Narrowing the Gap:
The Secularization of the Kingdom of God in Western Theology

by

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ABSTRACT

Charles Taylor contends that the Reformation inaugurates secularization. According to him, secularism is the result of the decline of a two-tiered perspective on time towards seeing it as simply secular. This process alters many Christian concepts, including the Kingdom of God.

Taylor divides secular time into three modes: the paleo-, neo-, and post-Durkheimian. In the paleo-Durkheimian there is an irreducible separation between the spiritual and the secular. By the time we reach the post-Durkheimian the separation has been so drastically reduced that many now believe that the message of the Kingdom can be implemented in the secular.

In this thesis I will trace how the process of secularization alters our sociological understanding of the Kingdom, starting with Augustine and ending with Brian McLaren’s post-Durkheimian understanding. In the final section I will analyze how the ideal of the Kingdom can become a reality through the process of secularization.
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1  

Chapter 1: The Paleo- and Neo-Durkheimian Modes .............................................. 8  
  1.1 The Paleo-Durkheimian Mode ......................................................................... 8  
  1.2 The Neo-Durkheimian Mode ......................................................................... 13  
    1.2.1 Martin Luther ......................................................................................... 13  
    1.2.2 John Calvin ........................................................................................... 15  
    1.2.3 The Anabaptists ...................................................................................... 18  
    1.2.4 Thomas Hobbes ..................................................................................... 20  
    1.2.5 Kant, The Enlightenment, and Excarnation .......................................... 21  
    1.2.6 Romanticism .......................................................................................... 25  
    1.2.7 Hegel’s Synthesis ................................................................................... 29  
    1.2.8 John Wesley .......................................................................................... 33  
    1.2.9 William Wilberforce .............................................................................. 36  
    1.2.10 Manifest Destiny .................................................................................. 39  
    1.2.11 Alfred North Whitehead ....................................................................... 44  
    1.2.12 Millenarianism ..................................................................................... 46  
    1.2.13 Walter Rauschenbusch ....................................................................... 49  
    1.2.14 Liberation Theology ............................................................................ 52  
    1.2.15 Fundamentalism .................................................................................... 53  

Chapter 2: Brian McLaren and the Post-Durkeimian Mode ..................................... 58  

Chapter 3: The Antagonistic Pedagogies ................................................................ 76  

Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 94  

Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 99
Introduction

The contemporary theological landscape has changed drastically in the last couple of decades. One of the most prominent examples of this change can be examined with the appearance of the Emergent Church movement and the debate over what defines authentic Christianity since its arrival. This debate is between these Emergents and any Christian denominations in the West that would be labelled fundamentalists.¹ But what is the root cause of the discord between these groups?

According to Charles Taylor, this discord results from the fact that these two groups are born out of distinct social imaginaries: one that reached its zenith in an early era of Christian history and whose presence is still powerfully felt, and one that is just beginning to emerge.

Before proceeding, addressing what Charles Taylor means by a social imaginary will be of great benefit for this thesis. According to Taylor a social imaginary is a “context or framework of the taken-for-granted.”² He most clearly defines it when he states,

I am thinking rather of the ways in which they imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations.³

In a religious purview, and in the context of this thesis, it means that,

Belief in God isn’t quite the same thing in 1500 and 2000. I am not referring to the fact that even orthodox Christianity has undergone important changes (e.g. the “decline of Hell,” new understandings of the atonement). Even in regard to identical credal positions, there is an important difference. This emerges as soon as we take account of the fact that all beliefs are held within a context or framework of

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¹ This term is far too narrow to capture all those who resist McLaren’s teachings. A broader definition of those in this group will be addressed shortly.
³ Ibid: 171.
the taken-for-granted, which usually remains tacit and may even be as yet unacknowledged by the agent because it was never formulated.4

The social imaginaries that I will endeavour to reveal are those found in Charles Taylor’s Durkheimian modes. Taylor uses a modified form of Émile Durkheim’s understanding regarding religion and society. He uses the term Durkheimian to demarcate the “link between adhering to God and belonging to the state.”5 He divides Western history into three modes: the paleo-, the neo-, and the post-Durkheimian, and these modes alter as the world becomes increasingly secular (by Charles Taylor’s understanding of secularization). It is the battle between neo- and post-Durkheimian Christianity that creates the conflict between the modern Fundamentalists and the Emergent Church, as each represents a very different social imaginary. This was also the case when the paleo- and the neo-Durkheimian modes existed concurrently.6 Thus, I will use these modes to reveal an important aspect of our modern religious climate in the West. It should be further noted that the modes only apply to political observance or, simply put, the relationship between church and state.

It must also be stated here that the Durkheimian modes represent ideal types. As such, if there is a time when these types existed ideally it was likely for a short period of human history, with the exception of the paleo-Durkheimian mode, which reigned mostly unheeded for a substantial period of Christian history. Once the neo-Durkheimian mode

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5 Ibid: 486. The whole quotation from which I draw this excerpt is, “Under the paleo-Durkheimian dispensation, my connection to the sacred entailed my belonging to a church, in principle co-extensive with society, although in fact there were perhaps tolerated outsiders, and as yet undisciplined heretics. The neo-Durkheimian dispensation saw me enter the denomination of my choice, but that in turn connected me to a broader, more elusive ‘church’, and more importantly, to a political entity with a providential role to play. In both these cases, there was a link between adhering to God and belonging to the state—hence my epithet ‘Durkheimian.’”
6 This is the essence of the Reformation where the paleo-Durkheimian Roman Catholic Church battled with the rapidly arising early form of the neo-Durkheimian Protestant church.
enters the scene, people are usually caught between it and the paleo-Durkheimian mode, until much later when the neo-Durkheimian mode becomes the primary or sole mode. Now that the post-Durkheimian mode has entered the fray, most are caught between it and the neo-Durkheimian. Further, not all movements can be accommodated by the modes. Certain sects, such as the Mennonites cannot be placed in any of these modes, as the Durkheimian modes only apply to political observance, something the Mennonites quickly rejected. In addition, the post-liberals, which include Karl Barth, John Howard Yoder, and Stanley Hauerwas, as critics of the marriage of Christianity and culture, cannot be placed into these modes either. Most other sociological movements reflect aspects of two modes, thus they do not fit neatly into any one of them. What I am trying to address in this thesis is Taylor’s sociological movement through Christian history. As such, these modes do capture the social imaginary of the majority of Christian individuals’ political relation to the secular world at a particular period of history. Primarily I use these terms as a heuristic device to best define the distinctions between opposing social imaginaries prevalent in Christianity now and in the past. Further, I will show the evolution of the modes through selected philosophers and theologians who best represent a particular sociological movement.

Before proceeding one must ask how Charles Taylor defines secularization. According to him, the world prior to the coming of Luther tended to see the ‘cosmos’ as operating within two times: higher time and secular time. In this age the world operated on a set of principles based on a hierarchical equilibrium founded on this two-tiered understanding of time. Taylor refers to this earlier period as the paleo-Durkheimian

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7 The term ‘cosmos’ in Taylor refers to how those in the paleo-Durkheimian mode understood their world, as opposed to how modern people understand theirs as a universe, a place of empty infinite time.
mode. However, with the coming of Luther, the abolition of the higher vacation, and the establishment of a priesthood of all believers,

There were not to be any more ordinary and super-Christians. The renunciative vocations were abolished. All Christians were to be totally dedicated . . . a levelling up which left no further room for different speeds.

This move to a priesthood of all believers begins the move to secularization, as by eliminating the hierarchical equilibrium, the concept of higher and lower time slowly recede until finally, “‘Secular’ time is what to us is ordinary time, indeed, to us it's just time, period.”

It comes to the point in which most people in the Western world find themselves in now, that is to say they see their lives playing out exclusively in secular time. Along with this elimination of the multi-speed system, the two tiered understanding of time, and the elimination of the higher vocations, secularization brings about the process of Reform into the public and private spheres. By imputing the priestly demands into the ordinary life of all, the need to remake society over as a more egalitarian, peaceful, and ‘civilized’ world enters the social imaginary of all in the West. This sense of Reform imbibes all aspects of life in the secular age: humanitarian desires are emphasized in the public sphere and in the private sphere there is a greater emphasis on ordinary human fulfillments. Taylor clearly states, regarding the increased emphasis on ordinary human fulfillments in the private sphere, that “the affirmation that the fullness of Christian

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8 Charles Taylor writes about the paleo-Durkheimian mode in A Secular Age, “Here invoking my discussion above about the development of modern social imaginaries, we can say that the understanding of order widespread among the people (as against the Enlightenment conceptions circulating among elites) is the pre-modern kind, an order of hierarchical complimentary, which is grounded in the Divine Will, or the law which holds since time out of mind, or the nature of things.” Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 438.

9 Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 77

10 Ibid: 55

11 Taylor capitalizes the word reform when he uses it to mean Reform of society, or the push of civilization identity.
existence was to be found within the activities of this life, in one’s calling and in marriage and in the family.”¹² And in the public sphere this means that,

We all should work to improve human condition, relieve suffering, overcome poverty, increase prosperity, and augment human welfare. We should strive to leave the world a more prosperous place than we found it.¹³

These two areas both come from the same source and work to the same end: that is, the ‘affirmation of ordinary human fulfillment.’ This anthropocentric leaning, Taylor argues, is behind the fundamental shift in our social imaginary, which can only be manifest in tangible secular time. Thus as a result of this change, Taylor can contend that now “We are all partisans of human rights.”¹⁴

Being that the Durkheimian modes are defined by one’s political leaning and secularization on how one relates to their world, and that this thesis is an examination of conflicting Christian social imaginaries, I will focus solely on “the politically charged concept of the ‘Kingdom of God.’”¹⁵ Further, regarding the post-Durkheimian social imaginary I will focus solely on Brian McLaren’s understanding of the Kingdom of God. I choose Brian McLaren here for two reasons: first, he is the most prominent Emergent Church theologian, and second, because his beliefs regarding the Kingdom are very much a result of his post-Durkheimian social imaginary.

It is not difficult to discern that for McLaren, secular ideals fundamentally alter his social imaginary, as is evident when he writes,

The secret message of Jesus isn’t primarily about “heaven after you die.” It doesn’t give us an exit ramp or escape hatch from this world; rather, it

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¹³ Ibid: 85.
¹⁴ Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 419.
thrusts us back into the here and now so we can be part of God’s dream for planet earth coming true.  

It should be clear here that for him the heart of the Gospel message is to bring about a Reform to society so that it is a place that aims to “improve the human condition, relieve suffering, overcome poverty, increase prosperity, augment human welfare.”

Bringing the discussion back to the correlation between secularization and the Kingdom of God, we can best see how these two relate in a quotation by Charles Taylor in *A secular Age*, when he contends, regarding the process of secularization of the Kingdom of God,

The full demands of Christian life would never be met, outside of isolated pockets of sanctity, in history, but only in the Parousia, at the end of time. It was recognized that there were structural features of our existence here, for instance, the existence of states, and of private property, which were inseparable from our fallen condition; these were necessary to mitigate some of the disastrous effects of the Fall, but just for this reason, they couldn't be projected forward into the eschaton. This meant that two orders in which the Christian lived, the City of God and the earthly city, to use Augustine’s expression, could never be totally in true with each other. There were strains. And this was reflected in differential rules of action, which may seem to us today to be hypocritical or inconsistent. So war was allowed in certain circumstances, but clergy should not take part in combat. The Church itself could not use force to fight heresy, but this was left to the “secular arm.” And it is true that these arrangements easily passed over into mere expedients to protect the appearance of ecclesiastical innocence and non-involvement. But within the then-regent outlook there was no totally comfortable way of smoothly combining the demands of the two orders. A central part of my story in earlier chapters is the way in which the drive to Reform tended to bring these demands closer to each other. The thrust of Reform was to make the Church in which everyone should show the same degree of personal commitment and devotion, which had hitherto been the stance of a dedicated elite. This would be a Church in which all genuine members (excluding the damned) should strive integrally to fulfill the Gospel. To carry through on this Reform required that one define a way of life open to everyone, which would amount to such an integral fulfillment; and this couldn't help but bring about a definition of the demands of Christian faith closer into line with what is attainable in this world, with

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17 Charles Taylor. *Sources of the Self*: 85.
what can be realized in history. The distance between the ultimate City of God and the properly Christian-conforming earthly one has to be reduced.  

My task in this thesis will be to illuminate how this distinction between the two Cities has been reduced. Therefore, I will examine the process of secularization of the Kingdom of God within the context of Taylor’s three Durkheimian modes. This will take us from Augustine’s understanding of the Kingdom of God to McLaren’s understanding of it. Upon reaching McLaren’s perspective on the Kingdom of God I will illustrate how his understanding finds its voice in the contemporary post-Durkheimian social imaginary. In the fourth section of this thesis I will address Charles Taylor’s concept of God’s pedagogy, which he derives from René Girard’s parallel histories. In doing so I plan to show the providential nature of the process of secularization, along with a demonic degradation that manifests itself as the counterpart to this providential progression. My hope is this will allow us to see God’s active work in history through the process of secularization. In the conclusion I hope to address Brian McLaren’s place in the providential march of secularism.

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18 Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 735
Chapter 1:
The Paleo- and Neo-Durkheimian Modes

It should be noted that this thesis is not a tracing of the theory of the Kingdom of God\textsuperscript{19} throughout history, as this would far exceed the parameters of this thesis, and it would be somewhat superfluous, as there are already wonderful works that tackle this topic (M.H. Abrams’s *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition in Romantic Literature*, Richard Neihbur’s *The Kingdom of God in America*, and Carl L. Beckett’s *The Heavenly Cities of The Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, to name a few). Rather the point of tracing the development of the Kingdom of God in this thesis is to show that the march of secularization also alters with the Christian understanding of this political ideal. I will follow this development until we reach the post-Durkheimian understanding of the Kingdom of God that we find in Brian McLaren’s work. In the following two sections I will attempt to illustrate that the concept of the Kingdom of God follows the pattern of secularization that Taylor illuminates upon in *A Secular Age*; however, in this section I will only deal with the first two modes, the paleo- and the neo-Durkheimian.

1.1 The Paleo-Durkheimian Mode

I will of course begin with the paleo-Durkheimian mode. With little doubt the best place to start the examination of this mode is with Augustine. In his works one can find the most potent basis of a two-tiered understanding of the Kingdom of God in Christian history and theology. About the two Kingdoms, which Augustine refers to as the City of God and the City of Man, he writes, “That City, in which it has been promised that we

\textsuperscript{19} The terms Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, and the City of God may be used interchangeably in this thesis.
shall reign, differs from the earthly city as widely as the sky from the earth, life eternal from temporal joy, substantial glory from empty praises, the society of angels from the society of men, the light of the Maker of the sun and the moon from the light of the sun and the moon."\textsuperscript{20} For Augustine, there existed an irreducible dualism between the two cities, as the City of God is the higher spiritual city and the City of Man is the material city and is therefore the site of flux, sin, and decay. This can be unequivocally demonstrated when he states, “There can be no direct meeting between the immortal purity on high and the mortal unclean things below.”\textsuperscript{21} In this one can quite readily see a Neo-Platonic dualism, which Augustine draws from Manichaeism (a form of gnosticism), which he was an adherent of at an earlier period in his life. G.R. Evans, speaking about this dualism, states, “He found it impossible . . . to shake off after he became Christian.”\textsuperscript{22}

Augustine, like the neo-Platonist Plotinus, works from a theory of emanations, which established his system of hierarchy. He referred to this hierarchical system as the ‘order of nature.’ He states, about the hierarchical system of his ‘order of nature,’

\begin{quote}
Immortal beings are higher than mortals, angels being higher than men . . . in establishing the order of rational beings, such weight is attached to the qualities of freedom and love, that although angels are superior to men in the order of nature, good men rank above the evil angels according to the criterion of righteousness.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

That is to say, that which is closer in likeness to the holy spiritual (e.g. a priest over a peasant) has higher ranking in this order. This hierarchical system establishes the political structure of the paleo-Durkheimian mode.

\textsuperscript{21} Augustine: XI: 17.
\textsuperscript{23} Augustine. \textit{The City of God}: XI. 16.
From Augustine’s ‘order of nature’ one can deduce several important points about his Two Cities. First, that there can be no belief that the Kingdom of God could be established on the earth, as for him, “Anyone who hopes for so great a blessing in this world and on this earth is a fool.” This is so because the secular world is at a much lower status in Augustine’s theory of emanations, and therefore it is much more impure than the spiritual worlds above. Second, “it is, strictly speaking, for the sake of eternal life alone that we are Christians.” As the Kingdom of God is found in a higher plane in Augustine’s emanations the only way to reach it is to leave this world and ascend to the spiritual realm. Finally, there can be no rebellion or revolution in this ‘order of nature’ as “it remains true that slavery as a punishment is also ordained by the law which enjoins the preservation of the order of nature, and forbids its disturbance.” This is a concept that will be potently rebelled against in the neo-Durkheimian mode and outright rejected in the post-Durkheimian mode.

According to Taylor, what defines the Paleo-Durkheimian model is “an order of hierarchical complementary, which is grounded in the Divine Will, or the Law which holds since time out of mind, or the nature of things.” This model fits well within the Neo-Platonic ideals of Augustine in which the ‘order of nature’ ‘forbids disturbance.’ In this mode political identity is based on an Archimedean point that ‘holds since time out of mind’ and on which hierarchical equilibrium finds its identity. It should not be

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surprising that there is no belief (in the paleo-Durkheimian mode) that the Kingdom of God cannot be brought forth on the earth, as “The earthly city was the site of sin.”28

However these two cities do co-exist together in secular time.29 This means that the Kingdom of God is not fully here even in the church, and, further, that not all the adherents of the church are participants of God’s City. The City of God instead must be separated from the City of Man in an age yet to come. It also means that even though the participants in the City of God live here and use ‘temporal’ systems, such as politics, and that these structures only exist to restrain humanity’s baser instincts until the end of this world.30 This common refrain to the use of politics as a measure to control humanity’s baser instincts is a significant part of Christian theology until the advent of Evangelicalism.

It is not this understanding of the Kingdom of God alone that makes Augustine such a seminal figure in Christian history, as he is also the first philosopher or theologian to turn inward to find moral and spiritual sources. Prior to Augustine, for those who adhered to the post-Durkheimian social imaginary, reality and truth were concepts to be found external to the individual and outside empirical reality.31 However with Augustine this changes radically as one can see when he states, “Do not go outward; return within yourself. In the inward man dwells truth.”32 According to Taylor, this turn of Augustine’s

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28 Ibid: 122.
29 Regarding this, Augustine states, “Thus even the Heavenly City in her pilgrimage here on earth makes use of the earthly peace and defends and seeks the compromise between earthly wills in respect of the provisions relevant to the mortal nature of man, so far as may be permitted without detriment to true religion and piety.” Augustine. The City of God: XIX: 17.
30 In regards to the role of politics, Augustine writes, “Political authority is unnatural because it is necessary only in a world men and women are enslaved by sin and where there needs to be firm protections against the more powerful injuring the weak.” Augustine. The City of God: XIX: 15.
31 This is readily evident in Plato’s divided line theory.
cannot be underestimated as it demarcates that “Augustine is the originator of the strand of Western spirituality which has sought the certainty of God within.” After Augustine, truth and reality are always sought within regarding spiritual matters; however,

For Augustine the path inward was only a step on the way upward . . . the thinker comes to sense more and more his lack of self-sufficiency, comes to see that God acts within him.

This reliance on the divine initiative, regarding the working out of the concept of the Kingdom of God, will reign mostly unheeded until we are well within the neo-Durkheimian mode. Whereas, as we will see shortly, with the anthropocentric shift that sees its advent in the Reformation and fulfillment in the Enlightenment, this emphasis will fall more and more on the initiative of humanity. This is most certainly true of Brian McLaren and the Emergent church movement, as will be abundantly clear in the following chapter.

As has already been pointed out, Augustine maintains a strong dualism between the spiritual and the material worlds. This dualism is also reflected in the terms inner/outer, as Taylor contends “that this same opposition of spirit/matter, higher/lower, eternal/temporal, immutable/changing is described by Augustine, not just occasionally and peripherally, but centrally and essentially in terms of inner/outer.” These dichotomies will be important throughout this thesis as there is a battle that ensues between the two understandings of the Kingdom of God that are reflected in the above dichotomies. However, I will only use the terms inner and outer, as these terms most

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33 Charles Taylor. *Sources of the Self*: 140.
34 Ibid: 156.
35 About the anthropocentric turn, Taylor writes, “In contrast, for Descartes the whole point of the reflexive turn is to achieve a quite self-sufficient certainty.” Charles Taylor. *Sources of the Self*: 256.
36 Charles Taylor. *Sources of the Self*: 121.
appropriately reflect the distinguishing marks of the two understanding of the Kingdom of God that I will deal with here.  

1.2 The Neo-Durkheimian

1.2.1 Martin Luther

According to Taylor, the major break within history toward a thoroughgoing secularization takes place with Martin Luther. In regard to the Kingdom of God, Luther’s understanding remains within the hyper-Augustinian strand of two-Kingdom theology. For Luther, there remains a sharp separation between the Kingdom of God and the world and because of this the purpose of the earthly government is, as was illustrated earlier with Augustine, to restrain the unrighteous until the coming of the Kingdom of God in a future epoch. Therefore, much of his values still reflect the values of the paleo-Durkheimian social imaginary.

However, there is the one obvious distinction that Luther has from Augustine and this is that he begins to break down the hierarchical system found in the paleo-Durkheimian mode. This is most clearly exhibited when Luther states,

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37 I deal briefly with the paleo-Durkheimian mode here because there are most likely no contemporary Western Christian movements that can be linked to the paleo-Durkheimian mode. In this thesis I will illustrate the neo- and post-Durkheimian modes in much more detail because it is these two groups that are shaping the contemporary Christian landscape. I place the paleo-Durkheimian mode here because it still plays powerfully in the social imaginary of many of those in the neo-Durkheimian mode. Thus a brief overview of the paleo-Durkheimian mode is sufficient for this thesis.

38 This is a term that Charles Taylor uses for social groups who take Augustine’s views regarding the secular and metaphysical world and his understanding on the depraved nature of humanity to far grander extremes than Augustine likely would have.

39 Luther, speaking explicitly at these two Kingdom states, “What is on earth and belongs to the temporal, mundane kingdom, there to be sure man has received power from God; but what belongs to heaven and to the eternal kingdom that is subject to the heavenly Lord alone.” Luther quoted in Richard Niebuhr’s The Kingdom of God in America (Middleton: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc, 1988): 38.

40 Luther’s rationale for the need to restrain the unrighteous is that “Christ's spiritual government does not extend to everyone; on the contrary, Christians are at all times the fewest in number and live in the midst of the Unchristian.” Martin Luther “On Secular Authority” published in Harro Höpf Ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority (Cambridge University Press, 1991): 12.
For perfection and imperfection do not inhere in works, and do not establish any distinction in outward condition or status between Christians; rather, they inhere in the heart, in faith, in love, so that whoever believes more [firmly] and loves more, that person is perfect, irrespective of whether it be a man or a woman, a prince or a peasant, monk or layman. For love and faith create no factions and no outward distinctions.  

Luther goes substantially further on the sanctified nature of ordinary vocations when he argues that even the vocation of the hangman is hallowed.  

As has already been contended, Taylor’s thesis is that this levelling inaugurates the process of secularization and narrows the gap between the Kingdom of God and the secular world. This is most certainly true of Luther when he states, “Christ came in order to begin the Kingdom of God and to establish it in the world.” As was said in the introduction, Luther begins the process of the affirmation of ordinary human fulfillment. If all must live according to the standards of priestly virtue, then “all life . . . is as hallowed as any other.” As a result, the way one lives their ordinary life becomes fundamentally important.

There is a further important distinction in Luther’s Reformation that stands in opposition to an Augustinian’s ‘order of nature’ (most notably in his early life and works), and that is by introducing into Christianity the concept of revolution against this order. Luther writes,

But what if a prince is in the wrong? Are his people obliged to obey him even then? No, because no one has a duty to act unjustly; we must obey God (who will have justice prevail), rather than men.

42 Luther explains his reason for sanctifying the vocation of a hangman in stating, “A further question that arises is whether beadles, hangmen, lawyers, advocates and all the rest of their sort can be Christians and in a state of grace? The answer is that if government [die Gewalt] and the Sword serve God, as has been shown above, then everything that government needs in order to bear the Sword, is equally a service to God. There has to be someone to catch the wicked, to accuse them, and execute them, and to protect, acquit, defend and save the good.” Harro Höpfl Ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority 21
43 Harro Höpfl, Ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority: 9.
As a result, revolution becomes a major part of the Reformation movement; however, later in his life Luther does reject the rights of revolution after the Peasant Revolts, which founded its revolutionary energy on the basis of his theology. The result was numerous deaths and this was untenable to Luther.

Therefore, with Luther, the process of the development of the neo-Durkheimian mode had begun but is very much in its infancy. For him the process of levelling only applies to the saved and there is certainly no belief that the Kingdom of God could ever truly be manifest upon the earth in any way. The movement into the neo-Durkheimian era does not really begin in earnest until the arrival of John Calvin.

1.2.2 John Calvin

After Luther comes another pivotal shift in the understanding of the Kingdom of God and it is found in the works and revolutionary energy of John Calvin. Calvin’s understanding of the Kingdom of God bears many similarities to Luther’s hyper-Augustinian understanding. This can be readily seen in the fact that he firmly believed in a polarized view of the two Kingdoms and that the role of the secular government was to restrain humanity’s baser instincts. Calvin also believed certain values that first became particular to Luther, such as his belief that the two Kingdoms were not incompatible, the abolition of the hierarchical equilibrium, and that the Kingdom of God was in essence an internal reality.\(^\text{47}\)

\(^{46}\) Calvin states, “We have just warned that [secular] government and the spiritual and internal kingdom of Christ are quite distinct. But equally we must recognize that they are in no way incompatible with each other. Harro Höpfel, Ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority: 49. In this statement we can see that there is a strong separation between the two Kingdoms but as well their complementary nature.

\(^{47}\) Calvin writes about the internal nature of the Kingdom: “It is a Judaic folly to look for the kingdom of Christ among the things that make up this world, and to shut it up among them; our opinion, which is supported by the plainest teaching of Scripture, is that, on the contrary, the fruit we reap from grace is a spiritual fruit.”
However, the clear distinction between Calvin and Luther has everything to do with the nature of good order in society, about which Calvin contends,

But there will be a more appropriate occasion for speaking about the benefits of civil order. For the present, the one thing that must [be] clearly understood is that [even] to think about abolishing it is monstrous barbarity. Mankind derives as much benefit from it as does from bread, water, sun and air, and its dignity is far greater [than] any of them. For unlike them all, civil order has not only to do with men's breathing, eating, drinking and flourishing (although it certainly encompasses all these, in that it makes human association possible).  

The reason that this push for civil order is so seminal to Western history lies in its success, which was due to its motivation. One can perceive this motivating factor when Calvin argues, “it is of considerable benefit to us to know what merciful care God has taken for the well being of mankind … it should incite us to a greater zeal for his service, to show that we are not ungrateful.” This ‘zeal for his service’ cannot be understated as the energy that one has to exert to show one’s gratefulness, along with the mad push for order, transformed the Western world. About this, Taylor writes, “While humans can do nothing to bring about reconciliation, the reconciled person feels the imperative need to repair the disorder of things, to put them right in God’s plan.” This transformation of society blossoms in the neo-Durkheimian mode.

Though Calvin laid the emphasis of the Kingdom of God as an inner reality, the move towards the external transformation of the world is obviously quite coterminous. That is to say that an inner transformation, or a well-ordered inner life, necessarily leads to a well order civil life. Taylor writes about this emphasis on spiritual inwardness leading to outward action and revolutionary energy:

Harro Höpfl. Ed. Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority: 48.

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
In other words, the good order of civility, and the good order of piety, didn’t remain in separate uncommunicating compartments. They to some extent merged, and inflected each other. The drive to piety, to bring all real Christians (which were, of course, a minority, the saved, and didn’t include the foreknown to damnation, even if they were nominally members of the church) up to the fully godly life, inflects the agenda for social reform, and gives the universal-philanthropic thrust. And the demands of civility, which entailed some reordering of society, in turn give a new social dimension to the pious, ordered life.\textsuperscript{51}

This is the origin of the drive towards civilization identity, which was soon to become to primary foundation for moral sources in the Western world.

Calvin also represents an important turn in the political understanding of the Kingdom of God. It is in Calvin’s push for order that is the advent of the neo-Durkheimian mode. For those in this age, the order of God was of supreme importance. This sense of civil order was inflicted into all areas of the community’s life, as we see in Calvin’s Geneva. The result was a

New empowerment [which] was meant to yield the fruits of an ordered life . . . . Order required the male to be a family man and a good provider; and this required that he become educated, disciplined, and a hard worker.\textsuperscript{52}

This is Weber’s thesis in \textit{The Protestant Work Ethic}. This move inaugurates the belief that the Kingdom could be manifest in secular time.

This ordering of one’s inner life is the fundamental ground for the revolutionary energy to remake the world into a well-ordered civil society;\textsuperscript{53} however, for Calvin the effects of this energy are only meant for and felt by the saved or the regenerate. It is not

\textsuperscript{51} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 105.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid: 451.
\textsuperscript{53} Charles Taylor writing about the revolutionary energy initiated by Calvinism states, “Calvinism is marked out by a militant activism, a drive to reorganize the church and the world. This is its striking difference from Lutheranism.” Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 228.
until the Victorian era and the American Republic that the full force of the neo-Durkheimian mode appears. To this I will return shortly.

### 1.2.3 The Anabaptists

There is another group of significant note that arose during the period of the Reformation and these are the Anabaptists, but more specifically here: the Mennonites. The Mennonites were a small breakaway sect from the Protestant Reformation. They held many of the valuations of the Lutherans and the Calvinists, such as the priesthood of all believers, a hyper-Augustinian belief on the nature of humanity and the world, the importance of the individual’s choice in the call to faith, and a strong distrust of authority and hierarchies. It is an extreme variance on this fourth point in how they differ from the rest of the Protestant Reformation. Though Luther and Calvin strongly rejected the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church they maintained the strong link between the church and state. It is on this point that the Mennonites disagreed most fervently with them.

These early Mennonites were fiercely antagonistic towards the marriage of church and state, as was quite evident when Menno Simons, the founder of the Mennonite sect, stated,

> Since we find that Satan can convert himself into an angel of light and sow the evil tares among the good wheat of the Lord, namely the . . . doctrines of the sword, matrimony, outward Kingdom of Christ, idolatry, deception [pretension to be of the state church when such was not the case] and other errors of similar nature, for whose sake [being accused of such errors] the children of God must in our day hear and suffer terrible things, therefore we have been led to give here with an account of our faith.  

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Here one can readily perceive that according to Simons the marriage of church and state is a perversion of God’s will. More specifically the perversion is the use of the sword, as the Mennonites were strict pacifists. Menno and his followers adhered to the priestly demands to an extreme in their lives, in particular the requirement to never lift a sword against another.\textsuperscript{55} To do so was the greatest distortion that one who claimed to be a Christian could commit.

The Mennonites in this early period of their history were a sectarian group. This had to be the case, being that they refused to be part of the state, as they believed if they were they would have had to approve of its use of violence. It should also be clear that for Simons there could never be a manifestation of Kingdom in secular time as he considers “the outward Kingdom of Christ upon earth a new Judaism, a deceptive error, an abomination, radically at variance with the spirit, word and example of Christ.”\textsuperscript{56} For him the Kingdom was an internal reality alone. This aversion to the valuation of an outward Kingdom meant a strict withdrawal from the world of politics.

The Mennonites never became a significant sociological movement. Also, they most certainly cannot be placed into a particular Durkheimian mode as the modes relate to political observance alone; however, their pacifist values would eventually play a significant part of the social imaginary that we will see arise in the post-Durkheimian mode, as will be illuminated upon in the following section of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{55} Aquinas’s position on the priestly demands and pacifism is that “Prelates and clerics may, by the authority of their superiors, take part in wars, not indeed by taking up arms themselves, but by affording spiritual help to those who fight justly, by exhorting and absolving them, and by other like spiritual helps. Thus in the Old Testament (Joshua 6:4) the priests were commanded to sound the sacred trumpets in the battle. It was for this purpose that bishops or clerics were first allowed to go to the front: and it is an abuse of this permission, if any of them take up arms themselves.” Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologica, Volume 3, Part II, Second Section (New York: Cosimo Inc., 2007): Q40 Art 2.

\textsuperscript{56} Menno Simons. \textit{The Blasphemy of Jan van Leyden} (497a; II: 301) quoted in Josh Horsch’s \textit{Menno Simons, His Life, Labors, and Teaching}: 165.
1.2.4 Thomas Hobbes

Not long after Luther and Calvin comes an understanding of the Kingdom of God that is entirely shorn of the transcendent (or rather is entirely secular), which can be found in the works of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes in his magnum opus *Leviathan* writes,

the Kingdom of God is properly meant a Commonwealth, instituted (by the consent of those which were to be subject thereto) for their civil government and the regulating of their behaviour, not only towards God their king, but also towards one another in point of justice, and toward other nations both in peace and war.\(^{57}\)

For Hobbes, the Kingdom of God is simply the manifestation of his political ideology.

Hobbes was a materialist, as he did not believe in a transcendent or a spiritual otherworld.\(^{58}\) Thus his understanding regarding the Kingdom of God was entirely secular. In this it is very distinct from any branch of hyper-Augustinian Christianity in terms of the possibility of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth. This is evident when he frankly states, “The Kingdom of God therefore is a real, not a metaphorical, Kingdom.”\(^{59}\) This is a contention that will be echoed by Brian McLaren and many others in the rapidly emerging secularized understanding of the Kingdom.

This brings us to another great turning point inaugurated by Hobbes, in that “the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of the imaginable life for masses of people.”\(^{60}\) An important watershed happens with Hobbes: the concept of the Kingdom of God becomes an ideal whose goal is the political benefit of human flourishing alone.

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\(^{60}\) Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 20.
For Hobbes, the purpose of politics was to engender peace, which could only be done by submitting to a sovereign. This decision was dictated by prudence, which for Hobbes meant it was based upon the universal desire to avoid death. Hence, “From this fundamental law of nature . . . men are commanded to endeavour peace.” Hobbes believed that civil government was needed to restrain the baser natures of humanity and that if humanity was left to its own devices that its selfish nature would consume itself. The Kingdom of God for him was simply ‘the state of nature’ restrained, with the result being that peace would ensue.

Thus, Hobbes is only the gateway into the Enlightenment as he still maintains a hyper-Augustinian pessimism regarding human nature. This is certainly distinct from what we will see in Enlightenment ideology, which moves toward a self-certainty in which the individual has it within him- or herself to engender peace and further towards the unmitigated belief in the freedom of the individual.

1.2.5 Kant and Excarnation

The next obvious turn in the process of secularization of the Kingdom of God has to be found in the full blown Enlightenment, which takes God’s ‘order’ to its ultimate extreme, as well as taking Augustine’s turn inward for moral sources to new heights. As has already been stated, after Augustine there is a turn in Western thought inward for moral and spiritual source. During the Enlightenment, this turn inward reached its zenith in Descartes’ immortal phrase *Cogito Ergo Sum*. Taylor calls the belief that the truth is found in the inner depth of the individual *excarnation*, about which he writes,

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We have moved from an era in which religious belief was more “embodied,” where the presence of the sacred could be enacted in ritual, or seen, felt, touched, walked towards (as in pilgrimages); into one which is more “in the mind,” where the link with God passes more through our endorsing contested interpretations- for instance, of our political identity as religiously defined, or of God as the authority and moral source underpinning our ethical life.\footnote{Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 554.}

This process of excarnation is an important one to Taylor as it is this turn inward that drives secularization along, as he clearly argues, “The direction of this Reform was towards a far-reaching excarnation.”\footnote{Ibid: 614.} This turn inward necessarily leads to a transformation in the secular world; however, this is as a result and not the primary motivation for the Enlightenment thinkers.

Though the turn to excarnation may manifest in an increased concern for the secular world, it can also lead to a growing apathy or disdain for the body. This happens as a result of the increased concern on the Rational order of the universe, with the end result being that,

We have to factor out our embodied feeling, our “gut reactions” in determining what is right, even set aside our desires and emotions. This move finds a paradigm statement in the work of Kant.\footnote{Ibid: 288.}

For those in who follow him in the Enlightenment modality of thinking, the needs and the desires of the body fall to secondary importance in determining the highest values in one’s life.

The Enlightenment thinkers who best represent this excarnation and the anthropocentric turn is of course Immanuel Kant. Kant’s significance to history and this thesis cannot be underestimated, as it is in his thought that for the first time we have
someone contending that the moral source does not lie externally but entirely in the individual. Kant believed that the individual was a self-enclosed moral source and had absolutely no need to turn externally to find it. Regarding the Kingdom of God and this internal moral source he argues that,

A Kingdom of God is here represented not according to a particular covenant ([it is] not a messianic Kingdom) but according to a moral one (available to cognition through mere reason).66

For Kant, the Kingdom of God was an inward Kingdom that found its reality in the individual who lives according to a set of perfectly reasoned universal moral maxims. He believed that if everyone were to follow these rational moral maxims then the world would reach a place where the ideal of the Kingdom of God would come close. Thus, this internal transformation would manifest in an external reality.

Kant, in believing that the moral law is within, introduces the concept of rational self-control. If everyone has this power inside, then the ability to suppress one’s baser natures must also follow. Suppression of one’s baser instincts was only for the priests and monks in the paleo-Durkheimian mode but for Kant this is a value that should apply to all. This will be particularly true once we reach the maturity of the neo-Durkheimian mode, as will be discussed shortly.

For Kant, the Kingdom is not entirely internal, for

Such is therefore the work of the good principle – unnoticed to human eye yet constantly advancing – in erecting a power and a Kingdom for itself within the human race, in the form of a community according to the laws of virtue over evil and, under its domination, assures the world of an eternal peace.67

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Kant here also introduces the idea of a ‘universal history,’ or a theodicy, which is the belief that history is advancing as humanity and the individual become more ‘enlightened.’ The concept of universal history is an important one for this thesis and will be encountered many times throughout Western history. One can perceive that for Kant the Kingdom will never be realized as it is ‘constantly advancing.’ Thus, Kant maintains a level of hyper-Augustinian pessimism that will soon disappear later in the neo-Durkheimian social imaginary.

One of the key aspects of the anthropocentric turn is the intensification of excarnation as the individual turns inward and finds moral sources within. Thus they begin to place greater emphasis on the human initiative to make the Kingdom manifest and less emphasis on the divine initiative. Speaking about excarnation, Taylor contends, “It not only shuts out God, it attributes this great power of benevolence or altruism to humans.” This is clearly evident in the values of Hobbes and Kant.

Benevolence is the term that Taylor uses to refer to the belief that humanity in general and each person in particular has internalized the power to change themselves and their world. He writes

> The locus of the highest moral capacity had to be a source of benevolence, and the aspiration of universal justice. Now benevolence and universal concern are precisely the hallmarks of eighteenth century exclusive humanism or perhaps we might say, of the humanism which turned exclusive; of utilitarianism, or the theory of Kant; or the Enlightenment

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68 Writing about the correlation between the Kingdom of God and becoming enlightened Kant contends, “The Kingdom of God is come into us even if only the principle of the gradual transition from ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth, has put in roots universally and, somewhere, also in public- though the actual setting up of this state is still infinitely removed from us. For since this principle contains the basis for a continual approximation to the ultimate perfection, there lies in it (invisibly)- as in a shoot that develops and will in the future bear seeds in turn-the whole that will one day enlighten the whole world and rule over it.” Immanuel Kant. *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason*: 152.

proponent of the rights of man, and a new dispensation based on general human happiness and welfare.70

As a result, benevolence becomes the greatest lasting legacy of the Enlightenment, as it influences all aspects of life in the West after this age.

1.2.6 Romanticism

After a long period, a general sense of dissatisfaction to the Enlightenment methodology emerges, and many simply grew weary of its hyper-rationalism and pragmatism. Those who felt this began to push back against the constraints of the Enlightenment. These individuals believed that something important had been lost, and they felt as if they had become divided or disembedded from their world. The consequence was that those who felt this way looked for a sense of wholeness in the world, religion, with others, and most importantly in the self. For Taylor, this is the second part of the puzzle that forms the modern identity (the first being the Enlightenment and its emphasis on benevolence): he refers to this as the counter-Enlightenment, though more specifically for this portion of the thesis, the 18th Century Romanticism.

Romanticism is marked by an era of dissatisfaction with the hyper-rationalism of the Enlightenment, its mechanistic sense of the universe, and its instrumental stance to the world. The result is that these individuals feel ‘split,’ as M.H. Abrams notes, when he contends that

The individual (so runs the familiar analysis) has become radically split in three main aspects. He is divided within himself, he is divided from other men, and he is divided from his environment; his only hope for recovery (for those writers who hold out hope) is to find the way to a reintegration which will restore his unity with himself, his community with his fellow men, and his companionability with an alien and hostile world. These ideas

70 Ibid: 245.
are shared in our times by theologians, philosophers, economists, sociologists, psychologists, writers, critics, and readers of Life magazine and The Reader's Digest, and the copious writings on this theme has been assembled into widely read anthologies.\textsuperscript{71}

For Romantics the solution in response to lost unity begins by looking to ‘nature as a source (or simply stating imbedding oneself in secular time),’ in emphasizing the importance of one’s emotional response to one’s world and God rather than the rational, and by turning to a sense of community to restore a sense of solidarity between the individual and his fellow man (this is in rebellion to the harsh narcissism of the Enlightenment). Two of the finest sources of this Romantic ideology are Novalis and Hegel. I will first address Novalis in reference to the Romantic era, as Hegel represents Romanticism married with the Enlightenment ideologies.

For the Romantics there was a hope for a better possible world than the pragmatic one of the Enlightenment. The solution for them was not nostalgia, to look back at a higher time with longing, nor was it something eschatological, something to be gained suddenly in some future epoch. Rather it was to be gained through historical process. In relation to the Kingdom of God it means, “When the history of mankind is envisioned as this circular design manifested in time, the Christian view of the last future paradise assumes the form of unity, unity lost, and unity-to-be-regained.”\textsuperscript{72} For the Romantics, there was a belief that there was a period of unity at some point in history (usually in the Greek period). As has already been stated, this is not nostalgia; rather, the unity that was to be regained was of a higher order. Along with this the Romantic wanted to re-embed

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid: 181.
themselves in their world, so this was something that had to be played out in secular time.\textsuperscript{73}

Of all the major Romantics, Novalis most certainly stayed the closest to kerygmatic Christianity and yet maintains all the main features of Romanticism.

Regarding regained unity in the concept of the Kingdom of God he writes,

\begin{quote}
The Kingdom of eternity is founded,
By love and peace all strife has been impounded,
The dreams of pain are gone, to plague us never,
Sophie is priestess of all hearts forever.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

Sophie here does not relate to rational process as it does in Aristotle, but rather an inner impulse linked with the emotions.

Novalis, writing about the emotions as the means to discovering a deeper sense of identity, states,

Everything that touches on experience and earthly effectiveness makes up the domain of consciousness, which unites the world with higher worlds. With the higher mental powers, religion comes into being; and what had before appeared as incomprehensible necessity of our innermost nature, a universal law without definite content, now turns into a marvellous, native, infinitely varied, and wholly satisfied world, into an incomprehensibly intimate communion of all the blessed with God, and in into a perceptible deifying presence of the most personal being, or of its will, its love, within our deepest selves.\textsuperscript{75}

In this we can see that there is a turn inward which closely links one to God and to oneself. As well, the moral source is not rationally derived, nor part of a fixed and external imperative, but is rather ‘a universal law without definite content’ that is ‘within the deepest self.’ Finally, this turn inward is not a deeper expression of rationality but is

\textsuperscript{73} This is a point that M.H. Abrams makes clear when he states, “The goal of man’s secular journey, like the heavenly city of the Christian wayfarer, remains somewhat on the far side of this world: but that goal is now rendered forever inaccessible by an outlook which limits human possibilities to this finite world.” M.H. Abrams. \textit{Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature} (New York: W.M. Norton & Company, 1973): 216.


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid: 168.
closely linked with emotion and imagination, which is to bring one to a deeper sense of self-awareness and of God, who also dwells within. According to the Romantics, hope is found in finding a sense of unity within the self (or self-realization in modern jargon), or, more appropriately, to discover a sense of ‘wholeness.’ This search for wholeness is the heart of Romanticism and will be its lasting legacy.

Even though there is intense excarnation found in Novalis’ works, there is also a sense of a deep connection to the earth as the source of this inspiration:

From the starry sky, the exalted dome of the jewelled realm, to the frilly carpet of flowery meadows, everything is maintained by it, linked with us, and made intelligible to us; it conducts the endless history of nature on the unknown path that leads to transfiguration.76

Novalis, like all the Romantics, fully embraced secular life and drew his moral and inspirational sources from it. M.H. Abrams states about this, “The Romantics developed an expressive view of nature, sometimes seen as a great current of life running through everything, and emerging as the impulses we feel within.”77 This great current of life would have been associated with God for Novalis. For the Romantics there was a sense that all things were connected and unity comes from this connectedness. This can be seen in the works of Novalis when he writes, “One could weep for joy and in detachment from the world just bury one’s hands and feet in the earth, in order to take root and never leave this happy spot.”78

It should be noted that for the Romantics, what is of primary importance is unity and not benevolence. This difference between those who come closer to a Romantic ideology and those who follow much closer to the ideals of the Enlightenment will

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76 Ibid: 167.
77 Charles Taylor. Sources of the Self: 416.
conflict on numerous occasions in the future. This will be illustrated several times in this thesis. Though these two values will often inflect upon each other in the neo-Durkheimian mode and, as we will see, in the post-Durkheimian era, they are at play with minimal to no conflict.

Romanticism doesn’t immediately lead us forward in the progression of the neo-Durkheimian mode. However, it is an absolutely essential element to bring it into maturity. Even further, though, the values found in the Romantic era will blossom into fullness when we enter the post-Durkheimian mode.

1.2.7 Hegel’s Synthesis

With Hegel, we arrive at a marriage of both Enlightenment and Romantic ideologies. The marriage between these two ideals is of fundamental importance for this thesis, as it is this synthesis that one finds the height of the neo-Durkheimian age, which leads us into the post-Durkheimian.

The primary task that Hegel sets out to undertake is that of synthesizing contradictions: the particular and the universal, the individual and the community, solitude and solicitude, reason and imagination, and the inner and outer Kingdoms. As a result, Hegel’s understanding of the Kingdom of God is complex, but it permeates almost all of his philosophy.

Hegel falls into the grouping of the Romantics because for him the emphasis is both on a regained unity and self-realization. In Hegel’s early writings, all of which are theological treaties, one can perceive his affinity with Romanticisms when he writes, regarding recapturing unity,

In the Kingdom of God what is common to all is life in God. This is not the common character, which a concept expresses, but is love, a living bond that
unites the believers; it is this feeling of unity of life, a feeling in which all oppositions, as pure enmities, and also rights, as unifications of still subsisting opposition are annulled.79

And again,

In the God of the world, all beings are united; in him there are no members, as members, of a community.80

This concept of finding unity in community is one that was not addressed in the previous section on Novalis but is a very important one for all Romantics.

For Hegel, unity comes through the particular, that is the individual, finding self-identity in the community (another Hegelian synthesis), which finds its identity through partaking in the self-realization of Spirit. In the concept of self-fulfilment one finds the key to understanding Hegel and his understanding of the Kingdom of God. For him the Spirit of God, or Geist, is seeking self-expression. This happens through the play of history, as he believes that the Spirit is seeking self-realization through it. The goal of world or universal history is that Spirit comes to knowledge of what it truly is, by means of the progress of secular history. Hegel makes this abundantly clear in contending that the Spirit “realizes it in a world which lies before it, in short, produces itself as an object for itself.”81 All of Hegel’s understanding regarding God reflects this; about Jesus he writes, “Rather he lives only for the truth, only for its proclamation; his activity consists solely in completing the higher consciousness of humanity.”82 This self-realization of Spirit does not happen independently for Hegel, as all individuals and

80 Ibid: 289.
82 Ibid: 317.
communities find their particular self-realization and expression through working through the Spirit. And the Spirit finds itself in self-realization through the community and the individual. That is to say, in short, the community and individuals are the active expression of the Spirit. ⁸³

This necessary play between the individual, the community, and the Spirit finding self-expression could not be otherwise for Hegel; if seeking higher unity is the ultimate goal, then reconciliation between the individual and the community, the individual and God (through the Spirit), and the world and God (through the Spirit’s interactions in the world and with community) need to take place. ⁸⁴

As I have already stated, Hegel marries the ideals of Romanticism with those of the Enlightenment. The concepts that were basic to the Enlightenment thinkers were very important to Hegel, which is to say freedom (as to become Enlightened means that one becomes free from a more ‘immature’ state of human history and thought; for the Enlightenment thinkers this maturation happens through what they perceived as moral, intellectual, and technological advances) and universal reason and history. Regarding freedom, Hegel writes, “This is the point which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal phases of the form in

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⁸³ Hegel is very explicit about this when he states, “Thus the community itself is the existing Spirit, the Spirit in its existence [Existenz], God existing as community.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Volume III The Consummate Religion: 330.

⁸⁴ About this complex interplay Hegel contends, “It is with the consciousness of the community—which thus makes the transition from mere humanity to the God-man, to the intuition, consciousness, and certainty of the union and unity of divine and human nature—that the community begins; this consciousness constitutes the truth upon which the community is founded. This is the explication of reconciliation: that God is reconciled with the world, or rather that God has shown himself to be reconciled with the world, that even the human is not something alien to him, but rather that this otherness, this self-distinguishing, finitude as it is expressed, is a moment in God himself.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Volume III The Consummate Religion: 327.
which the principle of Freedom has realized itself, – for the History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom.” Freedom, according to Hegel, is emancipation from a less ‘Enlightened’ perspective or when ‘consciousness’ is attained (as it was with the philosophers of the Enlightenment). For the Enlightenment thinkers, this freedom is realized when the individual is liberated from the less mature thinking of the masses. For Hegel, freedom is not arrived at independently but through the self-realization of the self, the community, and the Spirit; this forms the groundwork of Hegel’s enlightening. Freedom for all (including the Spirit or Geist itself) arrives with the self-realization of the Spirit, that is, ‘the development of the Idea of Freedom,’ which must be played out in the movement and progress of secular time.

This brings us to Hegel’s understanding of the Kingdom of God playing out in secular time. Regarding this he contends,

Secular life is the positive and definite embodiment of the Spiritual Kingdom – the Kingdom of the Will manifesting itself in outward existence. Mere impulses are also forms in which the inner life realizes itself; but these are transient and disconnected; they are the ever-changing applications of volition.\(^86\)

Hegel believed in a dialectical understanding of history, much in line with the Romantic notion of circular time spiralling up towards a higher unity, though this is much more developed in Hegel’s work. For him, if all that which was divided reached synthesis, we would reach the end of history. The fulfillment of the Kingdom would be manifest, as he makes clear when he states, “This formally


absolute principle brings us to the last stage in History, our world, our time.\textsuperscript{87}

Thus, for Hegel, the Kingdom of God comes when the Spirit realizes itself. This is when all who are partaking in the movement of the Spirit come to Freedom, which means that they also have reached a point of self-realization. For Hegel, secularization is that which is bringing the Kingdom into maturity.\textsuperscript{88}

For Hegel there is no contradiction between the inner and outer Kingdom. This is where his importance both for history and for this thesis is found: that both the force of the Enlightenment, and its concept of benevolence, and Romanticism, and its concept of wholeness and intuitive spirituality, can play out with little or no conflict in society. Even more potently they are working together unhindered in the individual, as we will see in the post-Durkheimian mode. Further, this synthesis will bring about the zenith of the neo-Durkheimian mode. This will be truly visible when we reach the belief in the Manifest Destiny of America.

\textbf{1.2.8 John Wesley}

Returning to Romanticism, there can be no doubt that its impact on later generations of Christianity has been immense. The most prominent early forms of Christianity that were influenced by Romanticism are Pietism and Methodism. Regarding this, Charles Taylor states,

\begin{quote}
    Pietism – which had some affinities to Methodism in the English-speaking world – was a movement of renewal in spiritual life. Starting in the seventeenth century it reached its culmination in the eighteenth. It reacted against the formalism of official Lutheranism, its stress on right beliefs and its concern for the established structures. All this was made secondary to the main point: the inward, heartfelt relation to Christ . . . which made central the inner encounter of the soul and God.\textsuperscript{89}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid: 442.

\textsuperscript{88} Regarding this Charles Taylor states, “Hegel developed a view of history as the unfolding of a purpose from within, through tragic conflict to a higher reconciliation.” Charles Taylor. \textit{Hegel}: 68.

The rebellion ‘against formalism’ in the religious sphere quickly became one of the hallmarks of Christian theology and practice in all Romantic forms of Christianity. Later we will see this rebellion against authority become one of the primary motivating principles for the post-Durkheimian mode.

Methodism and Pietism are the first mainstream branches of Christianity that turned toward Romanticism and a high emphasis on inward spiritual sources and unity. Its adherents fundamentally believed that one could only find a source of unity through the emotions. This turn is most prominently seen in the works and preaching of John Wesley, being that he was the most well known member of the Methodist movement. For Wesley, having right affections towards God was what defined the true Christian individual:

I say of the heart. For neither does religion consist in Orthodoxy, or right opinions; which, although they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the understanding. A man may be orthodox in every point; he may not only espouse right opinions, but zealously defend them against all opposers [sic]; he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever-blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine contained in the oracles of God; he may assent to all the three creeds, – that called the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian; and yet it is possible he may have no religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or pagan. He may be almost as orthodox – as the devil, (though, indeed, not altogether; for every man errs in something; whereas we can't well conceive him to hold any erroneous opinion,) and may, all the while be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart.90

For Wesley, it was in the heart, or the emotions, and having right affections towards God that illuminated the regenerate against the unregenerate.

As has already been illustrated, the great move that takes place during the Reformation is the reduction of the hierarchical equilibrium, which results in the

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priesthood of all believers; however, it is with the Pietists and the Methodists that these principles increased in potency. For them good civilization order is not just for the spiritual elites anymore. The idea that utter devotion to God would have been reserved only for those of monastic orders is long forgotten; now it must imbue all of Christianity. This increased push towards having the priestly demands disseminated to all is truly the heart of the anti-hierarchical equilibrium and what drives us towards the spirit of the neo-Durkheimian mode.

Due to this emphasis, Wesley’s understanding of the Kingdom of God most certainly reflects the ideals of the inner Kingdom, as he states in one of his sermons,

It is termed "the Kingdom of God," because it is the immediate fruit of God's reigning in the soul. So soon as ever he takes unto himself his mighty power, and sets up his throne in our hearts, they are instantly filled with this "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is called "the Kingdom of heaven" because it is (in a degree) heaven opened in the soul.\(^91\)

In this, one can ascertain the core of the Methodist movement: that ‘true religion’ must affect one’s emotions.\(^92\) Of further note in this quote is the belief that the Kingdom is not manifest in secular time, but only by the purification of the inner person.

One can even more clearly decipher that it is not outward expression that defines true Christianity when Wesley states,

Two persons may do the same outward work; suppose, feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked; and, in the meantime, one of these may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: For the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praise. So manifest it is, that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper still, even in “the hidden man of the heart.” \(^93\)

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\(^92\) Charles Taylor writing about the Pietists’ turn towards Romanticism states, “The Pietists movement, which begins in the late seventeenth century in Germany with Spencer and Francke, turns away from the orthodox Protestant emphasis on doctrinal correctness and seeks rather to bring about a ‘new Birth,’ whose fruits will be a deep piety and a holy life. This was one of the crucial moulding influences of Wesleyan Methodism.” Charles Taylor. Sources of the Self: 302.

\(^93\) Ibid: 62.
This will become a major driving force in the still-developing neo-Durkheimian age, will be a potent principle in the social imaginary of most Western Christians in our age, and will constantly battle with religion that stands closer to the Enlightenment ideals of benevolence (as will be evident in the conflict between Brian McLaren and modern Fundamentalism).

1.2.9  William Wilberforce

Shortly after Wesley’s Methodists and the Pietistic movement materialized, its counterpoint, Evangelicalism, emerged as a potent force in Christianity and the world. Evangelicalism was born of the progress of the neo-Durkheimian mode and it fits perfectly with the Victorian era.

The most important early Evangelical is William Wilberforce and he will serve as my example here. Whereas Wesleyanism falls closer to a Romantic strain of Christianity, the Victorian Christianity of William Wilberforce follows much more closely to the ideals of the Enlightenment in placing a greater emphasis on Providential order (or civility) and practical benevolence. About proffering both civility and benevolence William Wilberforce states, speaking about himself, “God has laid before me two great objectives: the abolition of the slave trade, and the reformation of manners.”

Wilberforce’s rationale for these two valuations makes him almost entirely distinct from the Puritan strain of Christianity. In fact Wilberforce had a great deal of

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animosity towards those who practiced Romantic forms of Christianity. Regarding this he wrote, “We need to remind the advocates of this fallacious principle that ones judgement often receives a corrupt bias from the heart and the affections.” 95 Rather, what Wilberforce promoted can be examined when he argues, “And yet it is true wisdom to work diligently, to curb the disorders of the emotions, and to implant and cultivate the virtues of moral character.” 96 In this, one can see that Wilberforce is in sharp agreement with numerous principles of Enlightenment. One of these points pertains to rational self-control, in curbing ‘the disorders of the emotions.’ Regarding this, Charles Taylor states, “For Evangelicals following God meant disciplining the self, creating by constant effort and exercise a character which would suppress the lower drives and strive to benefit mankind.” 97 Also one can clearly see his affinity to the Enlightenment concept of benevolence, about which Wilberforce contends, “Benevolence- enlarged, Vigorous, operative benevolence is her master principle.” 98

The importance of benevolence is key to the theology of Wilberforce, as is evident in his pivotal role in the abolition of slavery in England during his life. As we have seen in Wesley and in all Romantic strains of Christianity, changing the inner nature of the individual is all-important. However, for Wilberforce and the early Evangelicals, changing society to the standards of their understanding of the Kingdom of God is of the highest category (this changes in the modern American mainstream Evangelicalism as the

96 Ibid: 64.
Enlightenment and Romantic strains become synonymous, as will be illustrated shortly. 

About this Wilberforce argues,

Christianity has set the general tone of morals much higher than it was ever found in the pagan world. She has everywhere improved the character of man and multiplied the comforts of society. She has benefited particularity the poor and the weak, which from the beginning she professed to take under her special care.  

The contention that Christianity raises the standard of morals and improves the quality of life for all is a common refrain in the thought of Wilberforce and all Evangelicals.

Further, Wilberforce is an early example of a kerygmatic Christian theologian putting forth a theory that Christianity is the sole driving force for historical progress. In fact, Wilberforce is audacious enough on this point to contend that the Kingdom could be fulfilled upon the earth if Christianity were to be disseminated throughout the whole world. We can see this to be true when we read,

Following peace with all men and looking upon them as members of the same family, entitled to justice and brotherly kindness, he would be respected and beloved by others. He would himself be free from the annoyance of those bad passions that are activated by worldly principles and are so commonly corrosive. If such men filled any country, each thus diligently discharging the duties of his own place in society without impinging the rights of others, then the world indeed would be active and harmonious in the human family.

For Wilberforce there was no doubt that only Christianity could bring about the Kingdom and that a more zealous Christianity was desperately needed as,

Zeal is required in the cause of religion, and only they can feel it. Singleness of purpose, consistency of behaviour, and perseverance in effort are needed. Only true Christianity can provide these qualities.

It was this sense of zeal in Calvin that changed the lives of the regenerate in Geneva; this is true of Evangelicalism as well, except these values are no longer only for the

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99 Ibid: 49.
100 Ibid: 151.
101 Ibid: 175.
regenerate but are now for all in society. In essence, it is this sense of civilization identity of the Evangelicals that brings us very close to the fullness of the neo-Durkheimian social imaginary. However, we do not reach the zenith of neo-Durkheimian age until we move to America and the blending of both the Romantic and Enlightenment strains of Christianity.

It is also this increased sense of self-control to all in society that will lead us into an age where unbelief is a real option, as “Evangelicalism opened the road to an unbelieving philosophy of self-control.”102 Once this sense of self-control becomes imbued in society it is not a huge step to where some rightfully note that God is not necessary to run a well-ordered society. This will be addressed shortly.

1.2.10 Manifest Destiny

This brings us into the fullest understanding of the neo-Durkheimian mode. With Calvin, the mad push for order applies to the lives of the regenerate alone, but with the Victorian era, the push for well-ordered society based around the design of God, is a value that all in society must adhere too. No longer is this message only for the regenerate, as in the Pietists and the Methodists, but is now disseminated to all. The Evangelicals, and all those who follow in their tradition, draw much more from the Enlightenment and its ideal of universal benevolence, theodicy, and positive view regarding the nature of man. As has been already stated, the Victorians had to foster the ethos of their society, but it went beyond this in the attempt to instil ‘civilization identity’ in other cultural groups through powerful missionary movements. Regarding this, Taylor clearly articulates,

In this neo-Durkheimian form, religious belonging is central to political identity. But the religious dimension also figures in what we might call the “civilization” identity, the sense people have of the basic order by which they live, even imperfectly, as good, and (usually) as superior to the ways of life of outsiders, be they “barbarians”, or “savages,” (in the more polite contemporary language) the “less developed” people. 

This sense of civilization identity is the heart of Victorian Christianity, and its understanding of the Kingdom of God.

When this sense of civilization identity is blended with Romantic inner transformation we have the height of the neo-Durkheimian mode; this is most evident in America. The transformation of society that has been illustrated in Calvinism and Victorian Evangelicalism takes on a far grander scale in the American colonies. From the moment the Puritans arrived in America there was a fundamental belief that the Kingdom of God was going to be established on earth.

The tie between the religious and the political world was very close in the American experience, with the result being a new empowerment [which] was meant to yield the fruits of an ordered life . . . . Order required the male to be a family man and a good provider; and this required that he become educated, disciplined, and a hard worker. 

This is the internalization of the value of a well-ordered life, which necessarily leads to an external transformation. With Pietism (and Methodism) and Evangelicalism there was a strong distinction between the inner and outer transformation. However, in America the inner and outer work towards the same goal: an inner transformation of all that leads to the transformation of society into a well ordered whole. For Calvin, external transformation was simply a by-product; in America, they become synonymous.

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103 Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 455.
The result of this is that most members of the Americas become productive citizens of the Republic. Charles Taylor explains it in this way:

The Design of God, as it were, defines the political identity of this society. The second consists in “free” churches, set up as instruments of mutual help whereby individuals agree brought into contact with the Word of God and mutually strengthening each other in ordering their lives along Godly lines. They consist well together. Not only are they both organized on similar principles: This was the case in the early U.S.A. The Republic secured freedom of the churches; and the churches sustain the Godly ethos, which the Republic requires.105

The most common confusion regarding this interplay between the church and state is the belief that there was a “friendly” separation of church in which the “relationship reduced the interference of the religious authorities, the clergy in the political realm, but also of the state in the religious sphere.” 106 The understanding of the writers of Habits of the Hearts of private and public corrects this misguided understanding of church and state in America. In this understanding, the state takes on the public function and the Church the private therapeutic role. As a result, the Church had no need to challenge the utilitarian values of the state as it gladly accepted its ‘therapeutic’ role. Its role was to be a place of refuge from the harsh demands of the public sphere, but it also took on the role of providing social services to the state. This is why early in the Republic churches took on the tasks of providing education, health care, and a variety of other humanitarian services. From this understanding one can see the role of the church was not to remain distinct from the political order but rather to enrich it.

This enrichment to the State went far beyond providing social services; the church had a far bigger role to play in sustaining the Republic. The writers of Habits of the Heart succinctly surmised that the church still had a political function, in that “Its political

function was not direct intervention but support of the mores that make democracy possible.”\textsuperscript{107} Tocqueville also observed this relationship early in the American Republic, as in \textit{Democracy in America} he writes that the church is “a political institution, which powerfully contributes to the maintenance of democratic republic among the Americans.”\textsuperscript{108}

According to Taylor, in this relationship the state, in its public function, provides the denominational church a great service in allowing each individual and denomination the right to free worship and belief. Furthermore, it prevented any one denomination or belief system from exerting power over any other, thus allowing “free churches” to exist. In return, the church supplied the moral grounding to make the Republic function.

This ‘Godly ethos’ was that which drove the U.S. economic and political upsurge. These free churches, though distinct from each other, and who at times were in conflict with each other, did not compete to be the sole voice that sustained this Godly ethos. Rather, “The injunction to worship in the church of your choice is an injunction to belong to the “church” in the broader sense.”\textsuperscript{109} That is to say it was the ecumenical grouping of the free churches, working together, that sustained the Godly ethos of the state. The nature of this is most powerfully apparent during the three \textit{Great Awakenings}, when its benefits to the state became most powerfully exhibited. During this period in the Republic’s history, the notion of self-empowerment reached fruition and America quickly

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\textsuperscript{109} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 450.
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ascended to its current place as the world’s most powerful and wealthy nation. It was by this ‘Protestant Work Ethic’ that America became powerful.

By inculcating “Godly order” into one’s personal life, America ascended upward on the hierarchy of economic and political success. The church made ‘good citizens’ for the state, who led well-ordered lives, were not distributive, and of which most were productive contributors to the success of the American system. Modern Christian Right theologians have focused heavily on this link between America’s success being born of order in the private sphere. Charles Colson and Harold Fickett, two prominent Christian Nationalists\(^\text{110}\) clearly make this connection when they write,

> Women, for example, who were accustomed to their husbands going to the tavern at night leaving them alone, suddenly discover that when their husbands were converted they stayed with the family. The word spread. They joined the churches that promoted personal conversions and transformed lives. The choice was informed by the evident results the choice produced.\(^\text{111}\)

What makes America so remarkable is the breadth of its success in creating the world it envisioned. The result is that it didn’t take long for the ideals of American Manifest destiny to creep in. As one can readily see when William Gilpin, writing in the nineteenth century, states,

> The untransacted destiny of the American people is to subdue the continent – to rush over this vast field to the Pacific Ocean . . . to regenerate superannuated nations . . . to confirm the destiny of the human race – to carry the career of mankind to its culmination point . . . to cause a stagnant people to be reborn . . . to absolve the curse that weighs down humanity, and to shed blessings round the world!\(^\text{112}\)

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\(^{110}\) This is a term that Marcy McDonald used in her book *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: Random House Canada: 2010).


Perhaps the most famous of American Millennial expression is found in Jonathan Edwards’s works,

   And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall be begin in part in America, I think, if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of New England, it must needs appear the most likely of all American colonies, to be the place whence this work shall principally take its rise.\textsuperscript{113}

Here we see Hegel’s thesis powerfully at work: that both the force of the Enlightenment and its concept of benevolence and Romanticism and its values of wholeness and self-realization can play out to mutual benefit in society.

\textbf{1.2.11 Alfred North Whitehead}

The belief in the Manifest destiny of America is most certainly the fullness of neo-Durkheimian Christianity. For those who hold to this belief there is no doubt about the immanent nature of this Kingdom. The belief in historical progress was the core value of these Christian Nationalists. However, this idea regarding historical progress, and that God’s primary desire is to instil good order in society, would go far beyond Kerygmatic Christian theology. This is evident in the theology of the process and liberal theologians, of whom the most prominent is Alfred North Whitehead.

Whitehead falls close to outright deism. One can readily see this in the role that Whitehead gives to God, which is to place him in the category of an ordering entity,

“Thus God is the one systematic, complete fact, which is the antecedent ground conditioning every creative act.”\textsuperscript{114} God, for Whitehead, is simply that which creates the possibility of order. This sense of good order is necessary for the world to even exist and function. Whitehead, writing about this and God as an ordering entity, contends,

\begin{footnotesize}
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It is not the case that there is an actual world which accidentally happens to exhibit an order of nature. There is an actual world because there is an order of nature . . . . The ordering entity is a necessary element in the metaphysical situation presented by the actual world. 115

For Whitehead, without this order the world could not exist; in fact, it is in the increased presence of order in the world that purifies it.116

For Whitehead, the essence of true religion is to create the best possible well-ordered world:

Rational religion is religion whose beliefs and rituals have been reorganized with the aim of making it the central element in a coherent ordering of life – an ordering which shall be coherent both in respect to the elucidation of thought, and in respect to the direction of conduct towards a unified purpose commanding ethical approval.117

This ordering of life applies to society as a whole and is that which can bring about the manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Explicitly on the topic of the Kingdom of God Whitehead leaves no ambiguity as to the fact that he embraces Hegel’s dialectical method on history and understanding regarding the Kingdom of God. We see this when he claims,

The history of ideas is a history of mistakes. But through all mistakes it is also the history of the gradual purification of conduct. When there is progress in the development of favourable order, we find conduct protected from relapse into brutalisation by the increasing agency of ideas consciously entertained. In this way Plato is justified in his saying, the creation of the world—that is to say, the world of civilized order is the victory of persuasion over force.118

Or stated directly regarding the Kingdom, “There is a Kingdom of heaven prior to the actual passage of actual things, and there is the same Kingdom finding its completion

115 Ibid: 104.
116 Regarding this ordering presence purifying the world Whitehead writes, “Your character is developed according to your faith. This is the primary religious truth from which no one can escape. Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts.” Alfred North Whitehead. Religion in the Making: 15.
through the accomplishment of this passage.”¹¹⁹ Clearly for Whitehead there is an end of history or a time when the Kingdom of God will most evidently manifest itself.

Taylor writes about this belief regarding the purification of the world through historical process when he writes,

A common view today is that the spread of free markets, liberal societies, modern science and technology, and democratic forms of rule will ensure a golden age for humankind, promising universal peace and growing well-being for all.¹²⁰

This belief was a common one at the time of Whitehead and still is readily found in our modern era. However, when the Kingdom did not manifest itself as expected and evils unimaginable at the time revealed themselves in the world (particularly those committed during World War II), this belief that historical process could purify our world would attract a barrage of cynics.

1.2.12 Millenarianism

These Liberal Christian ideals had gathered a great deal of the imagination of Christianity by the 20th Century. Thus, it should be no surprise with the turn away from kerygmatic Christian theology, and in light of the evils that were committed during this time, that there was a massive rebellion against all the valuation of liberal theology. There are three major movements that rejected the progressive understanding of the Kingdom of God that permeated liberalism: the post-liberals, sectarian Millenarianism, and the early Fundamentalists.

The post-liberals, who include several of the most seminal theologians of the 20th Century, including Karl Barth, John Howard Yoder, and Stanley Hauerwas, most

¹²⁰ Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 690.
potently rebelled against the tendency in Christian history for Christians to blindly follow historical process and against the link between church and political observance. Though they are seminal figures in Christian history, I cannot use them in this thesis; as critics of all three modes of Durkheimian Christianity, they do not apply to this thesis. However, Millenarianism and Fundamentalism bring us much closer to our current era.

First I will address Millenarianism. The thinkers of this line of thought are well within the hyper-Augustinian tradition in their belief that the Kingdom of God couldn’t possibly be manifest on earth. The most prominent of the Millenarianism theologians is John Nelson Darby. Darby’s perspective regarding the Kingdom of God most certainly falls into the category of an extreme hyper-Augustinian modality. This is evident when one reads,

Evil exists. The world is lying in wickedness, and the God of unity is the Holy God. Separation, therefore, separation from evil, becomes the necessary and sole basis and principle.121

However, this belief that the world is evil goes far beyond Augustine’s belief that evil in the world is a constant and preexisting condition.

According to Millenarianism, the world is increasingly becoming a worse place. For Darby, this is happening because he believes that Revelation 20 predicts this very thing. Darby calls this ‘dispensation’ of history the Tribulation, about which he writes, “There will be at the close a tribulation, a time such as there never has been, till the Lord’s coming brings deliverance.”122 The Kingdom will only come, according to Darby, after the Tribulation dispensation. The first signs of the Kingdom will come prior to the

Tribulation, as the Saints will be removed, or ‘Raptured’ out of this world, prior to the tribulation. Regarding this he states, “The Rapture is in connection with the glory of the Kingdom; and the saints in general, who are to reign in the Kingdom, have part in this rapture.”123 This is an extreme revulsion to the liberal position on the Kingdom of God. Those who fall into the category of Millenarianism believe they see this regression everywhere in the secular world. These ideals will form a major part of the theology of the post 1973 fundamentalist movement, as will be illustrated shortly.

The second group that rejects liberal Christianity is Christian Fundamentalism. The most prominent of these early fundamentalists and the father of this movement is William Bell Riley. As is the staple of all anti-liberal positions, Riley contends that, “The world cannot germinate the Kingdom of God.”124 Riley didn’t withdraw from the world, as such a statement would suggest; rather, he made it his life goal to remove the teaching of evolution from America’s educational system. Riley, like all prominent Evangelicals, threw himself into politics, as one can see when he writes, “When the Church is regarded as the body of God-fearing, righteous-living men, then, it ought to be in politics, and as a powerful influence.”125 Yet Riley, at first glance, seems to represent a seemingly oxymoronic position. He contends, like all Evangelicals before him, for the importance of political activism and social reform and yet can contend that, “We insist that the Kingdom is in embryo in the believer’s heart: it will be in beauty over all the earth, while its full blessing it will be found in heaven.”126 For Riley, the Kingdom of God was an

123 Ibid: 118.
125 Quoted in George M. Marsden’s Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 36.
126 William Bell Riley. The Evolution of the Kingdom: 41.
internal ideal. For him, like Calvin, this internal transformation leads to altering one’s external reality. Though with Riley, and all Fundamentalists, comes the re-emergence of the belief that the Kingdom cannot be manifest in secular time. However, he and all Fundamentalists continue to attempt to instil neo-Durkheimian values in the public realm. This at first blush seems contradictory. However, the reason for this is most likely born of the desire to more rapidly usher in the eschaton and the zeal to service that had infiltrated most of Western theology by this time.

1.2.13 Walter Rauschenbusch

Before turning to modern Fundamentalism and the Christian Right there are a few additional understandings regarding the Kingdom of God that needs to be addressed. One of these is the Social Gospel movement. This movement follows many of the patterns of Victorian Christianity or Evangelicalism, including that of the principal of civility, providential order, and the Enlightenment ideal of benevolence. The leading propend of the social gospel movement was unmistakably Walter Rauschenbusch. Rauschenbusch’s importance falls along our continuum of the neo-Durkheimian model but also pushes us much closer to an understanding of the Kingdom of God that will be encountered in post-Durkheimian era and in the thought of Brian McLaren.

For Rauschenbusch, the Kingdom was a secular reality and is something that is realizable for each individual and for society in general. As one can see when he contends,

while the perfection of the Kingdom may be served for a future epoch, the Kingdom is here and at work. The Kingdom means individual men and women who freely do the will of God, and who therefore live rightly with their fellowmen. And without a goodly number of such men and women, no plan for higher social order will have stability enough to work. But the Kingdom also means a growing perfection in the collective life of humanity, in our laws, in the customs of society, in the institutions
of education, and administration of mercy, in our public opinion, our literal and artistic ideals, in the pervasiveness of the service of duty, and in our readiness to give our life as a ransom for others.\(^{127}\)

In this one can determine two things. First, Rauschenbusch can clearly be linked in some regard to liberal Christianity, as there is a strong relation between the Kingdom of God and the belief in historical progress in relation to politics, civility, and science.\(^{128}\) As well, one can see that he has a strong affinity for the Enlightenment ideal of benevolence.\(^{129}\) Being that he is in the American stream of Evangelicalism he also had strong beliefs in the manifest destiny of America and the close correlation of Christianity with the ideals of civilization identity:

There is no inherent cause why a great group of nations, such as that which is now united in Western civilization, should not live on in perpetual youth, overcoming by a series of rejuvenations every social evil as it arises, and in using every attainment as a stepping-stone to a still higher culture of individual and social life. It has never been done. Can it be done in a civilization in which Christianity is the salt of the earth, the social preservative?\(^{130}\)

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\(^{128}\) Rauschenbusch explicitly states how he perceives that the Kingdom is advancing in the world, “Millenarianism refuses to believe that the world is getting better. It refuses to believe that the spread of intelligence, the growth of mechanical inventions, the progress of democracy, the increase of the church in numbers and wealth, are really an improvement in the net quantity of God-fearing righteousness on earth.” Walter Rauschenbusch. *Walter Rauschenbusch: Selected Writings*: 90.

\(^{129}\) The Enlightenment ideal of benevolence is readily visible in Rauschenbusch’s writings as we can see when he states, “If Christian men are really interested in the salvation of human lives and in the health, the decency, the education, and the morality of the people, they must wish well to the working people in their effort to secure such conditions for themselves and their dear ones that they will not have to die of tuberculosis in their prime, nor feel the their strength ground down by long hours of work, nor see women and children drawn into the merciless hopper of factor labour, nor to be shut out from empowerment of the culture about them which they have watered with their sweat.” Walter Rauschenbusch. *Walter Rauschenbusch: Selected Writings*: 153.

One can readily see allusions to both Wilberforce and Edwards in this quote, as Rauschenbusch unmistakably believes that Christianity’s role in the world is to foster civilization identity.¹³¹

It should be made clear that Rauschenbusch’s theology must be clearly linked with the neo-Durkheimian Era. This is of fundamental importance for comprehending the distinction between the Social Gospel of Rauschenbusch from the social gospel we will encounter in the works of Brian McLaren. For McLaren, as I alluded to in the introduction, the sole task of the Kingdom is in reference to concern and care for the poor, the weak, and the oppressed. Though this is significant to Rauschenbusch, it is not of primary importance. We can see this exhibited when he states,

If, therefore, our personal religious life is likely to be sapped by our devotion to social work, it would be a calamity second to none… The great aim of underlying the whole social movement is the creation of a free, just, and brotherly social order. This is the greatest moral task conceivable. Its accomplishment is the manifest will of God for this generation. Every Christian motive is calling us to it. If it is left undone, millions of lives will be condemned to a deepening moral degradation and spiritual starvation.¹³²

This belief that the goal of Christianity is to maintain and progress civilization identity will be a foreign ideal by the time we arrive at McLaren and the post-Durkheimian mode.

After the Second World War, the vast majority of Western Christians rejected this ‘liberal’ view of Christianity, particularly the concept of the theodicy (why this was the case will be discussed momentarily). Tony Campolo writes about this,

“Social gospelers” were considered politically left, semi-Christians who had forsaken a Biblically based salvation message for the diluted gospel of mere social

¹³¹ The ideals of human progress found in ‘liberal Christianity’ or the process theology are quite obvious in Rauschenbusch. “We must repent of the sins of existing society, cast off the spell of the lies protecting our social wrongs, have faith in higher social order, and realize in ourselves a new type of Christian manhood which seeks to overcome the evil in the present world, not by withdrawing from the world, but by revolutionizing it.” Walter Rauschenbusch. *Walter Rauschenbusch: Selected Writings*: 159.

ethics. And because it was largely the theological liberals who embraced social action, evangelicals reacted by making both liberals and social action their adversaries.\textsuperscript{133}

After most of Western Christianity rejected all liberal valuations (with only a few minor exceptions), the social gospel movement mostly disappeared as a sociological movement. This will be true until Brian McLaren and the Emergent Church. However, Liberal values do not disappear from the West, in fact just the opposite: they intensify in the increasingly secular public sphere and in the growing agnostic, atheistic, and new age spiritual movements.

1.2.14 Liberation Theology

Before moving on to the Christian Right and modern Fundamentalism, there is one more theological position regarding the Kingdom of God that is worth mentioning: Liberation theology. Liberation theology, though not born in Western theology, plays a minor role in explaining McLaren’s understanding of the Kingdom of God. It is a theology born of the affirmation of ordinary life and its fundamental drive to reform the political sphere. Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the most prominent proponents of Liberation theology, states that Christianity “Consists especially in making the world a better place. Only in this way will I be able to discover what the Kingdom of God means.”\textsuperscript{134}

Liberation theology most certainly falls closest to the Enlightenment ideal of benevolence and as a result it is also a move away from an Augustinian belief that it is ‘for the sake of eternal life alone that we are Christians.’ This is a theology that is almost entirely revolutionary, which makes it a complete antithesis to the hyper-Augustinian understanding in which

\textsuperscript{133} Tony Campolo and Brian McLaren. \textit{Adventures in Missing the Point} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003): 113.

revolution is a contradiction of the Kingdom of God and the order of nature. About the revolutionary nature of Christianity, Gutiérrez writes,

The prophets announce a Kingdom of peace. But peace presupposes the establishment of justice: “Righteousness shall yield peace and its fruit [shall] be quietness and confidence forever” . . . . It presupposes the defense of the rights of the poor, punishment of the oppressors, a life free from the fear of being enslaved by others, the liberation of the oppressed. Peace, justice, love, and freedom are not private realities; they are not only internal attitudes. They are social realities, implying a historical liberation. A poorly understood spiritualization has often made us forget the human consequences of the eschatological promises and the power to transform unjust social structures, which they imply. The elimination of misery and exploitation is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom.\(^{135}\)

The importance of the concept of revolution and the rejection of the hyper-Augustinian belief in metaphysical transcendence will play out powerfully in the social imaginary of post-Durkheimian Christianity. This will be evident in the works of Brian McLaren.

1.2.15 Fundamentalism

Now returning to our modern understanding of Fundamentalism. One must understand that modern Fundamentalism is a synthesis between the ideologies of early Fundamentalism and Millenarianism. This brings us once again to Taylor’s understanding of secularism and the milieu we find ourselves in. Taylor, writing about what has been altered in the modern social imaginary, states, “The change I want to define and trace is one which takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others.”\(^{136}\) Taylor refers to this understanding of secularism as secularism 3, as opposed to secularism 2, which is the belief that secularism has arisen

\(^{135}\) Ibid: 90.

because God disappears from the public sphere; or secularism 1, which is the belief that secularism arises because people begin to turn away from religion en masse. Taylor wouldn’t outright deny secularity 1 and 2, but rather claims that they are derivatives of secularity 3. It is essential to state this as it creates the necessary criterion that motivates the advent of the Christian Right.

As I stated earlier, there existed a mutually beneficial relationship between the church and the state in America. This relationship continued for quite some time, mostly unimpeded until the *Scopes Monkey Trial* in 1925. This event was the first sign that the churches exclusivity as the sole provider of social services to the state was to diminish against the rapidly arising secular powers. The loss of the trial was a hard one to American Fundamentalists, and as a result, “From 1925 through the 1970’s . . . fundamentalists fell silent on political issues and, in effect, went underground.” However, such a view can only make sense if one understands how the church in the broader sense functions in the neo-Durkheimian mode and that even during this time, while functioning in its private therapeutic role, it still provided the Godly ethos for the state.

In 1973 the state legalized abortion and as a result of the reaction to the rapid growth of ‘secularism,’ Fundamentalism returned to the public sphere and out of this return the Christian Right was born. This moment in the history of Christian Nationalism,

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137 While rejecting the position of secularism 1, Taylor argues, “But whether we see this in terms of prescriptions, or in terms of ritual or ceremonial presence, this emptying of religion from autonomous social spheres is, of course, compatible with the vast majority of people still believing in God, and practicing their religion vigorously.” Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 2.

138 Regarding Secularity 2 Taylor writes, “In this second meaning, secularity consists in the falling off of religious belief and practice, in people turning away from God, and no longer going to Church.” Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 3.

and for American history in general, cannot be understated, as it galvanized the Fundamentalists concerns over the growth of secularism in America. From the perspective of these Christians, the State had overstepped its bounds and directly intruded into the private realm of the family, and, as the Christian Nationalists saw it, began to attack traditional family values. As well they viewed this as an attack on the American Republic as these ‘family values’ were early on what formed the basis for the economic and political success of the Republic.

The uproar was tremendous and Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, amongst others, raised the call for all Christian Nationalists to unite and combat secularism, which they believed was eroding national and family values. The full force of this movement was staggering and was most powerfully exhibited in the two elections of George W. Bush.

Jerry Falwell would have to be the most important member of the Christian Right. Earlier on in his life as a Christian minister Falwell can simply be regarded as another member of the early Fundamentalists, who did not intrude into the public sphere, as one can perceive when he states,

Nowhere are we commissioned to reform the externals. We are not told to wage war against bootleggers, prostitutes, racketeers, prejudiced persons or institutions, or another existing evil as such. I feel we need to get off the streets and back in the pulpits and into our prayer rooms. I believe we need to rededicate ourselves to the great task of turning this world back to God.\textsuperscript{140}

But not long after this, Falwell very much sought to “reform the externals,” which is evident when he contends, “This idea of ‘religion and politics don’t mix’ was invented by

the devil to keep Christians from running their own country.”\(^{141}\) Here one can observe what motivated Falwell and the Christian Right: the desire to reinstate Christianity back to the once vaunted position that it formerly held in the fullness of the neo-Durkheimian mode. This is a point that is not lost on Taylor, who contends, “What drove the moral majority and motivates the Christian Right in the U.S.A. is an aspiration to re-establish something of the fractured neo-Durkheimian understanding that used to define the nation.”\(^{142}\) For the Christian Right it is Taylor’s secularism 3 that has ‘ruined’ America. The end result is that we are now engaged in a cultural war with the Christian Right on one side and on the other secular humanists and those that adhere more closely to the post-Durkheimian mode, and other groups that do not fit neatly in to the neo-Durkheimian mode, such as Muslims (though there is obvious in-fighting even amongst these groups).

Regarding the Kingdom of God itself one can readily surmise that for Falwell, like the early American Pietists and Evangelicals, America ruled by ‘Christian’ law would become the essence of the Kingdom on Earth. However, Falwell like most, if not all, of the Christian Right, holds very strongly to Millenarianism valuations, as one can see when he contends,

As we get closer to the coming of Jesus, we will see conditions on the earth that are described in the Bible that happen both before Jesus comes and after Jesus comes. As these events appear, we know that Jesus is coming soon. Just driving into town you begin to see signs announcing restaurants, motels, and business establishments in Lynchburg, so there are signs that inform us that Jesus is coming soon. The more signs you see, the closer you are getting. Here are some of the signs that will happen before and after the return of Jesus:
1. Nation rising up against nation – Matthew 24:7.
3. Wars and rumours of wars – Matthew 24:6

\(^{141}\) Ibid: 22.
\(^{142}\) Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age* : 488.
6. Scoffers who deny Jesus is coming – 2 Peter 3:3-14.
7. People saying peace and safety – 1 Thess. 5:1-3.
11. Disobedience to parents – 2 Timothy 3:2.¹⁴³

As we saw earlier with William Bell Riley, this theological position at first blush appears to be contradictory, but rather is part of the old Calvinist doctrine of working for one’s gratefulness to God and grounding the world upon God’s Providential order, which in their opinion was successful during the neo-Durkheimian mode. This truly takes us to Brian McLaren, into the post-Durkheimian mode, and to the heart of the conflict between the neo-Durkheimian mode and a rapidly arising post-Durkheimian one.

Chapter 3

Brian McLaren and The Post-Durkheimian Mode

This turns us to Brian McLaren and the milieu we find ourselves in. Charles Taylor refers to this rapidly emerging era as the post-Durkheimian mode. What one discovers is that the relationship between Church and State changes substantially from what was evident in the paleo- and the neo-Durkheimian. In the paleo-Durkheimian mode the relationship is instituted upon a “society as constituted by a law which has been ours since time out of mind”144 or in Augustine’s terms it is founded upon an “Order of nature which forbids disturbance.” In this mode, one cannot question the hierarchical nature of the system, as to do so is a contradiction of the divine law, upon which the community finds its identity. Of course for those in the paleo-Durkheimian era there can be no possible belief that the Kingdom of God can be instituted on earth. Too much evil exists, as one can readily see when Augustine rails against the secular realm in The City of God.

In the neo-Durkheimian mode political allegiance and one’s relation to a metaphysical reality remain linked, but now without a pervasive hierarchical equilibrium. Order becomes all-important for those in this dispensation as one’s political allegiance is based around what one perceives to be an order that is readily evident to Rational minds. In Charles Taylor terminology one can refer to this as the Providential Order.

One can see this push for order drive the economic success of the Western world, as all or most individuals begin to bring the demands of the priestly order into their ordinary lives. Consequently, the adherents of the neo-Durkheimian mode begin to measure their political and economic success as proof of God’s favour upon them. At this

144 Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 192.
point in history, as has been exhibited, there is a profound belief that the Kingdom of God is actually becoming manifest in secular time, particularly in the United States.

Also at this time we see the principle of freedom rapidly become paramount in the neo-Durkheimian social imaginary. One can see this being initiated by Luther with the freedom from the hierarchical equilibrium of the Catholic Church. This emphasis on freedom intensifies as we move deeper into the era of the neo-Durkheimian mode. At this time as well, there is an intense push with the Evangelicals to emancipate slaves and to instil democratic values in the whole world. Taylor contends that this high emphasis on freedom necessarily leads us into the post-Durkheimian era:

The U.S. since the early nineteenth century has been a home of religious freedom, expressed in a very American way: that is, it has been a country of religious choice. People move, form new denominations, join ones that they weren’t brought up in, break away from existing ones, and so on. Their whole religious culture was in some way prepared for the Age of Authenticity [or the post-Durkheimian].

According to Taylor there are four hallmarks of the modern social imaginary in the Western world, and these are: the free market economy, the public sphere or the rights of free speech, the sovereign people, and the freedom of expression (or fashion). With all this emphasis on freedom it should not be surprising that a host of alternative options in the public and private sphere appear, particularly in the private. According to Taylor this is secularism 3, as mentioned in the previous section.

We now live in an era where we can begin to see many of the effects of all this freedom, such as the rapid decline of institutional religion, an increase in the number of alternative religious options, emancipation of many formerly oppressed groups, and the pursuit of self-realization, just to name a few. Taylor has noted the neo-Durkheimian

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145 Ibid: 529.
146 Ibid: 481.
mode and its increased emphasis on personal freedoms led naturally in a transition to the post-Durkheimian era. Though, as he further notes, the fall into the post-Durkheimian era is far from complete as many still fall into the mindset of the neo-Durkheimian and the meeting of these two modes fragilize each other.\textsuperscript{147} The result is that now there are an untold plethora of religious, non-religious, and synthesized options for the individual to adhere too.

In the neo-Durkheimian mode one could choose the denomination of their choice; however, it most often was within the bounds of orthodox Christianity. In the post-Durkheimian, as religious freedom has intensified, one feels free to branch outside of orthodox-Christian positions. As well, the increased emphasis on the passions of one’s religious leaning, as opposed to adherence to dogma (which is evident in Romantic strains of religious observance) becomes all-important in the post-Durkheimian mode.

Taylor makes this clear when he contends that

\begin{quote}
In the neo-Durkheimian world, joining a church you don’t believe in seems not just wrong, but absurd, contradictory, so in the post-Durkheimian age seems the idea of adhering to a spirituality, which does not present itself as your path, the one which moves and inspires you. For many people today, to set aside their own path in order to conform to some external authority just doesn’t seem comprehensible as a form of spiritual life. The injunction is . . . “Only accept what rings true to your inner Self.”\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

Speaking directly to Romantic strains of religious observance, Taylor states,

\begin{quote}
These movements wished to remain within orthodoxy, but it wouldn’t be long before the emphasis will shift more and more toward the strength and genuineness of these feelings, rather than the nature of their object.\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} The concept of fragilization is one that Taylor often refers to, about which he writes, “It’s a pluralistic world, in which many forms of belief and unbelief jostle, and hence fragilize each other.” Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 531.
\textsuperscript{148} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 489.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid: 488.
In Romanticism, unity is the primary motivating factor. This is true for those in the post-Durkheimian mode as well. In this mode the search for unity comes in the form of self-realization or ‘wholeness,’ as Taylor contends,

Each one of us has his/her own way of realizing humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own, as against to surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority.\textsuperscript{150}

Therefore, it shouldn’t be at all surprising then that many individuals are leaving the institutional Church. This is especially true when coupled with the sharp distrust of authority found in this era, which finds its psychological and sociological root in the Reformation.

Further, in the neo-Durkheimian mode the success of the state was founded upon a providential order that becomes instilled in the lives of individuals. This value system is born and advanced on Christian soil. However, when other religious and secular options enter the picture, the values of a well-ordered personal life and values for society as a whole do not diminish. Many perceive as a result of this that religion is no longer needed to ground civilization identity. Thus, it is not surprising that those in the post-Durkheimian mode of thought are highly resistant to the belief that religion is still needed to do so.

In the neo-Durkheimian mode of religious identity there is an intimate link between one’s religious and political identity. However, in the “post-Durkheimian dispensation, the ‘sacred,’ either religious or ‘laique,’ has become uncoupled from our political allegiances.”\textsuperscript{151} Hence Taylor’s use of the prefix \textit{post-} as the direct link between church

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid: 475.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid: 487.
and state is no longer mutually exasperated as it is in the paleo- and the neo-Durkheimian modes. This is the extreme result of the separation of church and state; or rather, more clearly, the separation of the private and public spheres. Consequently, one’s spiritual path is almost entirely privatized; it is to be found in one’s passions or emotions.

With religion identity becoming almost entirely privatized, or at least being compartmentalized from one’s political leanings, the emphasis on one’s spiritual path becomes more and more about finding one’s own inner path. This distinction is most often termed ‘spiritual’ as opposed to ‘religious.’ Regarding this, one spiritual seeker, quoted in *A Secular Age*, states,

> Spirituality, I think, is what enters you and lifts you up and moves you to be a better person, a more open person. I don’t think religion does that. Religion tells you what to do and when to do it, when to kneel, when to stand up, all of that stuff. Lots of rules.

One can readily see a whole host of Romantic ideals here: a deep-rooted animosity to organized religion, the desire for an inner transformation, and the draw to wholeness or self-realization.

This does not mean that those who fall into the category of post-Durkheimian spirituality are not actively involved politically. Rather it is that their spiritual principles don’t directly inform their benevolent political leanings. Benevolence in the post-Durkheimian mode is simply a right that is believed and practiced by all adherents of this mode. In this mode the Enlightenment ideals of benevolence infiltrates every aspect of

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152 Charles Taylor makes it clear that the there is a common “error of confusing the post-Durkheimian dispensation with a trivialized and utterly privatized religion.” Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 516.
154 Ibid. 508.
the public sphere, whereas the Romantic drives the private and religious dimension. Yet, this is

In a sense political, and flows from the moral order of freedom and mutual benefit. My spiritual path has to respect those of others; it must abide by the harm principle.\textsuperscript{155}

This is, in its essence, political, as everyone believes and contends that all have the right to these freedoms. Simply stated, the values of unmitigated freedom and tolerance become in its own sense religious and political. Here we can most certainly observe an intensification of Hegel’s thesis to new heights, whereas the Enlightenment ideals of benevolence and the Romantic notion of wholeness and inner transformation play out to the benefit of each other.

As well, this high sense of tolerance also leads into pacifism as a sociological phenomenon. In Anabaptism, pacifism is sectarian, but this new sense of pacifism is common to most if not all in the post-Durkheimian mode. There is a desire to seek peace above else all in this mode. Taylor’s sense of Reform plays out powerfully in the post-Durkheimian mode, as those who can be categorized by this mode wish to further transform society by this ideal.

However, as has already been asserted, Charles Taylor is clear that currently we are caught between the neo- and post-Durkheimian modes. About this he states,

My terms “neo-Durkheimian” and “post-Durkheimian” designate ideal types. My claim is not that our present day is unambiguously post-Durkheimian . . . . Rather there is a struggle going on between these two dispensations. But it is just this, the availability of a post-Durkheimian dispensation, which destabilizes us and provokes the conflict.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid: 489.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid: 488.
This is most pertinent in the United States, but the pull between these two ideals is still powerfully felt in the rest of the West. The battle between these conflicting ideologies is what provokes the majority of Brian McLaren’s works and makes him such a contentious figure in the modern world. This is due to the fact that he represents the voice of post-Durkheimian Christianity, which stands in opposition to the much more established branch of neo-Durkheimian Christianity.

First of all, McLaren spends a good deal of energy distancing himself from those who are attempting to return to a neo-Durkheimian form of austere spirituality. In fact the bulk of his writing is on creating distance between his Emergent theology and that of the re-emergent neo-Durkheimian mode. The very values that are fundamental to the neo-Durkheimian Christians are the ones that McLaren sets out to question. He often attacks the heart of the neo-Durkheimian mode – the link between religion and civilization identity. This is evident when he declares,

When people tell me that we are or have been a Christian nation, I want to ask, "When?" Was it in the colonial era or during westward expansion, when we began stealing the lands of the Native Americans, making and breaking treaties, killing wantonly, and justifying our actions by the Bible? Was it in the era of slavery or segregation, when again, we used the Bible to justify the unjustifiable? Was it in more recent history, when we dropped the first nuclear bomb and killed hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, when we overthrew democratically elected governments in the Cold War era, when we plundered the environment without concern for the birds of the air or flowers of the field, or when we sanctioned or turned a blind eye to torture earlier this decade? Was it earlier this week, when I turned on the TV or radio and heard people scapegoating immigrants and gay people and Muslims?

Marcy McDonald’s book *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada* is a pertinent example of the conflict between these two modes in Canada. 

And further, “To a citizen of Western civilization like me, Kingdom language suggests order, stability, government policy, domination, control, maybe even vengeance on rebels and threats of banishment and for the uncooperative.” ¹⁵⁹ Here we can see that McLaren questions the neo-Durkheimian belief that Christianity grounds civilization identity. In this there can be no doubt that McLaren is markedly distinct from neo-Durkheimian Christianity.

Further, McLaren proposes that concept of revolution, as I earlier stated would become important for post-Durkheimian Christianity. McLaren writes about this,

Jesus is saying, “Risk everything, including your life, to stand up to Caesar and join with me in revolution – not by fighting and killing, but by being willing to die with me.” ¹⁶⁰

McLaren often refers to our current economic system as a *suicide machine*, and he and all post-Durkheimian Christians believe that it is a system that they must combat. This modern leftist stance is one that will be of constant conflict between the neo- (whose adherents almost always stand on the right politically) and those who belong to the post-Durkheimian mode.

Also, the tendency in neo-Durkheimian Christianity is towards a hyper-Augustinian belief regarding the nature of humanity and the secular world, with its most extreme example being Millenarianism and all its derivatives. On this point McLaren further distances himself from the re-emergent neo-Durkheimian Christians. We can see this when he states, “Instead of the Kingdom of God coming to earth, the Christian religion has too often become preoccupied with abandoning or escaping the earth and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid: 98.
It is a common refrain of McLaren’s that Christian theology has for far too often and for too long emphasized abandoning the secular world.

As I have already contended, secularism, according to Taylor, is our social imaginary played out entirely in the secular time. The result is that all our concerns fall within the bounds of ordinary human flourishing. Regarding this Taylor explicitly states, that

A secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of the imaginable life for masses of people.

In this we can see McLaren is truly an extreme Christian version of Taylor’s secularism, as, for him, human flourishing is the highest dimension of God’s aspiration for humanity. Thus, even though Brian McLaren wishes to wholesale reject all things derived from the Enlightenment, his understanding of the Kingdom of God is primarily derived from the principle of benevolence that is birthed from it.

This brings us to the heart of McLaren theology and his understanding of the Kingdom of God. His theology of the Kingdom is deeply rooted in the Enlightenment ideal of benevolence. About which he writes, “These emerging Christian leaders realize that if their message isn’t good news for the poor, a message of liberation for the oppressed, it isn’t the same message that Jesus proclaimed.”

This is a common refrain of McLaren’s, that an understanding of the Kingdom of God that places its telos in a future epoch is not the message of Jesus. Rather the message of Jesus is to bring about the Kingdom here and now, as he makes especially clear when he asserts,

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the secret message of Jesus isn’t primarily about “heaven after you die.” It doesn’t give use an exit ramp or escape hatch from this world; rather, it thrusts us back into the here and now so we can be part of God’s dream for planet earth coming true.\textsuperscript{163}

For him the Kingdom of God is much in line with values of Taylor’s secular age, which is to say the highest value must be to “preserve life, to bring prosperity, to reduce suffering, world-wide.”\textsuperscript{164} He goes so far as to define a new eschatology based on this benevolent outlook:

In a participatory eschatology, when we ask, "What does the future hold?" the answer begins, “That depends. It depends on you and me. God holds out to us at every movement a brighter future; the issue is whether we are willing to receive it and work with God to help create it.”\textsuperscript{165}

As if to remove any doubt about McLaren’s alignment with a benevolent concept of the Kingdom of God, he quotes a friend in \textit{A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith}, “The Kingdom of God is at hand, . . . God’s benevolent society is already among us.”\textsuperscript{166} Therefore, for McLaren the values of the secular age truly are the values that best reflect his conception of the Kingdom of God.

However, as I have already claimed in the preceding section of this thesis, many others, like Walter Rauschenbusch and William Wilberforce, are drawn toward the Enlightenment ideals of benevolence. This high value on benevolence alone does not link Brian McLaren to the post-Durkheimian mode. Rather, it is his very post-Durkheimian spiritual outlook that makes him distinct from anything that has come before in kerygmatic Western Christian theology. This is most evident when he states, regarding

\textsuperscript{163} Brian McLaren. \textit{The Secret Message of Jesus}: 183. Though to be clear McLaren does believe in an afterlife. At one point he writes, “Jesus then, wouldn’t be telling them that there is a place for them in heaven after they die (although, thankfully there is).” Brian McLaren. \textit{A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Question that are Transforming the Faith} (New York: HarperOne, 2010): 220.

\textsuperscript{164} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 370.

\textsuperscript{165} Brian McLaren. \textit{A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Question that are Transforming the Faith} (New York: HarperOne, 2010): 196.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid: 138.
his book *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*, “So this is a religious book, but in a worldly and unconventional and ultimately positive way, a way some nonreligious people would call ‘spiritual but not religious.’” In this identification one can readily perceive that McLaren is writing to a post-Durkheimian audience and that he would most closely align himself with the values of this mode.

The highest virtue in the post-Durkheimian age is tolerance. As well, it is the heart of the political message in the post-Durkheimian era. McLaren in a grand way tries to capture this broad sense of tolerance or ecumenism in his book *A Generous Orthodoxy*, in which he attempts to find a common ground between Christian denominations, as well as other religious and non-religious movements. Yet he goes substantially farther when he contends in an interview with Tony Campolo,

> We obsess on "who's in" and "who's out." Jesus, however, seems to be asking the question, "How can the Kingdom of God more fully come on earth as it is in heaven, and how should disciples of the Kingdom live to enter and welcome the Kingdom?"... For example, I think God will be far more displeased by our carelessness toward the poor, or by our lack of peacemaking, or by our unrecognized racism and nationalism than he will be about whether you're an exclusivist or not. I think many of us should tremble in light of what God says about caring for the poor, the fatherless, and the vulnerable.

Though McLaren does not go so far as to claim "who is in," he frequently points towards non-Christians, who emphasize potent benevolent and social justice leanings, those whom he believes most closely emulate Christ. The shared sense of belonging that is so evident in the post-Durkheimian mode is readily evident in his thought. Taylor argues, writing about a particular branch of post-Durkheimian Christianity,

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This religion was born outside confessional structures, it has its own kind of universalism, a sort of spontaneous and unreflective ecumenism, in which the coexistence of plural forms of spirituality is taken for granted.\textsuperscript{169}

One can readily perceive that for McLaren this high value on peace and tolerance are of the highest moral category.

This sense of tolerance is what one can find at the very heart of the philosophy of postmodernism. McLaren is very much drawn to its ideals, concerning which he contends,

Most modern people love to relative the viewpoints of the others against the unquestioned superiority of their own modern viewpoint. But in a way, you cross the threshold into postmodernity the moment you turn your critical scrutiny from others to yourself, when you relative your own modern viewpoint.\textsuperscript{170}

One can readily identify his affection for the postmodern ideals of tolerance here but also a potent rejection of grand truth, which is a topic I will broach in a moment.

A caveat regarding postmodernism is necessary here. Charles Taylor would never use the terms postmodern and post-Durkheimian interchangeably. There are three reasons for this: First, the term postmodern can be used to reject the affirmation of ordinary human fulfillments as Nietzsche (the forerunner of post-modernism) and Foucault do. McLaren only uses the term in the most positive sense, as in that it promotes tolerance and seeks to advance the affirmation of ordinary human fulfillment. Second, Taylor goes out of his way to discredit the postmodern position. This should be no surprise, as Taylor does not believe in the “subtraction theory” (the belief that one value system simply replaces another) of postmodernism, which he defines when he writes, “First, science

\textsuperscript{169} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 534. Taylor here is addressing renewed Christianity in Russia after communism. He uses this as an analogy for what is happening in Western Christianity.

gave us ‘naturalistic’ explanation of the world. And then people began to look for
alternatives to God.” As we have seen in Taylor’s movement of secularization, this
slide to secularism is far more complicated than the subtraction story allows, as it in fact
originates on Christian soil, that our social imaginaries alter over long periods of history
and are born out of previous modes, and that it requires an increase in our “confidence in
our own powers of moral ordering.” Finally, Postmodernism rejects Metanarratives
and Taylor’s secularization narrative is a Metanarrative (in a grand way as we will see in
the following part of this thesis). Taylor most certainly contends that there has been a
substantial change in our modern social imaginaries from that of a paleo- and neo-
Durkheimian type, but the subtraction theory does not adequately explain it. Rather a
change in moral sources as we see in Taylor’s theory gives us a broad enough perspective
to begin to understand this change.

These substantial changes in our modern context can be chalked up to Taylor’s
secularity 3. It is to this that the re-emergent neo-Durkheimian mode, and its most potent
derivative the Christian Right, most strongly reacts. In the post-Durkheimian world self-
expression and tolerance become the highest value. In the neo-Durkheimian mode
tolerance was a value so long as it stayed within the bounds of Kerygmatic Christianity
and therefore did not threaten the role of the church as the social services provider that
grounded ‘the mores that make democracy possible.’ For the modern Right-Wing branch
of the neo-Durkheimian mode, the type of tolerance and freedom emphasized in Taylor’s
Secularity 3 oversteps its bounds and attacks the very foundation of what they believe to
be the root of civilization identity.

172 Ibid: 27.
The neo-Durkheimian mode had emphasized the Enlightenment sense of order so stringently that a rebellion by those who were more closely drawn toward Romantic, or counter-Enlightenment, ideologies was inevitable. As has already been illustrated, the Romantic ideals are very important for those who adhere to the post-Durkheimian social imaginary. With this being stated, it will be much easier to identify how Brian McLaren and the Emergent church movement fit into the post-Durkheimian mode.

The most obvious period in Western history where the neo- and the post-Durkheimian modes clashed was the 1960’s. The values of those in the post-Durkheimian mode, and the principles that they were resisting, are readily evident in these tumultuous times:

The revolts of the young people in the “60s” (which really extended into the 70s but I am using what has become the standard form) were indeed, directed against a “system” which smothered creativity, individuality, and imagination. They rebelled against a “mechanical” system in the name of more “organic” ties; against the instrumental, and for lives devoted to things of intrinsic value; against privilege and for equality; and against the repression of the body for reason and for the fullness of sensuality. 

By using the above quote I will be able to illustrate three further points on how and why Brian McLaren’s theology and valuations are founded in the post-Durkheimian mode.

First, I will address the rebellion against the “mechanical system.” Those on the neo-Durkheimian mode tend to place a great deal of emphasis on the Enlightenment ideals of a self-evident moral order. As a result, the ideas of rational self-control are very necessary to this modality of thinking in order to Reform society. These values were obviously very important to Immanuel Kant but perhaps even more so to William Wilberforce and the Victorian era, who pushed these values to a sociological level. Those

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173 Ibid: 476.
in the post-Durkheimian mode, particularly when it comes to the private sphere, strongly emphasize counter-Enlightenment ideals. Therefore, they are highly resistant to the rigid ideals that come with the rational self-control that is necessary for the neo-Durkheimian social imaginary. This was obviously the case with the early Romantics who felt stifled by the rigid moralism of the Enlightenment. Brian McLaren clearly links himself with the post-Durkheimian here when he states,

The Kingdom represents God’s work in the world at large – God’s concern for the environment, God’s work with people of other religions, God’s identification with the poor and the oppressed, God’s dispensing of artistic gifts so that artists can express beauty and glory and truth.\(^{174}\)

The draw to the physical world and artistic expression clearly identifies McLaren with Romantic ideals.

Further on this first point, one of the overt implications of a meta-moral order as we find in the Enlightenment is that its adherents must believe in a sense of ‘absolute truth,’ or a truth that is fixed and readily availed through reason. Charles Colson of the Christian Right most certainly believes this, which we can see when he insists “I believe moral teaching is universal, I believe we are made with a desire for certain goals and outcomes, that that’s just the way we’re wired.”\(^{175}\) Those in the post-Durkheimian with their high emphasis on tolerance are strongly opposed to this. Brian McLaren aligns himself with the post-Durkheimian as we have already seen when he states, “Most modern people love to relativize the viewpoints of the others against the unquestioned superiority of their own

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\(^{175}\) Chuck Colson. “Chuck Colson on Absolute Truth about God.”

modern viewpoint.” The belief in an absolute truth is a particularly strong point of contention by McLaren, which obviously shouldn’t be surprising given his perspective.

Second, those in the post-Durkheimian social imaginary rebelled “against the repression of the body.” The most potent driving force behind the values of the Enlightenment was excarnation. Out of it was born the powerful force of benevolence. However, a second and equally potent result of the turn towards excarnation is the sense of disembodiment that comes with it. It is against the repression of the body that those in the post-Durkheimian mode seek to distance themselves from the two earlier Durkheimian modes. Thus, those in the post-Durkheimian mode rebel “against the repression of the body for reason and for the fullness of sensuality.”

In the hyper-Augustinian perspective, which both the paleo- and neo-Durkheimian modes adhere too, the secular world is of secondary importance. This obviously diminishes noticeably later as we arrive closer to the heart of the neo-Durkheimian. Yet the desires of the body always remain of secondary importance. This is even true of the Methodists, Pietists, and all those who ideologically were much more closely aligned to Romantic strains of Christianity. The reason for this was because they place an even greater emphasis on excarnation and an inward understanding of the Kingdom of God; however, in the post-Durkheimian mode the goods in the secular world take over wholesale. Repression of the body begins to be seen as a deviancy and sensuality takes on a heightened significance. Or as Taylor states that in the post-Durkheimian mode, there is “the felt need to rehabilitate the body . . . a celebration of the

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value of sensual desire.” McLaren also rails against the repression of the body, which we can see illustrated when he argues,

We’re used to thinking about ourselves in the Napoleonic and Cartesian ghost-in-the-machine model, where the body is the bigger machine and the soul is a little disassociated tenant. This model says something different [speaking about the emergent model]: the soul is the “bigger” reality, the higher emergent reality, differentiated from the body and mind but never disassociated from them. McLaren rightfully identifies this repression as originating from Enlightenment ideals. As well, we perceive that McLaren is offering a post-Durkheimian concept of wholeness when he attempts to offer a holistic synthesis regarding the psycho-physical make up of the human person.

Thirdly, and finally, in the post-Durkheimian mode individuals are drawn towards the “more ‘organic’ ties.” A further aspect of excarnation is that it emphasizes individualization of the self to the point of narcissism and solipsism: the individual is valued over and against social and community values. This is another point at which those in the post-Durkheimian mode rebel against the neo-Durkheimian. Hegel and all the Romantics were drawn to a sense of community and this is no less true for those in the post-Durkheimian mode. McLaren most certainly agrees with the post-Durkheimian virtue of community here, as he argues

I fear that for too many Christians, “personal salvation” has become another consumer product . . . and Christianity has become its marketing program. If so, salvation is “all about me and . . . I think we need another song.

Regarding community or “organic ties” he states,

If we resituate ourselves in this new story, if we find identity, meaning, and purpose in this good news, we find ourselves beginning again, born again, facing a new

177 Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 766.
179 Kant’s deontological ethics make this readily evident.
start. As recomposed, resituated, *de*-deranged people, we can begin rebuilding our societal system, not as a suicide machine, but as a beloved community, the kind of garden city envisioned in John’s Apocalypse (Revelation 21: 1-4).\textsuperscript{181}

In these quotations emphasizing community-based or socialist values, McLaren is once again directly linked with the post-Durkheimian.

There can be no doubt that McLaren’s allegiance is with those in the post-Durkheimian social imaginary. Even more so, it should not be surprising that there is a great deal of animosity between McLaren, the Emergent church movement, and the re-emergent neo-Durkheimian church. This is a point that Taylor address when he writes,

Expressivism and the conjoined sexual revolution has alienated many people from the churches. And this is on two scores. First, those who have gone along with the current changes find themselves profoundly at odds with the sexual ethic, which the church have been propounding. But second, their sense of following their own path is offended by what they experience as the “authoritarian” approaches of the churches, laying down the law, and not waiting for a reply. . . . Churches find it hard to talk to people in this mindset.\textsuperscript{182}

McLaren attempts to remain within kerygmatic Christianity and yet find a way to identify with people of the post-Durkheimian mindset. With this being said, several questions necessarily arise. What is one to make of secularization and how it alters both Christian theology and practice? Along with this is how is one to interpret McLaren’s linking Christianity to the process of secularization? Is the practical primacy of ordinary human fulfillments providential or a detraction from God’s intention for the secular world? Is the secular world becoming a better place, as Hegel and Whitehead would claim, or is it becoming an increasingly worse place, as the Millenarianists would contend? These are all questions I will set out to address in the following section.

\textsuperscript{181} Brian McLaren. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Revolution, and a Revolution of Hope*: 151.
\textsuperscript{182} Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 493.
Chapter 4:

The Antagonistic Pedagogies

At this juncture of the thesis one has to notice that there are two polar positions on the process of secularization: on the one hand some, like Hegel and all who adhere to his understanding of history, contend that the world is becoming a better place, that there is a providential cause marching forward throughout history, leading us to the fullness of the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, many believe that as we move into an increasingly secular age things are getting progressively worse, that the magnitude of our sin is increasing; Millenarianism and those who fall in line with its valuations regarding the world contend this. How is it possible such divergent understandings on the state of the secular world exist? Is there a third way that sees that in some regard that the Kingdom has advanced in the world and yet recognizes that the magnitude of evil has also increased? It is my contention that the work of René Girard represents this middle way and that Taylor’s interpretation on historical progress will be of great benefit to define Girard’s position.

Thus far I have illustrated that the common understanding of the Kingdom of God has been adapted along the same continuity as Charles Taylor’s concept of secularism. The inevitable question that must be asked is, what is one to make of this process? In response to this, Taylor contends that there is a providential element to secularization. Writing about his own position regarding this, he states,

The practical primacy of life has been a great gain for human kind, and that there is some truth in the self-narrative of the Enlightenment: this gain was in fact unlikely to come about without some breach with established religion. (We might even be tempted to say that modern unbelief is providential, but that might be too provocative a way of putting it.)\(^{183}\)

\(^{183}\) Charles Taylor. *A Secular Age*: 637.
Thus, we can see that Taylor, even though he would categorize himself as a devout Catholic, believes that secularization and the post-Durkheimian social imaginary, and even the unbelief that comes with it, is a major advance in what he believes God is actively doing in the secular world.

The issue that needs to be addressed then, regarding the Kingdom of God advancing through history, is to define what God is improving through the process of secularization. Charles Taylor’s response to this is that God is purifying violence from the world. He refers to this progress in history as “God’s pedagogy.” For Taylor, this pedagogy does not manifest itself in the way of civilization or technological advancements. For him it only refers to God exposing, revealing, and correcting violent tendencies. About violence being exposed in history he writes, “there is a movement of God’s pedagogy through history, so that some forms which are utterly unconscionable now, were more excusable earlier, such as sacred war, or even human sacrifice.”

The term God’s pedagogy means exactly as it sounds in the context outlined above: God is teaching humanity to rid itself of violence through historical process.

Taylor is not naïve and therefore does not believe in an actualization of the Kingdom, as he clearly states,

These explorations of the depth of the meaning of violence tend to yield affirmation, even glorification of it; or else show how ineradicable it is. Put in other terms, we could say that they generally tend to show the draw to violence to be too deeply anchored to be rooted out.

We can clearly see this with Friedrich Nietzsche, who advocated violence as the highest expression of humanity. This can also be evident from the numerous acts of genocide,

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184 Ibid: 673.
185 Ibid: 672.
racism, war, and colonization that are readily recalled in the last century alone; however, this is a topic I will expound upon while addressing the thought of René Girard.

René Girard focuses all his work around the concept of violence, how it manifests itself, why it does so, and how it is remedied; these are all arguments he sets out to address. Girard tackles these points of debate by searching for the religious motivations of violence. The conclusion he arrives at is that violence is at the heart of religion itself.\textsuperscript{186} For Girard, it is when violence becomes sacralized that it can be perpetuated with sanction. This takes place according to him because when violence becomes sacralized the scapegoat mechanism is needed to restore order to a community. The concept of the scapegoat lies at the very heart of Girard’s theology; regarding the scapegoat mechanism he states, “It is the mimetic unanimity that, at the highest pitch of disorder, brings order back into human communities.”\textsuperscript{187} In short, it is when violence threatens the community that the scapegoat mechanism is triggered. Rather than searching within themselves and their society to find the root of the problem, the persecutors project their violence onto an outsider, believing that these victims, or scapegoats, are the cause of the disorder that threaten the system.\textsuperscript{188} The result is that “This spontaneous lynching is what re-establishes peace, and with the victim as intermediary gives the peace a religious, a divine, meaning.”\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{186} About the link between religion and violence Girard writes “The observation of the religious systems forces us to conclude (1) that the mimetic crisis always occurs, (2) that the banding together of all against a single victim is the normal resolution at the level of culture, and (3) that it is furthermore that the normative resolution, because all the rules of culture stem from it.” René Girard. \textit{Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987): 27.

\textsuperscript{187} René Girard. \textit{I See Satan Fall Like Lightning}: 44.

\textsuperscript{188} Regarding this Girard states, “When human groups divide and become fragmented, during a period of malaise and conflicts, they may come to a point where they are reconciled again at the expense of a victim.” René Girard. \textit{I See Satan Fall Like Lightning}: 157.

\textsuperscript{189} René Girard. \textit{I See Satan Fall Like Lightning}: 65.
If a scapegoat were not found the community would necessarily explode into violence. The reason this is so is because “The persecutions in which we are interested generally take place in times of crisis, which weakens normal institutions and favors mob formations.” The nature of a mob is violence and if it were left without an outlet it would destroy itself. The solution that the mob uses to avoid doing so is evident when Girard states, “The resulting violence of all against one would finally annihilate the community if it were not transformed, into the war of all against one, thanks to which the unity of the community is re-established.” This “one” can be an individual, a community, a nation, or a racial group. What is of primary importance to the persecutors in selecting their victims is that they are a minority and that they are in some way distinct from the majority. The usual hallmarks of the scapegoat are ethnic and religious minorities, the sick, the weak, the disabled, those with physical deformities, and the physically and mentally handicapped; in general anyone who can be defined as the other from societal norms. But this can expand beyond these categories into anyone who represents a legitimate threat to the order of the system, as Socrates and, even more poignantly, Jesus did. The reasons these scapegoats are selected is because “They attack the very foundation of cultural order, the family and the hierarchical differences without which there would be no social order.” These people are viewed as dangerous and if there is disorder in the system then it must be their doing. The whole community comes

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191 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 25. An example of this modality of thinking would be common accusations by medieval Anti-Semites, having no concept of bacterial and viral infection and transfer, who when illness on a large scale would strike their community believed it was the result of Jews poisoning the water. This is the example that Girard uses as an example in the first chapter of *The Scapegoat*.
192 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 15.
together against the scapegoat to rid the community of this perceived evil. The result being that

The persecutors don’t know that their sudden harmony, like their previous discord, is the work of contagious imitation. They believe they have on their hands a dangerous person, someone evil, of whom they must rid the community.¹⁹³

For Girard the greatest problem is that, as we have seen, the scapegoat mechanism becomes sacralized and the persecutors actually believe that their actions have divine sanction.¹⁹⁴ The work of Jesus, according Girard, is to expose the scapegoat mechanism and the divine meaning that the persecutors give it. He best articulates this when he states,

Against the mythical deities stands a God who does not emerge from the misunderstanding regarding victims but who voluntarily assumes the role of the single victim and makes possible, for the first time, the full disclosure of the single victim mechanism.¹⁹⁵

While Jesus walked the secular realm there can be no doubt the Hebrew world had entered a period of decay: the Romans held stiff rule over the people, there were massively divergent positions amongst the Jewish people, and Jesus arrived precisely at a time in history when a mob was ripe to form. He entered the scene and began to attack the foundations of their world. He is that which, to those who are the persecutors, brings disorder into the system. Thus it was inevitable that he was selected to be the scapegoat; in fact, there should be little doubt that he sought it. This is the beginning of his ultimate victory, the fact that he was totally innocent of his crimes, that he grouped himself with the persecuted or the minority, and that he exposed the violence of the persecutors.

¹⁹³ Ibid: 36.
¹⁹⁴ Furthermore on the rationale of these persecutors Girard contends that the, “Persecutors think they are good, the right thing; they believe they are working for justice and truth; they believe they are saving their community.” ¹⁹⁴ René Girard. I See Satan Fall Like Lightning: 126.
¹⁹⁵ René Girard. I See Satan Fall Like Lightning: 130.
Where his divinity is of importance is in his resurrection, as it confirmed his innocence; it unequivocally proved that God was with him, it proved the validation of his testimony, it exposed the violence of his persecutors, and it is the foundation of his victory over the world. Further, as to why Jesus alone can break the power of the scapegoat mechanism Girard writes,

Initially, Jesus’ disciples almost surrender to the mimetic power of the many, but on the third day, thanks to the Resurrection they secede from the deluded mob and proclaim the innocence of their lord. In mythology no dissenting voice is ever heard.196

By his resurrection he now and for all time can speak for all victims of persecution and reveal the violent nature of their persecutors.

Revelation is a very important concept to Girard, for it is in revealing the nature of the scapegoat mechanism that its power is broken. It reveals the violence of the persecutors and the innocence of the scapegoat. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, the scapegoat mechanism begins to lose its potency, and subsequently the more often it’s used against scapegoats the more readily it becomes visible.

This returns us to René Girard’s understanding of history. Girard, like Taylor, sees a progress in history as he states,

The Spirit is working in history to reveal what Jesus has already revealed, the mechanism of the scapegoat, the genesis of all mythology, and the non-existence of all gods of violence. In the language of the Gospel the Spirit achieves the defeat and condemnation of Satan.197

One can readily see a Hegelian movement here. However, for Girard, like Taylor, this advance is not the progress of technology, democracy, or a political ideology. The only progress he perceives is that the revelation of the scapegoat mechanism becomes clearer

196 René Girard: The Scapegoat: 2.
197 René Girard: The Scapegoat: 207.
as time progresses. Girard is clear that this is what he believes is happening with historical progress when we read, “In future [sic], all violence will reveal what Christ’s Passion revealed, the foolish genesis of bloodstained idols and the false gods of religion, politics, and ideologies.”

In Girard’s belief regarding historical process we can see that he very much falls in line with Taylor’s ideal of God’s pedagogy. This brings us to our modern world and its concern for victims or the advance of human rights. Girard regards this as a significant historical advance in our world. We can perceive this to be true when he states, “The most effective power of transformation is not revolutionary violence but the modern concern for victims.” Even more poignantly, Girard comments on what has happened in the secular world:

All the great human institutions have developed in the same direction: more humane private and public law, penal legislation, judicial practice, the rights of individuals. . . . Our society abolished slavery as well as serfdom. Later has come the protection of children, women, the aged, foreigners from abroad, and foreigners within.

As I stated earlier the work of Jesus is to reveal the scapegoat mechanism. This is what is at the foundation of the modern concern for victims. We have developed the ability to recognize victims much more readily as secularism advances. Thus, for Girard the ‘modern concern for victims’ is the result of the active work of Christ and his Spirit in the world. They are dialectically bringing about the Kingdom of God in secular time. Therefore, one can see that according to Charles Taylor’s process of secularization

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198 Ibid: 212.
199 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 168.
200 Ibid: 166.
201 Regarding this Girard writes, “The evolution I am rather haphazardly summarizing forms the basis of the effort of our societies to eliminate the permanent scapegoat structures that form their foundation, and this occurs to the extent that we become aware of their existence.” René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 168.
that Girard’s thesis is at almost every stage of its development advanced. This is most obvious in emancipation movements that break patterns of religious and hierarchical tyranny, such as the freeing of slaves and women from oppression.

However, Girard does not fall into the faulty thinking of a Hegelian Zeitgeist, nor does he believe that God is an ordering presence who is increasingly disseminating the rules of civility to the world, like we find with the process theologians.\(^2\) Nor does he believe that the Kingdom manifests itself in political or scientific advancements. Rather he believes that parallel histories are taking place. This second history is the antithesis of God’s pedagogy.\(^3\) One could simply refer to this as the anti-Christ’s pedagogy.\(^4\) One reason for this has already been answered earlier, when Charles Taylor contended that some choose to embrace violence. Girard evokes Nietzsche in discussion of this perspective on violence, or rather the Nazi’s interpretation and use of Nietzsche’s works. According to Girard,

The spiritual goal of Hitler’s ideology was to root out of Germany, then all of Europe, that calling that the Christian tradition places upon all of us: the concern for victims.\(^5\)

According to Girard the greatest perversion that humanity could perpetrate is the embracing of numinous violence. We have arrived at a time when those in this second pedagogy do not simply believe that the elimination a group of scapegoats will return

\(^2\) Girard speaks explicitly about his rejection of a Hegelian or liberal valuation when he states, “Liberal thinkers like Renan fabricated a Jesus with humanitarian and socialist traits.” René Girard. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*: 96.

\(^3\) About the theory of parallel histories, Girard states, “The one type is false, deceptive, misleading, and is the unconscious fulfillment of the victim mechanism. The other transcendence is truthful, luminous, and it destroys mythical illusions by revealing how violent contagion poisons communities.” René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 131.

\(^4\) This is my term, not Girard’s or Taylor’s. Girard uses the term “Kingdom of Satan” at one point and I was drawn to this term; however, for a point of contrast my term better serves this thesis. René Girard. *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*: 203.

\(^5\) René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 171.
their communities to order, but rather that the elimination of all scapegoats is needed to bring about a perfect sense of order to the world. In other words, the Nazi’s attempted to bring about utopia, or the Kingdom of God, by the elimination of all scapegoats. Even more shockingly, this is not just a one time historical happening: many acts of modern genocide show tendencies toward this new belief in the elimination of all scapegoats. So even though God’s pedagogy advances with the process of secularization so too does the anti-Christ’s pedagogy.

Here Girard introduces the concept of an apocalyptic.\(^{206}\) This is an apocalyptic in the Biblical sense of both a revealing and that it exposes the ultimate destiny of humanity, with the end result being the inevitable conflict between good and evil. It is a revealing in that it renders visible God’s good intention for the world through his slow pedagogy; as well it reveals the scapegoat mechanism and the true nature of the anti-Christ. It is the ultimate conflict between good and evil in that it is God’s pedagogy versus the anti-Christ’s pedagogy.

As these two pedagogies increasingly become revealed and manifest, as the process of secularism advances, the gravity and the breadth of the conflict also grows. Girard contends that only the future will tell if there will be a final great battle, the Armageddon, between these two:

> At this moment the loosening of cultural restraints and the awareness of the truth underlying violence have matured, so that everything will topple over, either into a form of violence with either an infinite power of destruction, or into the non-violence of the Kingdom of God, which now alone is capable of ensuring the survival of the community.\(^{207}\)

\(^{206}\) I am indebted to Professor Joseph Mangina for introducing this concept into my thesis.

Thus Girard directly links the Apocalypse and the Kingdom. However, according to him, the Apocalypse is an either/or:

The events that followed the preaching of the Kingdom of God depended entirely on the response of Jesus’ audience. If they had accepted unreservedly, there would have been no Apocalypse announced and no Crucifixion. The majority turned away in indifference and hostility.\(^{208}\)

The normal conviction of Biblical commentary, argues Girard, is that Apocalypse will happen as a result of God’s initiative. The rationale behind this is that most theologians and Biblical commentators suppose that Jesus teaches first about the Kingdom of God and then when humanity does not accept it God will destroy the world in violence. This is bad theology according to Girard. Rather,

by remaining faithful to violence and taking its side, however little they may be aware of the fact, men have deferred the revelation once again and compelled it to take the path of incalculable violence. It is upon men and men alone that responsibility falls for the tragic and catastrophic nature of the changes that humanity is about to witness.\(^{209}\)

Thus, according to Girard, Jesus is playing the prophetic role when he speaks of the Apocalypse: either we accept the path non-violent and love of the Kingdom of God or we accept the path of violence and invite Armageddon, which now is possible for humanity to achieve. It is not God that commits violence on the world, as this is contrary to the nature of the Kingdom, but rather it is humanity that will bring destruction upon itself by not adopting the values of the non-violent Kingdom.

Further, Girard and Taylor are not the first thinkers to present the concept of a parallel history as should be evident in section two of this thesis, in which I presented the paleo- and neo-Durkheimian modes. Augustine’s concept of the Two Cities, on which

\(^{208}\) Ibid: 202.
\(^{209}\) Ibid: 203.
Luther and Calvin’s concept of the two governments is grounded (one could also include Calvin’s concept of the Double Predestination here as well), is most certainly also a parallel history. In Augustine’s perspective, the spiritual and the secular Kingdoms are categorically distinct, so much so that they must have their own histories. According to Taylor and Girard, these histories play out in secular time and the secular world is constantly being transformed by their progress and interplay. In the Augustinian stream of thought the interplay of these histories is between the spiritual and the material world, with neither drastically being altered by the interaction.

According to Girard, it is only Christ that could bring the power to drive the scapegoat mechanism from the world, as is evident when he states, “The idea of a society alien to violence goes back clearly to the preaching of Jesus, to his announcement of the Kingdom of God.”210 For Girard, the purification of violence from the world is not possible without Christ’s active work in the world. It is no surprise to him that Christianity shrinks in the West at the same time as the God’s pedagogy advances. The reason for this, first, is that, as has already been stated, the scapegoat mechanism is tied up with religion and thus secular societies seek to jettison it from their midst, as they believe that all religion carries the roots of violence, including Christianity.211 The second is that, as noted in section two, the emphasis on purifying the world falls more and more on the human initiative with secularism. The turn to benevolence is obvious here; the

210 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 164. Girard goes further. Like Taylor, he sees modern humanism as a derivative of Christianity: “They cannot conceal the true origin of our modern concern for victims; it is quite obviously Christian. Humanism and humanitarianism develop first on Christian soil.” René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 163.

211 Regarding Christians falling into the line of the alternate pedagogy Girard contends, “Throughout Christian history a tendency of Christians themselves to choose Jesus as the alternative scandal, that is, a tendency to lose them and merge into the mob of persecutors.” René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lighting*: 156.
result is that humanity begins to believe that it is now capable of achieving the condemnation of violence without a divine initiative. The presence of secular humanism in the world makes this reason overtly obvious.

These parallel histories aren’t divided between the West and the rest of the world or one nation’s superiority over all others, as we saw in the concept of American manifest destiny. This is not the political left against the right as Girard and a host of other authors have exposed the implicit violence of the left. Nor does Girard contend that the history of Christianity falls solely into God’s pedagogy. In fact, quite frequently Christian history has found itself in the category of the anti-Christ’s pedagogy. Rather, Girard contends that at the same time the world is becoming a better place, it is also getting worse; thus synthesizing the seemingly contradictory observations we find in groups like process theologians and Millenarianism. In reality, Girard would contend that wherever and whenever one sees God’s pedagogy advancing, the anti-Christ’s pedagogy has the possibility of emerging in reaction to it.

In our Secular age, the greatest danger left is that God’s pedagogy can be twisted in favour of the anti-Christ’s pedagogy. This can most evidently be seen with colonization, in which those in the West had progressed further down the process of secularization than the rest of the world and then turned that as a weapon against everyone else. They believed that they were bringing the ideals of the Kingdom to the less civilized or to ‘savages,’ and here the truth of God’s pedagogy became caught up with a perversion. One can also see this powerfully played out in our contemporary world with the modern belief in the superiority of liberal capitalism and the Christian Right’s

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212 Namely Richard Rorty, Joseph Heath, and Andrew Potter.
defence of its actions as God’s work. For Girard, this is Satan at work in our modern world, as he makes clear when he states, “Satan, trying to make a new start and gain new triumphs, borrows the language of victims. Satan imitates Christ better and better and pretends to surpass him.”

Being that Satan can no longer use the scapegoat mechanism as readily as in the past, he instead perverts God’s pedagogy as his new methodology of perpetuating violence in the world.

How is one to avoid falling into the trap of the perverting God’s pedagogy and turning it against others? According to Girard the answer to this is found in Jesus’ teaching on sin. It is our sense of superiority over the other that leads us toward this greatest of sins. This was clearly true of the Nazis, who believed themselves to be a superior race, the Aryans, and used that valuation as motivation to eliminate their scapegoats. This sense of superiority is always caught up with the perversion of God’s pedagogy. In our world, this sense of superiority can get tied up with the perceived progress of civilization. The cause of this is that “This insight regarding scapegoats and scapegoating is a real superiority of our society over all previous societies, but like all progress in knowledge it also occasions to make an evil worse.”

This belief in one’s superiority over others can lead to a plethora of violence. This most obviously happens when the advance of the Kingdom of God becomes caught up with an ideology such a liberal capitalism, technological advancement, or the rules of civility. Girard chalks this up to the fact that “The modern Western world has forgotten the revelation in favour of

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213 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 181.
214 Girard does not believe Satan is an anthropocentric being, rather, “The interpretation that assimilates Satan to rivalistic contagion and its consequences enables us for the first time to acknowledge the importance of this world without endowing him with personal *being*.” René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 45.
215 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 159.
its by-products, making them weapons and instruments of power; and now the process has turned against it.\textsuperscript{216} This perversion is constantly emerging as God’s pedagogy advances.

For Girard, the only way to avoid falling into this perversion is to recognize one’s own complicit violence.\textsuperscript{217} Without Christ we lose the sense our own violent nature or, rather, we lose the concept of our sinfulness. This is directly attributable to Christ’s divine and sinless nature, as he alone in all human history doesn’t succumb to violent contagion, thus making him the perfect model for all humanity.\textsuperscript{218} The perversion comes when we believe we are no longer capable of violence, or we reduce sin to pathology, as is the tendency in the secular age.\textsuperscript{219} Charles Taylor addressed why awareness of one’s culpability in sin and violence is so necessary, when he argues,

There is no general remedy against this self-righteous reconstitution of the categorizations of violence, the lines drawn between the good and evil one’s, which permit the most terrible atrocities. But there can be moves, always within a given context, whereby someone renounces the right conferred by suffering, the right of the innocent to punish the guilty, of the victim to purge the victimizer. The move is the very opposite of the instinctive defense of our righteousness. It is a move, which

\textsuperscript{216} René Girard: The Scapegoat: 205.
\textsuperscript{217} Explicitly regarding this Girard contends, “Because we are not aware of our own complicity, which is not conscious of itself. We continue to imagine ourselves alien to all violence.” René Girard. I See Satan Fall Like Lightning: 41.
\textsuperscript{218} About why Christ is the best model for all humanity Girard writes, “Neither the Father nor the Son desires greedily, egotistically. . . . If we imitated the detached generosity of God, then the trap of mimetic rivalries will never close over us.” René Girard. I See Satan Fall Like Lightning: 14. It is not until later in this thesis that I introduce the topic of mimetic rivalries and doubling. Though when I do it will be on a superficial level and this is for the sake of brevity; however for Girard it is precisely because Jesus doesn’t and cannot fall into this trap that he is the perfect example.
\textsuperscript{219} Charles Taylor writes extensively about the therapeutic turn, or turning sin into pathology. Regarding this he states, “One obvious fruit of this desire to rehabilitate the ordinary, the bodily in modern culture has been the affirmation of the essential goodness, innocence of our original, spontaneous aspirations. Evil tends to be seen as exogenous, as brought on by society, history, patriarchy, capitalism, the ‘system’ in one form or another. As David Martin puts it, the ‘mobile, shifting, hedonistic, technicist’ mentality that one encounters in the dominant metropolitan culture today ‘has no sense of personal guilt and yet possesses an excoriating sense of collective sin.’ One of the most striking fruits of this sense of innate human innocence has been the transfer of so many issues, which used to be considered moral into a therapeutic register. What was formerly sin is often now seen as sickness.” Charles Taylor. A Secular Age: 618.
can be called forgiveness, but at a deeper level, it is based on recognition of common, flawed humanity.\textsuperscript{220}

This sense of one’s “common, flawed humanity” is the remedy for the myth of superiority. Also here Taylor introduces the most potent means of combating the anti-Christ’s pedagogy, and this is reconciliation, which I will turn to in a moment.

At this point it should be clear that Girard does not believe that the Kingdom ever will truly come, as the nature of the anti-Christ’s pedagogy is always nipping at the heels of God’s pedagogy. As well, as Taylor has noted, the draw to violence is too deeply linked with human nature to be ever driven out entirely. Instead, “the knowledge we have acquired about our violence, thanks to our religious tradition, does not put an end to scapegoating but weakens it enough to reduce its effectiveness more and more.”\textsuperscript{221}

I have already mentioned that the highest ideal of Christ’s victory over the scapegoat mechanism comes in the form of reconciliation. This is the most potent means of combating the anti-Christ’s pedagogy as well, as it is also the most needed form of it in our modern world. The reason this is so, according to Girard, is that,

The Judeo-Christian message is that if we do not reconcile, there is no more sacrificial victims to save our skin. The offer of the Kingdom of God is: reconciliation or nothing. Unfortunately, we are doing the second choice by idleness and ignorance. The only solution is to reject all violence, all retaliation. I am not at all sure of being able of doing that, but the Gospels tell us that this is the only way. The tragedy is that one always chooses the short term.\textsuperscript{222}

We have reached a point in our history where the scapegoat mechanism has been weakened so thoroughly that the hunt for scapegoats is immediately recognized. Due to this we no longer have scapegoats to remedy the disorder in our community. Now our

\textsuperscript{220} Charles Taylor. \textit{A Secular Age}: 709.
\textsuperscript{221} René Girard. \textit{I See Satan Fall Like Lightning}: 184.
only choice is reconciliation or nothing. Learning to reconcile is the next important stage in God’s pedagogy; if not, Armageddon must result.

In our contemporary world with so many competing voices, reconciliation is vitally needed. The end result of not doing so is the violence that comes with mimetic doubling. About mimetic doubling Girard writes,

> Mutually exacerbated by the live obstacle, the scandal, that each is henceforth for the other, they become mimetic *doubles* and forget the object of the quarrel; they turn against each other with rage in their hearts. From now on they turn upon the other as a mimetic rival.²²³

This mimetic doubling exists amongst the strongest voices in our world: the Christian Nationalists see the secular humanists and Muslims as the rivals that they need to be rid of; the strong atheist Left view the religion, particularly Christian or Muslim, as the enemy; and the fundamentalist Muslims see all others as their enemies. The situation is dire, as all are fighting for the same goal: the control of the West and the rest of the world. The seriousness of the situation is not lost on Girard as he writes,

> The novelty in relation to Western heroism is that it is imposing suffering and death, if required by the suffering itself. The Americans made the mistake of “declaring war” on Al-Qaeda when we do not even know if al-Qaeda exists. The era of wars is over: now, war is everywhere. We have entered an era of transition to universal passage à l’acte. There is no more intelligent policy. We’re near the end.²²⁴

This leads us into why Christ not only remains vitally important to our world but whose intervention is of increasing importance.

One can see that for Girard there must be a vertical dimension in our secular world for the Kingdom to continue to advance. In the secular age the affirmation of ordinary life is the highest value; for Girard, this cannot possibly be the ultimate goal. For

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²²³ René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 22.
²²⁴ Elizabeth Levy’s interview of René Girard. “War is Everywhere.”
him it must be further exposing the scapegoat mechanism. According to Girard, imitating Christ means dying as he did, as is evident when he contends that “the more martyrs die the weaker the representation becomes and the more striking the testimony.”225 Thus, we can see something beyond the affirmation of ordinary life, something that perhaps “the world” cannot understand. One can see the inclusion of a vertical dimension here, that it takes transcendence for God’s pedagogy to further advance. Taylor elaborates on this when he claims,

The vertical dimension I’ve been talking about here is one of reconciliation and trust. . . . The above discussion indeed shows how Christian faith can never be decanted into a fixed code. Because it always places our action in two dimensions, one of right action, and also an eschatological dimension. This is also a dimension of reconciliation and trust, but it points beyond and merely intra-historical perspective of possible reconciliation.226

This is where secular humanism and ordinary human fulfillment will fail to progress us further down the path of God’s pedagogy. The essence of secular humanism is the height of the affirmation of ordinary human fulfillments. For this reason it cannot understand renunciation. Even more importantly this is why it cannot understand Christ. This is a concept that Taylor recognizes:

In the Christian case, the very point of renunciation requires that the ordinary flourishing forgone be confirmed as valid. Unless living the full span were a good Christ’s giving of himself to death couldn’t have the meaning it does. In this it is utterly different from Socrates’ death, which the latter portrays as leaving this condition for a better one. Here we see the unbridgeable gulf between Christianity and Greek philosophy. God wills ordinary human flourishing, and a great part of what is reported in the Gospels consists in Christ making this possible for the people whose afflictions he heals. The call to renounce doesn’t negate the value of flourishing; it is rather a call to center everything on God, even if it be at the cost of forgoing this unsubstitutable good; and the fruit of this forgoing is that it become on one level the source of flourishing to others, and on another level, a collaboration with the restoration of a fuller flourishing by God.227

227 Ibid: 17.
Renunciation is therefore necessary to achieve a greater level of ordinary human flourishing in the world; to do this one must often renounce it for themselves to advance God’s pedagogy. One may need to go so far as to renounce ordinary human fulfillments in the ultimate sense by surrendering their life to the persecutors to do so. We can observe this with the numerous accounts of martyrs who died so that others might flourish. The most contemporary example of this is Martin Luther King Jr. This is what secular humanism cannot understand. This is the reason why Christ is absolutely essential to our modern secular world. The vertical dimension is needed for us to transcend our current state. It will take nothing less than one who is both human and divine to provide this vertical dimension, and Christ alone can do that if we have a hope of overcoming the draw to violence and see the Kingdom further flourish in our secular world.
Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I began by asking what provoked the conflict between modern neo-Durkheimian Christianity, particularly Fundamentalism, and post-Durkheimian Christianity, which is evident in the thought of Brian McLaren and the Emergent Church. If we follow the progression of this thesis, which is that God’s pedagogy is being advanced along with the process of secularization, then what is one to make of Brian McLaren? Where does he, and the Emergent Church movement, fall along the continuity of God’s pedagogy? If we take Taylor’s understanding of secularization to heart and believe that God’s pedagogy is advancing with secularism, and that the move into the post-Durkheimian era is part of this further advancing of the Kingdom of God, then it is easy to contend that McLaren is pushing forward God’s pedagogy. However, along with this it would be also be easy to contend that McLaren, in his intimate link between secularization/political observance and Christianity, opens up the possibility of succumbing to the anti-Christ’s pedagogy.

The reason that McLaren can have such a significant role for God’s pedagogy is that he represents a real threat to the powerful modern neo-Durkheimian Christians. There should be little doubt that the theology and the actions of the resurgent neo-Durkheimian Christianity, as found primarily in the Christian Right, falls well outside God’s pedagogy. A great deal of it, in fact, tends to attack the modern concern for victims, thus falling into the anti-Christ’s pedagogy.

Most disconcerting is their continued use of the scapegoat mechanism. This is readily evident in the rationale that Jerry Falwell gave for why the world trade centres were attacked on September 11th, 2001:
I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say, “You helped this happen.”

The scapegoating here is readily overt and this is a common refrain of the Fundamentalist branch of the modern variation of the neo-Durkheimian mode. Charles Colson clarifies whom these scapegoats are when he argues, “The Christian West is under the assault by the twin challenges of secularism and radical Islam.” These re-emergent neo-Durkheimian Christians often scapegoat several American minority groups, most notably: homosexuals, Muslims, and atheists. They fundamentally believe that if it was not for this segment in our population that most if not all of America’s woes would be remedied.

For these re-emergent neo-Durkheimian Christians, the draw towards civilization identity is still powerfully felt, as they still believe that religion is necessary to ground this identity. Further, though the neo-Durkheimian era was an advancement in the process of secularization at one point in history, many of its adherents now stand to do the opposite: to oppose the process of secularization, at least secularization that results in increased concern for the poor, those with special needs, the oppressed, or anyone who would bear the hallmarks of a scapegoat.

There are a host of modern means of attacking God’s pedagogy; regarding these, René Girard argues,

But this concern presents temptation to which we usually succumb, such as the colonial conquests, abuse of power, the murderous wars of the twentieth century, the pillage of the planet, etc.

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228 A podcast of Jerry Falwell on Pat Robertson’s 700 Club. [https://home.comcast.net/~joe.grabko/falwell.mp3](https://home.comcast.net/~joe.grabko/falwell.mp3)
230 René Girard. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*: 170.
Modern neo-Durkheimian Christians are often drawn towards these means of attacking God’s pedagogy. As has been exhibited in the second section of this thesis, colonial conquest is very intimately tied with the civilization identity of the neo-Durkheimian mode. It is extremely concerning that Christian Right theologians like Charles Colson still adhere strongly to the civilization identity of that age. As a result they have played a powerful part in several modern wars. Jerry Falwell even went so far in his pro-War stance to contend that anti-war protestors are anti-American.\textsuperscript{231}

As well, these neo-Durkheimian Christians often promote environmental degradation. We can see this to be overtly true when we read the following excerpt from a meeting of many of the most prominent evangelical leaders of our time, when they contended regarding environmental degradation:

> Those in the movement are using the global warming controversy to shift the emphasis away from the great moral issues of our time, notably the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage and the teaching of sexual abstinence and morality to our children.\textsuperscript{232}

As well, in the simple basis of trying to return to an earlier period of what God had advanced in secular time, the neo-Durkheimian Christians are holding back the future of what God is trying to achieve. Therefore, on the foundation of McLaren’s broad appeal and the fact that he has set out to expose these violent tendencies in the modern neo-Durkheimian branch of Christianity, he is advancing God’s pedagogy.

Further, some of the ‘vertical’ dimensions evident in Girard’s thought are also evident in McLaren’s thought. This is apparent in his understanding of benevolence and

\textsuperscript{231} “Falwell: Ant-War Protestors show their true Nature”
http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=132x2039330

how the Kingdom of God advances. This bears many of the hallmarks of a perspective of the Kingdom of God that places a high value on martyrdom and reconciliation. Though McLaren often speaks of revolution and associates with liberation theology, he will not gain his aims by violence. Like Girard, he argues that martyrdom may be necessary to expose the ‘suicide machine.’ About this he states,

Jesus is saying, “Risk everything, including your life, to stand up to Caesar and join with me in revolution – not by fighting and killing, but by being willing to die with me.”

McLaren also frequently emphasizes reconciliation between differing religious faiths and denominations. He is even willing to do so with Fundamentalists, thus showing a higher vertical dimension to his own theology.

It is also clear McLaren is aware of the nature of the scapegoat mechanism and Jesus’ work to combat this. It is perceptible when he contends,

Then he stretched out his neck, as it were, inviting them to pounce, and they did. Ironically, though, as he exposed his own neck, he also exposed their vicious wolfishness, and in that way he sabotaged them, defeated them, rendering them ugly and incredible. After all, they could no longer claim to be agents of peace and promise after torturing and killing a good and peaceful man so violently and shamefully. Just as the wolfish powers breathed a sigh of satisfaction at nailing yet another challenger to the cross, Jesus’ quiet but real resurrection validated to his disciples that the liberating king was not defeated, but was rather on the move, quietly at the margins, where all revolutions begin.

So even though McLaren is very secular and revolutionary in his understanding of the Kingdom of God, he still leaves open a powerful vertical dimension.

As I contended in the preceding section of this thesis a vertical dimension is now needed to further advance God’s pedagogy in our world. As such, Christianity still has a crucial role to play in God’s pedagogy even though it is retreating in the public sphere.

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and in shear numbers. If McLaren and the post-Durkheimian Christians can succeed in
wresting the hearts and minds of Evangelical Christians away from neo-Durkheimian
Christianity, then perhaps the next moves can be inaugurated.

Simply put, when it comes to the Emergent movement and McLaren’s work, it is
too early to determine its impact. A great deal of this will be determined by its prevalence
as a sociological movement, both inside Christianity and in the world as a whole. It is
also too early to see if the Emergent movement will produce martyrs, those who are
willing to combat the anti-Christ’s pedagogy, and foster reconciliation to push forward
God’s pedagogy. The persistent danger still exists that Emergent Christians, and all those
who adhere to a post-Durkheimian modality of thought will begin to believe themselves
as superior to their enemies, being that they have further advanced down the process of
secularization, and as result use this sense of superiority as a weapon against their
enemies and further hasten Armageddon. One can only remain hopeful that they choose
to embrace God’s good intention for the secular world instead.
Thesis Bibliography


