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Dialog in the form of comments, exchange and debate should be limited to 2500 words.

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Reviews should be approximately 1000 words in length.

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Articles may be submitted at any time. All articles should be submitted electronically in Word, WordPerfect, or Rich Text format and will be fully double-blind peer-reviewed electronically. Therefore, authors should avoid recognizable references to themselves or their institutions until the paper is accepted for publication. Illustrations should be embedded in the text. All main text should be Times New Roman 12 point, double-spaced, with ragged (not justified) right margin.

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Article:

Sitwell, O.F.G. 1981. *Elements of the cultural landscape as figures of speech*, Canadian Geographer 25: 167-180.

Book Chapter:

Jakle, John A. 1990. Social stereotypes and place images: People on the trans-Appalachian frontier as viewed by travelers, in *Place Images in Media: Portrayal, Experience and Meaning*, ed. Leo Zonn, 83-103. Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

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