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INVITED ESSAY

The Psychology of Religion *and* Spirituality? Yes and No

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This article considers the question of whether our field should relabel itself the psychology of religion *and* spirituality. The meanings of religion and spirituality appear to be evolving. Religion is moving from a broadband construct—one that includes both the institutional and the individual, and the good and the bad—to a narrowband institutional construct that restricts and inhibits human potential. Spirituality, on the other hand, is becoming differentiated from religion as an individual expression that speaks to the greatest of human capacities. Several dangers in these trends are considered, including the danger of losing the sacred core of our field. An alternate approach to defining religion and spirituality is presented that preserves the heart of our discipline while encouraging the study of new pathways to the sacred and new meanings of the sacred itself.

This is an exciting time to be a psychologist of religion. For many years, our field was tremendously attractive to those who enjoyed working in relative obscurity. Now, however, religious study is receiving a burst of international attention by the public, the sciences, and psychology. Is this just a passing fad? Maybe. But maybe not.

We now have a wonderful opportunity to create an awareness of who we are and what our discipline is about. First, however, we have to answer two important questions: Who are we, and what is our discipline about?

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One issue cuts to the heart of our identity and challenges who we are. It has to do with the concept of spirituality. I am sure you have come across many people who have said to you, "I am not a religious person, but I am spiritual." These are not isolated comments. A recent study found that 78% of a diverse sample rated themselves as religious; in contrast, over 90% rated themselves as spiritual (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Interest in this concept has grown sharply in recent years (e.g., Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Sanders, 1988; Helminiak, 1996; Lapierre, 1994). The number of entries under "spirituality" in the *Religion Index* (1994) has increased dramatically in the last 10 years. Recently, several journals have devoted special issues to spirituality. Conferences have been called on topics ranging from spiritual intelligence to spirituality and health. Bookstores are filling their shelves with volumes dedicated to dimensions of the spiritual. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed.; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) now distinguishes between religious problems and spiritual problems.

Indicators such as these suggest our field may be in the midst of a potential transformation: The meanings of our central constructs are changing, the phenomena of greatest interest are being redefined. What do we think about these changes? Is spirituality a phenomena of interest for our discipline, or does it fall outside our domain?

The issue was most clearly articulated to me last year at an executive committee meeting of the division of the psychology of religion of the American Psychological Association, when someone suggested that we rename our division the psychology of religion and spirituality. I believe the question could be applied to our field more generally. Should we relabel ourselves the psychology of religion and spirituality? Is that a good idea? In this article, I would like to give my answer. It is not the only answer, but in offering one point of view I hope to stimulate more dialogue on this topic. Let me start by putting my answer into a historical, social, and empirical context.

A LONG AND DEEP TRADITION OF STUDY ABOUT THE MEANING OF RELIGION

Psychologists of religion who have been in the field for a while can agree on one thing: we have never agreed about anything. The point is especially true for the ways we have defined religion. Over scores of years, religion has been called the supernatural, the ultimate, the institutional, the creedal, the ritual, the experiential, the ethical, the temperamental, and the directional. I could go on. Today people continue to assign diverse meanings to the term *religiousness* (Pargament, Sullivan, Balzer, Van Haitsma, & Raymark, 1995; Zinnbauer, 1997).

In spite of the diversity of meanings religion has held for so many years, there are three ways in which religion has traditionally *not* been defined by psycholo-

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gists. First, historically, religion has not been viewed as a purely institutional phenomenon. William James (1902), for one, defined religion as "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude" (p. 32). Since the time of James, few psychologists have taken a serious look at religious institutions and the roles they play in shaping character. If anything, our discipline has been antisocial when it comes to religious life. Institutional religion has been contrasted unfavorably with interiorized religion. Those invested in congregational life have been assigned lower scores on religious maturity indexes. As a discipline we have been much more concerned about the motivational, affective, behavioral, experiential, and cognitive sides of religion than with the institutional.

Second, historically, religion has not been only about God. Certainly we can find many substantive definitions of religion in the literature, definitions that focus on beliefs, practices, feelings, or relationships centered around a higher being. But functional definitions of religion have also been plentiful in our history. These definitions focus on the special purposes religion serves rather than the content of religion. In many functional definitions of religion, there is no mention at all of gods, higher powers, or supreme beings.

Finally, historically, psychologists as a group have not approached religion in all good or all bad terms. (I say "as a group" because there have been a few exceptions). Nevertheless, from James's (1902) contrast of healthy-minded and sick-souled religion to Allport's (1950) comparison of intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness to Fromm's (1950) distinction between authoritarian and humanistic religion, psychologists of religion have generally been quick to point out the multicolored character of religion: its potential for good and its potential for bad. Most would agree with the notion that the relationship between religiousness and well-being depends on the kind of religion we are talking about.

Historically, religion has been defined as a broadband construct, one that encompasses the individual as well as the institutional, the functional as well as the substantive, and the good as well as the bad. It is important to keep this context in mind as we turn to the rise of spirituality.

THE RISE OF SPIRITUALITY AND THE EVOLVING MEANING OF RELIGION

David Wulff (1997) has a very nice discussion of how the meanings of religion and spirituality have evolved over the centuries. Let me focus on where we seem to be currently. Today some writers use the terms religion and spirituality interchangeably, a device, Spilka and McIntosh (1996) suggest, to add linguistic variety to our work.

More and more, though, we are finding spirituality defined in contrast to religion. Two contrasts are particularly important to note. First, religion is being de-

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fined as the organizational, the ritual, and the ideological. For religion, now substitute *institutional religion.* This newly defined construct is contrasted with the spiritual, which refers to the personal, the affective, the experiential, and the thoughtful. The reminder that an individual can be spiritual without being religious or religious without being spiritual has become a standard part of many papers on spirituality.

Second, the term spiritual is increasingly reserved for the loftier/functional side of life—spirituality is said to be a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, for the highest of human potential. Religion, which has to do with institution and formalized belief, is peripheral to this central task. Whereas spirituality is increasingly described as a dynamic process, religion is evolving from what was once seen as a dynamic process (a verb) to a static entity (a noun; Wulff, 1997). Gradually, spirituality and religiousness are taking on positive and negative connotations. As Marty (1996) put it, spirituality is now cool; religion is uncool.

In short, religion is moving from a broadband construct that includes both the institutional and the individual, the good and the bad, to a narrowband construct that has to do with the institutional side of life, a side of life that often restricts and inhibits human potential. Spirituality, on the other hand, is becoming differentiated from religion as an individual expression that speaks to the greatest of our capacities.

Why the Change?

I cannot do justice to this important question here. But, let me briefly note just a few of the forces that may be driving this transformation.

Certainly the evolving meanings of religiousness and spirituality may reflect large-scale sociodemographic changes. As boundaries between countries and cultures have become more open, we have seen a proliferation of Eastern religions and alternative religious beliefs in the United States and Europe. They have brought with them alternative religious groups and practices. Alternative quasi-religious movements in the United States and Europe have also prompted changes in labels and meanings of these constructs. The rise of 12-step programs represents one notable illustration.

Recent changes in meanings of religiousness and spirituality could also be viewed as the latest in a series of religious revitalization movements that have punctuated our history (McLoughlin, 1978). In response to the sense of insufficiency of current religious institutional forms and structures, these movements provide alternative solutions to critical personal and social issues. In a parallel vein, the "spirituality" movement may represent the latest in a series of religious reawakenings; a response to the feeling that there is something missing in the way

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religion is currently defined and practiced, and an attempt to inject some new "spirit" into our lives.

The movement toward spirituality can also be seen as part of a larger sociocultural trend toward deinstitutionalization and individualization. Berger (1967) argued that religions were at one time sources of meaning so plausible and so compelling that they bound people into a common view of the universe. In Western culture, however, the scope of the sacred has shrunken as alternate explanations of the universe have taken hold. Institutional religion has lost some of its authority as a source of indisputable meaning. Instead, we find people searching for their own subjective meanings, picking and choosing from various religious offerings—a religion à la carte (Bibby, 1987). The loss of faith in other institutions in Western culture, from big government to big business, only exacerbates this trend. Along these lines, Roof (1993) found that baby boomers in the United States (a group mistrustful of institutions of all kinds) are particularly likely to see themselves as spiritual rather than religious and to pursue highly individualized patterns of belief and practice.

SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE EMERGING SPIRITUALITY FOR THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

There are, I believe, some potential dangers in the ways we are approaching the construct of spirituality.

The Danger of Ungrounded Study

First, there is the danger of ungrounded study. Our work can be ungrounded theoretically and empirically.

Ungrounded theory. Much of the literature in the area of spirituality is speculative. Now there is nothing wrong with armchair theorizing, but armchair theories can and should be put to the test. How well, for instance, do our concepts of spirituality reflect those of the larger population? We might be surprised. Let me give an example.

Recently, my research group headed by Brian Zinnbauer (Zinnbauer et al., 1997) conducted a survey of 11 diverse groups in the United States ranging from New Agers to nurses to mental health professionals to Roman Catholic parishioners to religiously conservative college students. We asked them about their definitions of religiousness and spirituality in a number of ways. Let me present two of the key findings.

First, although the two terms have been contrasted with each other in the literature, many people see no tension between the two. For instance, we asked our par-

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ticipants to choose whether they considered themselves to be religious and not spiritual, spiritual and not religious, both religious and spiritual, or neither religious nor spiritual. The large majority (74%) defined themselves as both religious and spiritual. Apparently, most saw no need to choose between religiousness or spirituality. When we content analyzed participants' definitions of the terms, we found important areas of overlap. In fact, we were unable to detect any differences in the ways the sacred was conceptualized in the two sets of definitions.

Second, we found that almost everyone believed they were spiritual. (This is not to say that they agreed on what it meant to be spiritual. In another study by Zinnbauer [1997], the correlation among individual definitions of spirituality was essentially zero.) We saw more variation in the degree to which people defined themselves as religious. Even more interesting was our finding that our subgroup of mental health professionals showed one of the higher levels of discrepancy between their self-rated religiousness and self-rated spirituality. Mental health professionals are doing much of the writing on this topic today. To what degree are their conceptualizations of religiousness and spirituality reflective of the people they work with? To what degree are they projections of their own interests?

Ungrounded research. Research in spirituality can also be ungrounded. For instance, a number of new measures of spirituality have been developed. These scales may be related to a variety of criteria. What we do not know is whether these measures add anything to what we already know from existing measures of religiousness. I have to admit that some of these new scales of spirituality look suspiciously like old measures of religiousness to me. But I also believe that some could very well add a new and valuable dimension to our existing approaches to measurement (e.g., Hall & Edwards, 1996). Richard Gorsuch (1984) pointed out that new religious scales should demonstrate "incremental validity"; the ability to add knowledge above and beyond that provided by existing measures. His point applies equally well to measures of spirituality.

The Dangers of Polarization

Polarization is a second danger in the way we approach spirituality. There are two related types of polarization: the polarization of the institutional and the individual, and the polarization of the good and the bad.

Individual versus institutional. To speak of religion as institutional and spirituality as individual is to ignore two facts. The first is that virtually every major religious institution is quite concerned with spiritual matters. The primary objective of religious institutions is to bring individuals closer to God (Carroll, Dudley, & McKinney, 1986). Some succeed better than others, and some may have lost

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sight of this goal, but the search for the sacred remains the most fundamental of all religious missions.

The second fact is that every form of religious or spiritual expression occurs in a social context. Privatization and individualization of spirituality are unfolding in a culture that supports privatization and individualization. That we tend to overlook these cultural and institutional forces does not mean they are no longer operative. Spirituality is never experienced outside of a context. Individuals dissatisfied with their churches or synagogues do not simply leave; they seek out new religious homes. They may be smaller homes. They may be mobile homes. But they still look for a place where they can share their views and receive the support of other like-minded people. Today we find new forms of spiritual institutionalization in the guise of healing groups, Yoga groups, meditation groups, New Age groups, 12-step groups, and so on. Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, and Gorsuch (1996) note that in the late 1980s over 400 new spiritual associations developed. If the church-sect literature is any guide (and I think it is quite useful here), eventually we should see many people moving from smaller to larger spiritual homes.

It is ironic that spirituality, according to many views, reflects an appreciation for the interrelatedness of all things. Yet in some ways, this interrelatedness has been treated as a purely psychological process: It is a *sense* of connectedness that becomes the goal, rather than a connectedness that is lived out. Paradoxically, our approach to spirituality runs the risk of disconnecting people from their worlds. By polarizing religion and spirituality into the institutional and the individual, we lose sight of the individual mission of the institution and the social context of the individual; we lose the opportunity to learn how people express their faiths within the context of their lives.

Good versus bad. Polarizing spirituality as good and religion as bad is, I believe, another danger. Many definitions of spirituality are in fact definitions of spiritual well-being. They describe the author's view of the highest level of human potential. Naturally, this view differs from author to author. I see no problem with definitions of spiritual well-being, as long as they are labeled and debated as such. But I do see a problem in saying that spirituality is by definition the "good guy" (and religion is by definition the "bad guy"). It does not hold up well to research study, and it does not hold up well to what we see around us.

For one thing, people can pursue the highest of goals through dysfunctional paths. In search of the sacred, people have engaged in all sorts of destructive behaviors, behaviors that have resulted in the sacrifice of themselves and the sacrifice of others. The suicides of the members of Heaven's Gate is only one case in point.

On the other hand, involvement in organized religious life is by no means harmful to everyone. Quite the contrary. Religious congregations are sources of support for people from all walks of life, including the most disenfranchised (Maton &

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Pargament, 1987). Organized systems of religious belief (e.g., there is a loving God who is vitally concerned about each of us) have also been associated with a variety of correlates of health and well-being. As psychologists of religion, we have exciting opportunities to work together with leaders of the hundreds of thousands of religious congregations throughout the world, assisting them toward many common goals—but not if we hold to the view that religion is the "bad guy" (Weaver et al., 1997).

Of course, we can find more than enough examples of the destructive influence of religious institutions and beliefs and the benevolent influence of spirituality. But to treat these constructs as good and bad by definition leads us away from far more interesting questions. For example, how is it that in the search for the highest of goals, some people achieve the greatest of their potentials while others end up destroying themselves or others? Conversely, how is that some forms of organized religious life facilitate well-being whereas others impede it?

As a note, let me add that in polarizing religion and spirituality into the institutional/bad and individual/good guys, I think we are reinventing the intrinsic–extrinsic religiousness polarity. There are strong parallels in the literature between spirituality and intrinsics (those saintly folks who live their faith) and between religion and extrinsics (those dastardly folks who use their religion). The problem is, as I have argued elsewhere, that there are not too many saints or demons among us (Pargament, 1992). Mortals that we are, most of us are engaged in both living and using our religion. We search for God and we search to satisfy our human needs. *I* versus *E*, religion versus spirituality—these polarizations are seductive. They offer easy ways to think about the world and easy solutions. But they are not particularly well-suited to a complex world that calls for well-integrated rather than simplistic solutions.

The Danger of Losing Our Sacred Core

The third danger in the way we approach spirituality is, I think, the most serious one: the danger of losing the sacred core of our field. Many definitions of spirituality are functional in nature. They view spirituality as a search for a variety of goals. One author, Goldberg, said that spirituality is a "search for universal truth" (Scott, 1997, p. 108). Another, Mauritzen, said that "spirituality is the human dimension that transcends the biological, psychological, and social aspects of living" (Scott, 1997, pp. 111–112). Still others, Soeken and Carson, said that spirituality is "a conscious or unconscious belief that relates the individual to the world and gives meaning and definition to existence" (Scott, 1997, p. 115). Certainly these goals can be pursued in ways related to God or, more broadly, the sacred. But not necessarily. Meaning can be found through many paths, as can wholeness, truth, community, and self.

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These definitions of spirituality raise the problem of boundaries. If virtually any path can be taken in search of meaning, community, or self, then what makes that path religious? What is to distinguish our discipline from other disciplines that are just as much concerned with questions of meaning, self, and community as we are? Where do we draw the lines around our field? Without clearer boundaries I fear that we will lose our own definition. To take it one step further, I believe that without a clear acknowledgment that our field deals with matters sacred, we lose what makes us unique. What sociologist Peter Berger (1974) had to say about functional definitions of religion applies all too well to many approaches to spirituality: Its special transcendent nature is "flattened out ... absorbed into a night in which all cats are gray" (p. 129). These types of definition, he suggested, subtly support a secular worldview, providing a "quasiscientific legitimation of the avoidance of transcendence" (p. 128). A spirituality without a sacred core leaves our field without a center.

Should we relabel our field the psychology of religion *and* spirituality? My answer is no, not if it means we become a field in which the study of spirituality is ungrounded theoretically, empirically, and historically. No, if it means we simply place new labels on old debates and established methods. No, if it means we define religion as institutional and bad and spirituality as individual and good. And no, if it means we remove the sacred from the core of who we are and expand our boundaries to include virtually any pathway leading to virtually any valued destination. If this is what it means to be a psychology of religion *and* spirituality, then my answer is no.

AN ALTERNATIVE

There is, however, another way to approach religiousness and spirituality.

Defining Religion

Religion is a search for significance in ways related to the sacred (Pargament, 1997). This definition bridges both functional and substantive traditions in the psychology of religion. Functionally, religion is a search for significance. By search, I mean efforts not only to find significance but to conserve significance once found or transform significance when necessary. By significance, I mean whatever people value in their lives—be it psychological, social, physical, or spiritual; be it good or bad. There is no assumption here that we all seek the same things. To the contrary, the evidence seems to show that different people seek different objects of significance.

Not every search qualifies as religious. One thing distinguishes the religious search from others. Religion refers to the search for significance in ways related to

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the sacred. This is the substance of religion, the dimension that separates religion from other human phenomena.

Every search is made up of two dimensions: a pathway and a destination. The sacred can be part of either or both dimensions. Attendance at religious congregations, religious beliefs, involvement in prayer and rituals, religious coping—these are just a few of the many sacred pathways taken to find, hold on to, or transform significance. These pathways may or may not lead to sacred destinations. People involve themselves in religious activities for many reasons, not all of them spiritual. But if the sacred is a part of the pathway, the search qualifies as religious, regardless of where it leads.

Of course the destination of a religious search may also be sacred. People may seek out God, transcendence, a spiritual mission, a religious community, or any other number of sacred objects. They may seek it through traditionally religious or nontraditional means, through personally created pathways or established pathways created by institutions, through healthy or unhealthy behaviors.

I am defining religion in the classic tradition of our field. The search for significance in ways related to the sacred encompassing both the individual and the institutional; it includes both the traditional and the novel; and it covers both the good and the bad. Where does spirituality fit here?

Defining Spirituality

I see *spirituality* as a search for the sacred. It is, I believe, the most central function of religion. It has to do with however people think, feel, act, or interrelate in their efforts to find, conserve, and if necessary, transform the sacred in their lives.

Let me say a bit more about the sacred. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), the *sacred* is defined as the holy, those things "set apart" from the ordinary, worthy of reverence. The sacred encompasses concepts of God, the divine, and the transcendent, but it is not limited to notions of higher powers. It also includes objects, attributes, or qualities that become sanctified by virtue of their association with or representation of the holy (Pargament, Mahoney, & Swank, in press). In our arguments and debates about God and whether there can be a religion without God, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that much of the power of religious life comes from the human ability to sanctify secular objects (Durkheim, 1915). As Emmons pointed out, our most fundamental strivings in life can become spiritualized (Emmons, in press). There may be important consequences of the sanctification process. A job is likely to be approached differently when it becomes a vocation. A marriage likely takes on special power when it receives divine sanction. The search for meaning, community, self, or a better world are likely to be transformed when they are invested with sacred character. Even if beliefs in a personal God fade, other objects of significance may remain sanctified.

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Thinking about the sacred and sanctification in this way extends our field to the study of a larger array of phenomena. By defining spirituality as the search for the sacred, we avoid restricting ourselves to narrow or traditional conceptions of God. But we maintain some boundaries. As much as we value connectedness, authenticity, meaning in life, holism, and many other processes so often associated with spirituality, these goals and values do not fall within the spiritual realm unless they are somehow connected to the sacred. Certainly they can be. Often they are, I believe, at least implicitly. But we can do a better job of making the implicit explicit. We can also begin to test the implications of sanctification for how people live their lives. Our research group has begun to study the sanctification process, and the results have been promising. In a study led by Annette Mahoney (Mahoney et al., 1997), we found that couples who define their marriage as sacred report higher levels of marital satisfaction, dependence, and more effective marital problem-solving strategies than couples who see their marriage in less of a sacred light. Emmons (in press) reported similar advantages to spiritualized strivings or goals in life.

Let me underscore an important point. As I have defined it here, spirituality (like religion) can be experienced and expressed individually and institutionally; it can take traditional or nontraditional forms; and it can be good or bad. So what is the relationship between the two?

The Relationship Between Religion and Spirituality

Spirituality is the heart and soul of religion. The search for the sacred is the most central religious function. It may sound a bit odd, but I believe it is the case that we have not paid much attention to the search for the sacred in the psychology of religion. We have tended to reduce sacred phenomena to other psychological, social, biological, or evolutionary motives and drives. But the search for the sacred is, I believe, a legitimate search in its own right, one that cannot be reduced to other processes. Of course, we cannot measure God or determine whether objects do, in fact, have holy powers. But there is no reason why we cannot and should not study the physical, psychological, and social "footprints" left by those engaged in the search, and we can compare those who take different pathways toward different destinations.

Perhaps the hardest thing to accept in the approach I have presented here is the notion that religion is a broader construct than spirituality. Most people view it just the reverse (Zinnbauer et al., 1997), but I have harkened back to classic psychology of religion. Religion is a broadband construct. It encompasses the search for many objects of significance. Spirituality focuses on the search for one particular object of significance—the sacred. But note that from this point of view, there is less and less of a distinction between religion and spirituality as more and more ob-

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jects of significance in life are sanctified. For those who find the whole of life sacred, there is little difference between religion and spirituality.

It does not follow though that the psychology of religion should focus exclusively on spirituality. There are other important questions for our field. For example, we should be concerned about religious means as well as ends; with methods of religious coping, prayer, and congregational involvement, even if these methods are used to reach nonspiritual goals. (Note, with all due respect to Gordon Allport [1950], there is an important distinction to be made between nonreligious ends and antireligious ends. The individual who returns to church in search of fellowship may be just as extrinsic as the individual who joins a church to establish his social superiority, but they are quite different in some important respects.) As practicing psychologists, we might be willing to work together with religious congregations to facilitate the health and well-being of their members, even if these goals are, at least for some, extrinsic to their faith. As I have already stressed, we should also be concerned about religious socialization; how secular ends become sanctified, how seemingly nonreligious objects become imbued with sacred power. Questions such as these take us beyond spiritual concerns to broader religious issues.

A RETURN TO THE QUESTION

So let me return to the question I began with: Should we relabel our field the psychology of religion *and* spirituality? Here is my answer. If the change serves to remind us that the sacred lies at the very heart of the psychology of religion; if the new label comes with an appreciation for the long and deep tradition of thought, study, and practice in our field; if the term spirituality offers a bridge to the study of new pathways to the sacred, new meanings of the sacred itself, and new applications of our work; if the modification in language helps clarify rather than confuse the boundaries of our field; if a change in title helps us develop a more integrated rather than a more polarized view of the many dimensions of religious and spiritual life; and if this is what we mean by a psychology of religion *and* spirituality, then I say yes to the change.

I would like our field to remain an inclusive discipline, a discipline broad enough to encompass individual and social expressions, the helpful and the harmful, basic research and applied interests, skeptics and believers, and any human pursuit that is in some way connected to the sacred. Lose that and we do lose our spirit, our soul.

Should we become the psychology of religion *and* spirituality? My answer is yes and no, depending on the way we approach these constructs. We are coming to a crossroads, but I have to admit that I am worried about our direction. My concern is that the construct of religion is losing its richness, breadth, and potency, and in the process, our discipline is moving toward less historical sensitivity, toward greater polarization of the individual and the institutional, toward greater polariza-

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tion of the good and the bad, and toward greater boundary confusion. As a discipline we are reacting to many of the large-scale sociocultural-religious forces that are shaping the lives of those we study. But the psychology of coping teaches us that people not only react to their changing circumstances, they have the power to transform them as well.

As a discipline, I believe we should be at the forefront of the battle over the definitions of religion and spirituality. We should be out there talking about what we mean by these terms. We must make it clear that there is a difference between broadband and narrowband religion; that religion is not a synonym for institution, dogma, and ritual; that religion is not a dry, static, dead-end construct. We must make it clear that our field is vitally concerned with spirituality and all matters sacred. We do have a long history to bring to bear to this debate; we do have a sense of the critical issues, problems, and pitfalls; and we even have some relevant data. Let us respond to this important challenge and transform the argument. The tremendous interest and energy in the topic of spirituality represent a wonderful resource for our field. We must lay claim to this topic within the tradition of religious study and scholarship before it is appropriated from our discipline. In the process, we may discover that this is an exciting time to be a psychologist of religion *and* spirituality.

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