

One Last Breath

Love as an economic matter

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Of the sundry bountiful paths this paper could have taken, the direction most conducive to the formal requirements of the thesis will depend heavily on the occidental views on the matter, presented by Iannaccone. This work also serves to nip the scope of the topic in the bud, at least initially, since the sources from the west do not touch upon eastern input; the scope should enter full bloom when we see how the east accounts for western research, mirroring and resolving the trajectory of the prologue. The general incompatibility of theological goods from separate firms also defines the nature of competition among firms, of which sect formation is an obvious but not necessary consequence. Since my own intuition puts the oriental intuition to practice, its discussion will take place in due course. The way this transpires will reflect the synthetic approach that favours a view of the whole over the piecemeal analysis best reserved for pure science.

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Abstract

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Prologue

“Horus is my god, and I have nothing against Ammon, either. But I can see that Ammon has grown too powerful, and the new god has set himself up in opposition to strengthen Pharaoh’s sovereignty. ... With the help of Aton they intend to overthrow Ammon or at least to limit his power, for it is not fitting that Ammon’s priests should rule Egypt over the head of Pharaoh. That is sound statesmanship, and as a warrior I can well understand that a new god is indispensable. If Pharaoh were content merely to raise temples to him and fee priests into his service, I should have nothing to complain of. But Pharaoh thinks and talks too much about him. Whatever the occasion, sooner or later he brings the conversation round to him, by which he makes those about him crazier than himself. He says that he lives by truth – but truth is like a sharp knife in the hands of a child; a knife should be carried in its sheath and used only when need occurs. So it is with truth, and for no one is truth more dangerous than for the ruler.” (Waltari 1945, p. 118)

Several millennia later in another part of the world whose population is facing the advent of subjugation in a writhing death-agony:

“And what will be their fate?” he asked. “Forgive me master, but I am curious to know, so that my heart may prepare itself.”

“Flesh without spirit,” I said. “Life without hope, the slavery of mankind – a bondage so hopeless that slaves will no longer know they are slaves. Wealth without happiness, abundance without the power to enjoy it. The death of the spirit.” (Waltari 1952, p. 95)

Introduction

The prologue consisting of excerpts from two historical novels by the acclaimed Mika Waltari reflects concerns over the perceptions toward the state of religion, revealing varying individual opinions by which each character relates to the issue. Horemheb’s superficial treatment of theological matters is only willing to acknowledge the misshapen surface of the poorly articulated form of prototype Christianity taking place as imparted by Amenhotep IV during the 14th century B.C., reflecting how people at large after the climactic incident have smugly learned the wrong lesson, that of superficial tolerance and coexistence. Amidst the

blood-scented crepuscule of the Byzantine Empire 1453 A.D., Johannes Angelos asseverates to his servant Manuel the prospective consequences of Ottoman subjugation over Constantinople, leading directly from economic musings that are characteristic of a philosopher to something distinctly beyond their material manifestations. It is in this sense that the latter is prefigured in the former, while the former is fulfilled in the latter via the essence.

Religion, a hypocritical pretext for some, a source of truth for others, has been a controversial subject of old, to the point where most cannot even distinguish “challenge” from “offense”. While resorts to insults are no call for open-mindedness, dialogue and opportunities to test one's faith are considered welcome. Without such distinctions, rights have been most diplomatically afforded with little regard to its relationship with worldly affairs on account of its perceived irrelevance.

Nonetheless, Iannaccone (1998) clearly finds the economics of religion a topic worthy of deeper discussion, and accordingly constructs a handy hub for the Western research carried out independently thus far. Sriya Iyer (2015) in turn reports on the progress since Iannaccone's publication, indicating a trend that is in line with the mathematising of today's field of economics, no exception afforded to the burgeoning field of economics of religion.

Distinct narratives on an effervescent story

Western research relies heavily on data, which in this case are limited and unreliable (though more abundant than many recognize). This fallibility, helped neither by uninquiring governments nor unsystematic records kept by religious organizations, arises from inherent difficulties as well as sloppy financial records and over-inclusive membership lists. Iannaccone, in any case, defends well his argument with empirical evidence of religion's enduring effervescence and of the scientifically unsound secularization thesis. Without even looking at any data, a negative correlation between religiosity and time should come across as a superficial conclusion that is too elementary to capture any story worth investigating. Things look even worse for this theory when we get to the data that show, in the US at least where data are most available, the exact opposite over the past century (Iannaccone 1998). As with Max Weber's famous proposition contained in his The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, seeing a logical hypothesis through should entail supporting evidence, the lack of which is perhaps its most surprising feature. Those aware of the absence of empirical science during his time, however, will not be surprised. In light of empirical evidence provided by Iannaccone:

1. American church membership rates have risen throughout most of the past two centuries—from 17 percent of the population at the time of the Revolution, to 34 percent by the mid-1800s, to more than 60 percent today.
2. The fraction of the U.S. population employed as clergy has remained around 1.2 per thousand for the past 150 years. See Figure 1 in the appendix, based on data from various government reports, including the 1850, 1880, and 1906 Census of Religious Bodies, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics' January reports on Employment and Earnings.
3. Since the advent of national opinion polls in the late-1930s, the percentage of Americans claiming to attend church in a typical week has remained remarkably stable, around 40 percent of the total population. Figure 2 in the appendix, based on responses to Gallup polls, plots attendance trends

for self-identified Protestants, self-identified Catholics, and all Americans (including non-Christians). No real pattern emerges apart from a downward shift in Catholic attendance immediately following a series of controversial papal pronouncements in the mid-1960s (Michael Hout and Greeley 1987).

4. Surveyed religious beliefs have proved nearly as stable as church attendance. For decades, about 95 percent of Americans have professed belief in “the existence of God or a universal spirit” and a large fraction continue to believe in heaven, hell, an afterlife, and the divinity of Jesus. See Table 1 in the appendix and also Greeley (1989) for details.
5. Total church contributions appear to have remained around 1 percent of GNP since at least 1955. Religious giving consistently accounts for about half of all charitable giving in the United States (approximately 64 billion dollars in 1995); religious volunteer work is more common than any other form of volunteer work (Charles Clotfelter 1985, p. 145); and the majority of nonprofit institutions are or were religiously based.

McCleary and Barro open their paper by recognizing a two-way interaction between religion and political economy. They dichotomize this aggregate interplay into “Religion as a Dependent Variable” and “Religion as an Independent Variable” as a means of determining the effect religiosity has on individual characteristics, such as work ethic, honesty and thrift, and thereby on economic performance. Their approach is logical and quantitative, relying on international data.

Whatever the case may be, since Weber’s speculative analytical input, the two main actors subject to economic analysis have been Catholic Christianity and Protestant Christianity, the latter of which was posited by Weber to have surpassed the former in laying the foundations for robust capitalist economies in countries harbouring higher concentrations of its followers. These two brands are both distinctly western actors. Orthodox Christianity up to this point has been curiously sidelined or outright omitted from discussions of such length in spite of it being a whole eastern counterpart to the west. This remains the case even in the latest Iannaccone-esque survey by Sriya Iyer (2015), after economics of religion as a field finally earned its own JEL classification number (Z12).

The burden is on Fr. Daniel F. Payne and Christopher Marsh to attempt to fill this void. This challenge, tackled in 2009, is well maneuvered, detailing the various views of our major Orthodox thinkers and how they developed over time, internally and in the face of external pressure. Those thinkers that made a turn toward religion, rather than merely being always involved, join us here today to demonstrate their rejection of positivism, highlighting any valuable contrasts to their former ways of thinking. Among such company is the distinguished Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), who uses this rejection as a primer to attack his former school of thought, Marxism.

Bulgakov employed his originality to rewrite Marxian “social poetry”, thereby evoking a fresh Christian paradigm to model what defines “economy”. In other words, we are posed the problem of scarcity and our need to work for means by which to satisfy our basic needs; motivation to work has become extrinsic, as freedom and necessity became intertwined into what we call economy. Relationships among the intrinsically motivated would be defined implicitly, by virtue of their common inspiration and participation in the shared task of nature’s resurrection (Evtuhov 2000, pp. 11), according to Bulgakov’s ideal rather than by consent or contract. This adds a tempering layer to what the Marxist gospel took to be the mechanism that defines our lives, rewriting Marx’s social poetry by starting from the harmonious Eden as opposed to

the fallen state of humanity on which Marxism was based. As a proposed answer to this famous economic idiom found in English translations of Genesis 3:19, the Sophic economy theoretically "celebrates human freedom over economic necessity and the joyful transformation of creation in the Resurrection of Christ". Catherine Evtuhov, in her introduction to her own translation of Bulgakov, lets us know that Bulgakov was most prudent in avoiding any fixed picture of Sofia, calling it things like joyousness, play, wisdom, and love. This is just another monumental reminder not to underestimate the potential for innovation motivated by religious thought.

Patristic sources that comprise Payne's Eastern Orthodoxy's Theology of Economics (2011-2012) evoke themes of wealth, equality, and salvation. In Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215 A.D.), the Christian Apologist, missionary theologian to the Hellenistic world, and second known leader and teacher of the catechetical school of Alexandria, we do not see a societal restructuring of wealth, like that decreed by Amenhotep IV in the novel to cataclysmic effect, but rather a charitable economic arrangement within the bounds of the church whereby the wealthy are to care for the poor in exchange for their prayers. Herein is Clement's insight regarding moral perfection: the wealthy through their use of their goods for charity grow in virtue and become less attached to material possession. The wealthy, then, can indeed be saved through moral perfection and virtue.

Methodist founder John Wesley (1760) tried to employ moral approval in a more extrinsic fashion by famously urging his congregants to "gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can." However, he regretted that he had been more successful in promoting the first two tenets than the third. But the first two—akin to Weber's work ethic and thrift—are probably more important than charity as underpinnings of a productive economy. Wesley also regretted that, as his congregants became richer, they became less devout—thus giving an early empirical expression of the secularization hypothesis. (Barro and McCleary, p.51)

Aside from moral approval, patristic sources are so bold so as to relate the use of wealth directly to love, as seen in the works of Basil the Great of Caesarea and John Chrysostom that form the base for the theology of stewardship. It is a curiosity to see such concerns addressed only by our Eastern-minded sources.

Predictors of membership

This section will be dominated by Western theory.

A statistical portrait in nine points enumerates certain predictors of membership (because self-identity and conviction in general that transcends denominational borders is harder to assess) after affirming the incessant vitality of religion. It is no surprise that we are relying on real-world data in a scientific economic inquiry. Whereas the first five points went into Iannaccone's arguing for the continuing importance of religion in the previous section, the last four points in particular debunk certain banal claims of culpability in order to replace them with more accurate constellations of cause-and-effect. These four points can best be summarized as follows:

1. "Religion is not the province of the poor or uninformed", as eloquently stated by Iannaccone. Rates of religious belief and religious activity tend not to decline with income, and most rates increase with education. On the other hand, styles of religion do vary with income and education. Theologically conservative denominations (typically labeled "fundamentalist," "Pentecostal," or

“sectarian”) draw a disproportionate share of their members from among the poorer, less educated, and minority members of society.

2. Coercion and neurosis are typically nothing more than tabloid-fodder, much less an explanation for religious participation, even in extremist sects or cults.
3. College professors are, on average, somewhat less religious than the general public, but it is not at all clear that this reflects a fundamental tension between faith and science. Irreligion is most pronounced in the humanities and social sciences, whereas faculty in the physical sciences and professional fields are much more likely to attend church, profess faith, and approve of religion. It is, in fact, only within the social sciences most committed to the secularization thesis (psychology, anthropology, and, to a lesser extent, sociology) that one finds high levels of antireligious sentiment. Among leading physicists, chemists, and biologists, belief in a god who answers prayer is as wide-spread today as it was in 1916.
4. The fastest growing religions on the whole tend to be more sectarian and theologically conservative (Iannaccone).

Even with the above rebuttals instated, Iyer notes how the political or social climate of a country can distort our picture of who is and who is not a believer, a picture devised solely through people's claims. In light of legal restrictions and societal pressures that can go either way (underestimating levels of belief in the atheistic state of Albania 1967-1991, or overstating them in Saudi Arabia where non-affiliation is sanctioned), this seems like an obvious concern. Less obvious, however, may be the potential disparity between national weekly attendance and national level of trust. For example, the Finnish disparity between its 5% weekly attendance and 71% level of trust is marginally outshone only by Denmark's gap between, respectively, its 3% and 74% reported levels. (Manchin, 2004)

A similar process of debunking and replacing dubious claims takes place when investigating economic (material) consequences of religion. It makes sense that Weber attempted to speculate the effect of religious values and moral sanction on economic growth and welfare, though his case-based prediction proved anachronistic. While religious values and moral sanction can be taken to define the religion proper in this case, members can collectively suffer from circumstances such as discrimination that drive them to perform at higher standards and influence their earnings, as is the case with Jews versus non-Jews. In such cases, this ties the defining features of a religion to something otherwise unrelated to values and moral sanction.

One observation that interests me is that "Studies of teenage delinquency are particularly abundant, and typically find that youth raised in highly religious homes are less likely to engage in criminal activity, use drugs or alcohol, or engage in premarital sex. These effects are particularly strong for children raised in strict denominations or religiously homogeneous communities." (Iannaccone, p. 1476) I believe that such an environment is more likely to promote an absolutist morality, or a view on morality in absolute terms that can easily gain confirmation from wherever one chooses to look.

In addition to seeming to deter deviant activity, even after controlling for police expenditures and other crime-related socioeconomic variables, religious commitment and activity consistently seem to promote mental health, reduced stress, social support, and increased life satisfaction according to empirical studies.

A lasting marriage also proves to be an incentive for endogamy, or marrying within one's denomination, evocative of the way water sticks to itself due to its intrinsic property of cohesion but does not mix with oil. This is not to say that interfaith marriage does not occur, but rather that its increased risk of divorce does have implications for the spouses' marriage-specific investment, an effect that extends as far as female employment and rates of intended fertility.

Definitions

Before we consider the question of competition as a force affecting religion, we will define the terms most predominantly used in this inquiry. Marked with an asterisk (*) are terms that are either not included or not sufficiently explained in the Western literature under review today.

Competition: As obvious as this may seem, it helps to list a definition for this term in order to distinguish between good and bad types of competition. Rivalry between two or more persons or groups for an object desired in common usually results in a victor and a loser but does not necessarily involve the destruction of the latter. Zero-sum games are typically easiest to conceptualize but just as typically inaccurate in real life.

Religion: Any shared set of beliefs, activities, and institutions premised upon faith in supernatural forces. As an offspring of the Latin *religare*, it means something that binds or fastens together, an insight applicable to other concepts used in the English language, e.g. he follows cinema religiously. Defined in terms of its collective dimension by Emile Durkheim (a notable French sociologist), it refers to the crystalline structure surrounding the essence. Iyer recognizes this as a substantive definition while adding the fact that functional definitions, focusing on what it does for people in terms of its role in their lives or supporting them either socially or psychologically, also exist.

Church: The whole Christian religious tradition through history. Religious denominations that are all-embracing of religious expression within a society. By extension, state church is a Christian religious body or creed officially endorsed by a nation's government. According to some models in recent work in the economics of religion, church as viewed as standard, neoclassical firms in which producers (e.g. priests) sell their religious goods and services to consumers (lay people). Unlike a sect, a Church always gives regard to communion with the outside world, even when it comes to the physical self-isolation of select members we call monasticism.

Religious goods or commodities: Religious education and knowledge of doctrines, rituals, and practices including the core belief of the existence of God.

Religious human capital: The stock of religion-specific experience derived from one's past religious experiences (Iannaccone 1984, 1990; Durkin and Greeley 1991). Patristics, or the writings of the early Church fathers, are often cited as one example of post-Biblical human capital from which several major areas of theology developed. They were also central in the post-World War I debate between Karl Barth and Georges Florovsky geared toward mending the identity crises of both the Protestant and Orthodox Churches instigated by the war (Payne 2004). Furthermore, Payne's qualitative synthesis of his Eastern Orthodox theology of economics is derived from patristic sources in significant measure, aside from Bulgakov (2011-2012).

Sect: Like a Church, a religious institution, but marked by tension with the outside that consists of differences in norms and values and refers to the degree of distinctiveness, separation, and antagonism in

the relationship between a religious group and the outside world (Iyer 2015, p. 7; Starke and Finke 2001; p. 35).

Cult: In common discourse, synonymous to "sect". In more esoteric contexts relative to today and capitalized, however, Cult denotes a noble synthesis of things and ideas, of phenomena and noumena, instigating the rise of Culture. In the "religious market" context with which these economics texts are largely concerned, the ignoble connotation associated with any so-called "new religious movement" will naturally take precedence, almost as if to forget entirely that the word once meant "care" in the Latin language, with cultivation referring to taking an active role beyond mere admiration.

Fundamentalism: A religious movement characterized by an unwavering adherence to a set of irreducible beliefs, most typically marked by the utmost degree of literalism. The most predominant Christian chapters began in the United States toward the start of the last century among Protestant denominations (in time for the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial that infamously brought charges against a Tennessee substitute high school teacher for violating the Butler Act by teaching the theory of evolution), while major Islamic movements, especially of late, have basically earned this American-born label to describe their radical practices. Fundamentalism tends to coexist with sectarianism, which serves as emphasis that such belief systems stand in mutual exclusivity with other systems.

***Gnosticism:** The heresy of valuing the spiritual over the earthly to a fault. On an economic indifference map with material and spiritual against each other both in aggregate, Gnostic and Marxist isoquants would occupy opposite corners. These isoquants trace out paths along which two simultaneous values for the aforementioned mutually define a given output/utility level.

***Orthodoxy:** "O" in majuscule denotes the belief system of the Eastern (or sometimes Oriental) Orthodox Church, while a miniscule "o" refers to the degree of conformity to certain doctrines, philosophies, and ideologies. Neither implies the other.

***Love¹:** According to Professor Christos Yannaras, the mode of authentic life as expressed in human existence (Payne, 2016). To translate this definition from philosophy to economics, it helps to account for kenosis, or self-emptying, modeled after the self-emptying love of the Second Person of the Trinity. Game theory is already equipped to deal with altruistic preferences, of which kenotic preferences are a more abstract subset. Without it, the "Triadic fullness of life" that Yannaras goes on to describe is too abstract of an ideal for economics to adequately express. In the Western sources, this word appears exactly once². They carry not a reference in passing even in the contexts of marriage or sexual activity that they did mention. Among the Eastern sources under review today, "love" is not shy to make a staggering grand total of 64 appearances, not counting the Greek words "agape" and "eros". If love is ever to find its connection to economics, it will decidedly lie in Eastern territory. A challenge that comes with this fact is that the Eastern sources, though considered related to economics, are typically seen as philosophical.

¹ The array of dictionary definitions is complicated to succinctly prioritize or summarize other than that it entails feelings, needs, desires, passions, and giving and receiving parties that do not necessarily reciprocate. It is also linked to personal growth and development. For example, studies have shown cerebral and synaptic atrophy in babies who are ignored when they cry from hunger, pain, or fear, making it difficult for them to give and receive love later in life without a standard of comparison. This example, as well as others, would fall under the definition offered by Yannaras.

² This is where Iyer cites a working paper by the name "For the Love of the Republic: Education, Religion, and Empowerment", which probably did not have Yannaras' definition in mind.

Network access/recruitment: "Network access" and "recruitment" are observed in terms of belonging versus non-belonging, making it a question of activity rather than of conviction, the difference between which is one measure of hypocrisy. It is easier to resort to these piecemeal explanations for religious participation as opposed to love.

Competition

When Adam Smith wrote about the economics of religion in his largely ignored chapter of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), he likened churches to secular firms, subject to exactly the same realities and constraints as secular firms. Churches associated with his Protestant background lend themselves better to these parallels than that one church from which these others spawned, the former monopoly whose papacy would sometimes forbid the Bible as public literature. Meanwhile, as economists and sociologists have only just begun to recognize religious behaviour as a potential instance of rational choice as opposed to a chronic exception to sound reason, Elizabeth Prodromou argues that "'religious belief' (as well as non-belief, in the form of exit from belief and/or belonging) becomes volitional, rather than a matter of inherited and immutable identity; likewise, religious practices become matters of discussion and debate, rather than fixed expressions of doctrine." This is in the context of democracy globalized, of which Adam Smith's interpretation can be read as a more specific example. Eastern input corroborates this Western view of religious markets. (Payne 2016)

A major question that arises from this decay of religious monopoly is that of pluralism. Whereas conventional wisdom once held that pluralism undermines vitality, advocates of supply-side economic theory would have it exactly the other way around: Pluralism arouses vitality through competition. Empirical evidence does not, however, support the claim that religious pluralism is positively associated with religious participation in any general sense according to Chaves and Gorski (2001).

Tymofii Brik's 2016 study presents further evidence in the context of Ukraine, namely amongst its Orthodox Churches. President Poroshenko called for a "unification" of domestic churches in light of abiding yet ever-increasing inter-religious tensions, a "unification" that amounts to the existence of none other than the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as the sole Church found domestically. Aside from Ukrainian and Russian Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Catholicism, and Protestantism also currently exist in the fold, but the following reveals certain implications specific to within-Orthodox competition.

With affiliation, subjective religiosity, church attendance, and praying at home as measures of religious behavior, statistical models are revealing a significant and positive influence of within-Orthodox church competition on the religious behavior of Ukrainians. The relationship remains intact after controlling for a battery of independent variables on the individual and contextual levels, including individuals' language preferences, employment status, educational status, health status, loss of a partner status, gender, age; communist religious suppressions in a region, economic performance of a region, the level of unemployment in a region, and time after the collapse of the USSR.

The theory that a competitive religious market might be a powerful source of religious vitality rests on two points:

1. Various churches can better match the potential religious preferences of people, thus creating adequate niches.

2. Competition provides additional incentives for churches to fight for their congregation instead of acting as “lazy firms”.

To ensure that the aforementioned correlation is explained by direct causality, an instrumental variable is used, in this case, the share of all religious communities whose registration was rejected by the state. The state may reject or cancel a community’s registration if the community’s ordinance does not comply with the Constitution of Ukraine. It was observed that the post-Soviet governments returned to the strong regulation of the religious markets in the 21st century in areas where one religious group constituted the majority of the population. Indeed, the instrumental variable has a strong negative correlation with church competition (-0.47). In other words, strong regulation causes church competition to subside. The instrumental variable does not correlate with the dependent variable (church attendance), thus fitting the necessary prerequisite.

It is worth noting that all Eastern Orthodox Churches, from the Greek to the Russian, are known for being essentially the same, observing the same faith and (upper-case) Traditions. A Bulgarian Orthodox consumer can attend a Romanian Orthodox service, deriving virtually the same benefit from it as from the same service held in one’s own Church. They differ in their (lower-case) traditions idiosyncratic to the surrounding culture to which they cater. This seems to describe an ideal setting in which competition has great latitude to trigger benefits via the two aforementioned points. Rather than accept Poroshenko’s reactionary call for his so-called “unity”, it seems more befitting to embrace Metropolitan John Zizioulas’ assertion that “otherness is constitutive of unity” as seen in the Orthodox understanding of the Trinity. (Payne 2016)

Berger and Zijderveld have said, “pluralization also changes the sociological character of religious institutions and the relation of these institutions to each other. Churches, whether they like it or not, cease to be religious monopolies and instead become voluntary associations.”

Studies of Catholic religious participation provide partial support for the “lazy monopoly” model. Analyzing data from the 102 Roman Catholic dioceses in the United States, Stark and James McCann (1993) find that, relative to the total Catholic population, the number of children attending Catholic schools and the number of priestly ordinations tend to be higher in regions where Catholics make up a relatively small fraction of the population. Stark’s (1992) analogous cross-national study, based on aggregate data from 45 nations, finds a strong negative correlation between the number of priests per Catholic and the percentage of Catholics in the total population. Although both these studies suggest that Catholic commitment is lower where Catholics make up a larger share of the population, they must be set against the fact that church attendance rates are not consistently low where Catholics make up a large share of the population. Among the predominantly Catholic nations of Western Europe, weekly church attendance rates range from a low of 12 percent in France to a high of 82 percent in the Irish Republic. (Iannaccone p. 1487)

The pluralism thesis that is replacing the previously annulled secularization thesis is welcomed by the Orthodox as an opportunity. Consumers and producers will have the paramount task of negotiating amongst themselves to what extent literature-based religion is reader- or writer-responsible. A goal is establishing *koinonia* (communion) amidst the ever diversifying and pluralistic places where the Orthodox Church is known to exist and thrive. Only through *diakonia* (ministry) can it truly surface.

“... the role of the Orthodox Church in relationship to other religions and Christian traditions must neither be proselytization nor even to testify to its historical tradition, but as Petros Vassiliades states,

'Its role is to acquire and live in communion with the other. As Metropolitan John Zizioulas has emphasized, 'This can only happen through a slow process, a kenotic [sic] presence and a genuine integration. It can only happen in close and creative cooperation and truthful dialogue.'" (Payne 2016)

Despite the fact that religion was not dealt with seriously in economic terms and the gap of almost 200 years between the first attempts to connect religion and economics by Adam Smith (1776) and the first modern study of the subject by Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975), religion has remained pervasive and of continuing importance in today's societies and throughout time. A large number of economists used economic theory and a significant amount of data to address issues such as what determines religious belief and behavior, what is the nature of religious institutions, and how religion impacts economic attitudes and activities of individuals, groups, and societies. They liken religion to the ultimate credence good and believe it to artificially augment the cost of doing bad deeds (though moral judgments defining these "bad deeds" are left unexplained).

Data from the U.S., where they are most detailed, show that in that country, rates of religious belief and behavior have declined little or not at all over the years and they show no signs of waning. What does change from time to time and from place to place is the style of religion, which appears to approach moderation when faced with the political systems that demand it. The more liberal and conservative denominations may then be faced with diseconomies of scale, as is the case with Kehillath Israel, the storied Conservative synagogue in Brookline, Massachusetts (Heilman). This Harvard Street synagogue is planning to spend \$15 million to preemptively downsize in order to remain proportionate to its mitigated congregation and sustainable by its correspondingly curtailed revenue, all in light of the decline in Reform and Conservative affiliation. Times have indeed changed since the early to mid-20th century when it was first edified.

Other models liken churches to clubs, whereby the religious commodities that enter a household's utility function depend not only on their own input of time, goods, and capital, but also on the inputs of fellow church members (Iannaccone p. 1482). The notion of a club model is prompted by the fact that despite its firm-like characteristics, the typical congregation functions as a mutual-benefit organization, dedicated to the collective production of worship services, religious instruction, social activities, and other quasi-public "club goods." Except for a few full-time religious professionals and a handful of benchwarmers, most members contribute both to production and consumption of these religious commodities.

Club models of religion may be framed as an extension to the household production approach. The religious commodities that enter a household's utility function now depend not only upon their own inputs of time, goods, and capital, but also upon the inputs of fellow church members. So, for example, the pleasure and edification that I derive from a worship service does not depend solely on what I bring to the service (through my presence, attentiveness, public singing, and so forth); it also depends on how many other people attend, how warmly they greet me, how well they sing, how enthusiastically they read and pray, how deep their commitment, and so forth. Formally, the household's religious production function becomes

$$R = R(T_R, X_R, S_R; Q)$$

where T_R and X_R account for inputs of time and purchased goods respectively, S_R signifies religious human capital, and Q indexes the quality of the group, which is in turn a function of the religious inputs of the

other group members (Iannaccone 1992; see also Jack Carr and Janet Landa 1983; B. Chiswick 1991; Sullivan 1985; and Joe Wallis 1990).

In many ways, this model turns the standard club story on its head. Rather than emphasize problems of congestion, it emphasizes the positive externalities associated with religious participation. In congregational settings, an active member (who attends regularly, sings wholeheartedly, and greets others enthusiastically) increases the utility for other members. Conversely, free riders who participate less frequently and less energetically, threaten to undermine the viability of most religions—a problem well-documented by sociologists of religion.

Case study in fundamentalism

To describe the competition taking place among fundamentalist brands as unhealthy and characteristic of a red-herring would be an understatement. To make matters worse, we are currently observing another such movement that, while not strictly religious in the conventional sense, does occasionally employ so-called churches as vehicles and capitalizes on a belief system every bit as simplistic and irreducible as that driving fundamentalism. Its temporal advantages stem from its simplistic value system which is not in contention with the self-righteousness that came before it and had already done them great harm, and its facility in accusing anyone who is even remotely a nay-sayer to such a simplistic value system of bigotry, a term that is becoming increasingly misused. Such resounding naïveté travels too well on the hairy back of Bulgakov's *bête noire*.

Recalling the precise definition of “fundamentalism” as given on page 7, we investigate the problems with which a specific fundamentalist group must contend. If we were to examine GLBT fundamentalism, for instance, we would find that it has surprisingly more in common with other fundamentalist brands than differences.

While we are faced with the ideal of loving everyone equally and unconditionally as we are with Christ, being made in God’s image as we are, it is understandable that the earthly clay to which we are bound carries with it impulses and other material factors that cause us to stray from this image of love. The economic choices we make to come closer to this image with regard to cost-benefit analysis, empowerment, and scarcity are all inevitably influenced by a religion of some sort, visible or not.

In a world that complacently subscribes without question to the common expectation of opposite-sex relations on the foundation of accordingly opposite-sex attraction, it takes a strong, typically painful, internal impulse to even recognize the possibility of same-sex attraction, an opposite-sex aversion, or even both. Even if this impulse is scientifically proven one day to be genetically hardwired, this far from concludes the story.

Faced with unsettling choices in the presence of this new self-identity, GLBT people enter something remarkably akin to the classic five stages of grieving. Of economic interest are the foremost, middlemost, and lattermost stages, denial, bargaining, and acceptance, for they determine the struggle one has with choice-making given this newly manifest self-identity. They are still initially eager to fulfill societal expectations, but also conflicted with wishing to lead an honest life without cheating or deception that will weigh on their consciences and significantly reduce the utility derived from marriage. Bargaining serves to feel out how mutually exclusive these two desires really are. Acceptance, however, is where the real controversy starts. Acceptance is often where they attempt to manipulate opportunity costs by making

extreme claims about their orientation, namely their capacity to love toward either sex, that turn into irreducible beliefs. If there is an innate human inclination, rather than a religious one, to take offense at one's incapacity to love, explaining this may be more productive than assigning personal blame and constantly tempting fate.

They are not helped either by the undeniable discrimination and passive-aggression they have faced from several fronts, of which they for some reason acknowledge only the fundamentalist Christians and based on this generalize about all Christians. This alarmingly irrational choice has yet to be explained, aside from possible lack of education. Based on this crass generalization, however, it is not difficult to deduce the reactionary nature of GLBT fundamentalism. They complacently believe the ball to be entirely in their perceived enemy's court, incognizant of the real impasse.

What makes this matter difficult to introduce in a scientific paper at this point in time is the paucity of viable literary quality. The suplicants unfortunately articulate themselves via 1 percent ethos and logos and 99 percent pathos, a recipe which garners little reception beyond those who are immediately like-minded. Their literature is lurid, voyeuristic, and egocentric, fixated on matters that others will not understand or appreciate. In other words, they have produced nothing widely presentable, much less useable in a scientific research paper such as this. One has no choice but to go by inference, even if it means making conclusions that these people do not necessarily like. To their credit, however, this brand of fundamentalism is generally non-violent unlike most others.

If we go back to the beginning, starting with the societal assumptions³, we see these resting on an assumption about the material, meaning we have been materialistic about love in the first place, not to mention extrinsically motivated. One is particularly singled out then for having the only possible motive to show love to members of one's own sex, in a world where the only possible motive is the impulse. Under any other circumstance, including the absence of any impulse either way, the choice is clear.

Today, arguments against sexual deviancy in general rooted in religious, psychological, or political reasoning are extrinsically motivated and condescending. The humility of the quintessential economist just might have a more accepting audience with such people, though no promises can be made.

It is worth noting that this is a totally different concern from those held by sources which view economics and religion as completely separate entities that merely affect one another in the manner of dependent and independent variables, like McCleary and Barro. This is a matter that evokes more in the way of one's personal economy of love.

Relations with the state

Here is yet another instance where the difference between the philosophical narrative-driven East and the empirical analysis-herded West is clear in terms of their distinguishable perspectives and approaches.

The degree to which a church is state-funded is said to correlate negatively with religious participation. Finland's heavily state-funded Lutheran Church conforms to this pattern with a correspondingly low participation rate. The Orthodox Church of Greece, however, is an outlier; it manages to foster much vitality despite running on state funds. (Source missing)

³ Into which the clumsy acronym effectively shoehorned itself, apparently for lack of an inclusive yet non-disparaging title other than "GLBT".

On the other hand, the East exhibits a political economy view: "it is against the very self-understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ to become a political institution aligned with the state. Rather, the Church should focus on 'its own story in and through the liturgical life of the community.' In so doing, 'the church is able to offer an alternative culture to that of Western secularism'". (Payne 2016)

The position of a religion can gain substantial ground nationally when used as a vehicle of resistance against external political domination attempts. Iannaccone mentions Catholicism in Ireland and Poland as examples in a footnote on page 1487, in opposition to English and Soviet conquest, respectively. Even though the Orthodox Church principally does not serve a political function and does not affiliate with any political party, the role of Orthodoxy during the Greek resistance against Turkish rule, however, is just as valid an example. Greece's answer to the Irish hedge schools in contention with the anti-Catholic Penal laws, τα κρυφά σχολεία (secret schools), were said to be held under church roofs by Orthodox priests. Whether or not this development physically existed, since this is still debated in the absence of historical evidence, their narrative since the 1821 War for Independence, passed down through poetry and art, has effectively tied Orthodoxy's preservation of the national language and history to the state's ultimate salvation.

Poroshenko's call to appropriate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as an instrument of defiance in a similar capacity is unlikely to work the same way.

Conclusion

The nascent field has been on a relatively fast track to development after its initial inertia. Integrating Eastern and Western takes on this field is also a promising activity that will hopefully be undertaken more often, to show that religion and economics might not be so tangential to one another as people tend to think. Despite these significant strides, secularists still continue to posit trite arguments for their unsound expectations.

Iannaccone ends his paper with "a countervailing hope: the economics of religion will eventually bury two myths—that of homo economicus as a cold creature with neither need nor capacity for piety, and that of homo religiosus as a benighted throwback to pre-rational times". He does not, however, give a reason for such a personal hope at the end of what should be an objective scientific literature review. Whether the reason for this individual happens to be that which was echoed at least 64 times in today's sample of Eastern literature or it happens to be something yet unvoiced, only a disturbingly vivid imagination can fathom what it would take for religion to draw its one last breath.

Appendix

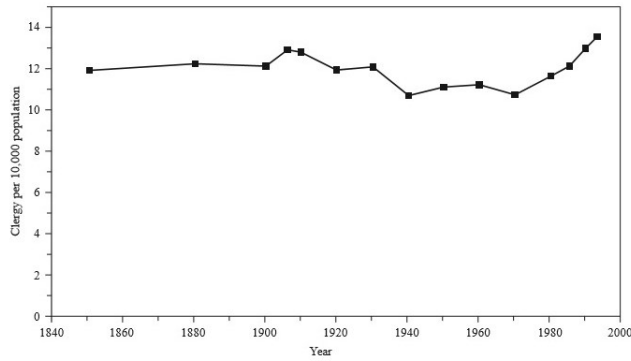


Figure 1. U.S. Clergy Employment, 1850-1995.

Source: 1850, 1880: *Religious Bodies* (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1850 and 1880).
 1900-1970: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (U.S. Bureau of Census 1975, series G458).
 1977-1995: *Employment and Earnings* (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January issues).

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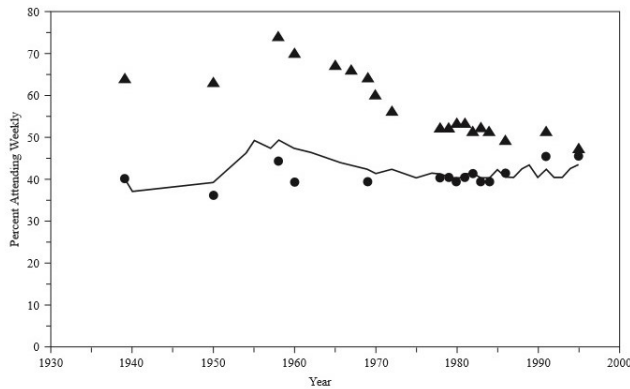


Figure 2. U.S. Church Attendance Rates, 1939-95.

Notes: — = all respondents ● = self-identified Protestants ▲ = self-identified Catholics
 Source: Gallup opinion poll statistics, reported in annual editions of *Religion in America* (Princeton Religion Research Center 1990, 1992/3, 1996) and in Hout and Greeley (1987).

TABLE 1
 POLLS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

	God	Jesus	Life	Heaven	Hell
1945	95		76		
1950	99	77	73	72	58
1955	97		74		
1960	97		74		
1965	97	75	75	68	54
1970	98		73		
1975	94		69		
1980	95	78	71	71	53
1985	94	76	74		
1990		84	71	75	60
1995	96		71		

Notes: Where data are lacking for a given year, but available for one of the two years before or after, the average of these values is entered.

average of these values is entered.
 Source: Gallup polls, reported in "Religion in America" (1985, 1990, 1992/93, 1996). Variables:
 God = Percent of "Yes" responses to "Do you believe in the existence of God or a universal spirit?"
 Jesus = Percent of "Yes, God" responses to "Do you believe Jesus Christ ever actually lived? Do you think He was God or just another leader like Mohammed or Buddha?"
 Life = Percent of "Yes" responses to "Do you believe in a life after death?"
 Heaven = Percent of "Yes" responses to "Do you think there is a heaven where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded?"
 Hell = Percent of "Yes" responses to "Do you believe there is a hell?"

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