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Civilization and Religion: The Dance of Shape-Shifters

Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo

Dedicated to the memory of Matt Melko, a grand leader who pushed the ISCSC to collaborative scholarship

"Religion" is as hard to define as is "civilization." Thanks in no small part to the valorous persistence of our dearly remembered Matt Melko, we members of the ISCSC have learned that the term "civilization" has had multiple reincarnations. A carefully worded definition which fits one period of history often comes up short for others. Make the definition wide open for all climes and times, however, and the result is likely too porous to serve as a tool for analysis. Rather than scold ourselves for failing to find a magical formula to define all and everything for every time and everywhere, we should not be surprised that complex realities are unavoidably complex. I wish to warn civilizationalists that the taxonomic travail enveloping "civilization" is repeated when defining "religion." My message is plain: religion and civilization slip through the clutches of easy definition because their protean nature locks them in the dance of shape-shifters.

Religion is Older than Civilization

Although related, religion and civilization were not born as twins. Religion is older than civilization. Before the first cities, before the first writing or the first state systems, religion had shaped human experience for more than fifteen thousand years. Paleo-archaeological remains provide incontestable evidence that the first of human groups carved religious symbols on axe handles, painted them on cave walls and carefully placed religious artifacts in graves. The issue before us is not whether religion was present at the dawn of human societies but what that presence means.

In an insightful blog on the civilizationalist website, Walter Benesch reminded us that the word "religion" is taken from the Latin verb, "re-ligere" which means "binding" or "linking". Etymology helps make the point that religion links human beings with the "Other." Although we may be tempted to think of the religious Other as the man in the sky with long beard on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, such anthropomorphism is a relatively late conceptualization. Religion, I would say, is not just a thin string connecting us to a heavenly deity like the child's cord of a kite in the sky. Rather, let us understand religion as a complex net linking the individual with all that can be captured with imagination.
Religious linkages shape our behavior by placing us before other persons who deserve respect, fear or love. These linkages are not severed by distance or death. Religion also links us to nature and animates the sun and moon, winds and rain, in ways that invite human interaction. Religion assumes that the Other encompasses all things: the imagined and the real; the spiritual and the material; everything that is human or animal, vegetable or mineral. Thus, the “world” becomes the “cosmos.”

Functionally, religion imposes intelligibility upon the objects of human consciousness, including those encountered by expectation and presumption. However, it accomplishes this task of intellectual knowing by coupling it to social behavior. Making choices above and beyond the call of animal instinct is an essentially human trait, and religion is the touchstone of soulful feeling that is simultaneously deeply personal in each individual and conducive to social unity among many. Do we act selfishly? rationally? altruistically? lustfully? Religion often provides the guide to both define and also to select the appropriate behavior from among such multiple choices. But true to its shape-shifter dimension, the linkages and the behavior are constantly changing. We should not consign religion to commandments set in stone. Religion is a Tao -- a “Way” of living humanity to its fullest meaning by adapting ourselves to new circumstances and challenges.

I stress here that for most of human history, religion has had these three functions of linkage to the Other, shaping individual and social behavior, and adaptation to changing circumstances. Some approaches separate religion’s relationship with the Other from its role in shaping behavior and guiding social adaptation. “Culture” becomes a surrogate that assumes two-thirds of religion’s tasks but conveniently escapes issues about who or what is the Other. This is not the place to argue that melting down religious belief is falsification of reality, but it should be noted by civilizationists that study of ancient cultures requires study of religion.

Egyptian culture only existed within Egyptian religion: the same for Greeks, Romans, the Hindu, the Chinese and virtually every civilization known in history. For millennia, religion told humans how and when to eat or how to greet or take leave of others. Although these functions are typically viewed today as “merely” arbitrary cultural norms, religion was originally all inclusive of human existence. It gave motivational reward to right behavior in this world and promised righteousness after death. Why religion has shrunk during the modern era and why it acquires new roles today are the matter at hand.

**Analogical Thinking at the Root of Religious Expression**

Across the ages, religious experience has embraced analogical thinking. I propose analogical thinking as the Rosetta Stone for civilizationalists when assessing religion. A basic definition is in order: “Analogy is a form of reasoning in which one thing is
inferred to be similar to another thing.” “Inferred similarity” is a precise definition of an admittedly imprecise process. Seeing stars in a woman’s beauty is a human experience of romance not easily defined in scientific terminology. It is with consummate subjectivity that one compares the stars of the nighttime sky to the eyes of the beloved. Alien to scientific literalness, the “inferred similarity” made possible by analogical thinking constitutes a powerful tool of human discourse as a poetic reference, made easier by wine and moonlight. Analogical thinking is not an escape from rationality but rather the ladder to transcendence.9

In our contemporary society, however, we sometimes conflate science and rationality, thus leaving the analogical thinking of religion out in the cold. Ironically, for much of human history -- rather than its antithesis -- analogical thinking was science’s handmaiden. Let me offer an example here. As we know, the lunar cycle endures for some 28 days during which the moons waxes and wanes. That regularity can be used to predict the optimal time for planting and harvesting, for anticipating rain or drought, and for marking time and growth. Analogical thinking also linked the moon to the fertility cycle of a woman because female biology parallels the length and predictability of the lunar cycle.10 Thus the religious analogy was layered with scientific applications to predict the workings of nature.

The analogical reasoning within religion, however, goes beyond mere observation of phenomena. The ability to link humans to the Other allows religion to enrich observations with causal connections to order and behavior. Thus, for the analogical thinker the similarities of the cycle for the moon and for the feminine are not coincidence or poetic license. The similarities in patterns for moon and fertility are not “invented” by human whim, but rather are “discovered” because those patterns were placed there by the Other.

The analogies in religions to sun, earth, and the sea as divine forces are common to the comparative study of religion. Perhaps the clearest example of the metaphysical power of analogical thinking can be found in the Creation Hymn of the tenth book of the Hindu Rig-Veda where the “poetry” of existence is ascribed to the Other.11 Moreover, by describing Brahman, the absolute principle of life, with the root verb (bhr) for “grow,” the Hindus parallel physical change with metaphysical power. Even in the ancient religion of the Hebrews which systematically rejected anthropomorphic representations of the Divine, the name of God, הוהי (lit. “I am who I am”) had a metaphysical application that was revisited in medieval Christian theology.12 The Greek philosophers like Aristotle embraced analogy to rise from physics to metaphysics in describing the Unmoved Prime Mover.13

The cautionary tale uses analogy. Rather than stressing the closeness of the links between the Other and the human, the cautionary tale explains the distance between them. For instance, the Babylonian Gilgamesh searched fruitlessly for the secret of
human immortality, and the curious wife of Lot was turned into a salt pillar near the Dead Sea. In both cases, human metaphors express the inability of humanity to control the world.

Analogy also supplies parameters on human behavior by creating taboos. Consider, for instance, the Native American aversion to ravens based on the notion that the mythical personage named “Crow,” was an all white bird until blackened by perching too long near the smoke of a human fire. The moral: keep crows away from your teepee. The Taínos of the Caribbean considered the mating song of the frog to be a herald of community migration. A seasonal move of the encampment allowed a regeneration of the fish supply at the site, something the frog knew should be done. The ancient Hebrews would consume either goat-cheese or goat meat, but never together, since one either takes milk or eats meat from the same animal, but cannot do both simultaneously. “Make your menu mirror God’s order of reality,” is the message.

Rather than dismiss analogical thinking, I urge civilizationalists to recognize that religion is not the product of a “Primitive” or “Savage” mind. Analogical thinking is a worthy invention of human intelligence, encapsulating intricate logic that integrates multiple dimensions of existence. Religion paints knowledge of self and of nature as a divine gift that must be used wisely. And while the Promethean power over nature given by analogical thought may not be sufficient to control events, at least it provides an understanding of how things work in the cosmos.

In all cases, analogical thinking imparts communitarian consequences to human actions. Religious rituals “act out” the linkages with nature and society: thus, a dancer dresses in bird plumage while dancing between fertility symbols. In ritual, human actors leave behind the mundane boundaries of life and cross a threshold into a place charged with cosmic power. Such religious rituals are not “entertainment” such as presented to tourists in folkloric reenactment of traditional dances. Rituals suffused with faith become pathways to cosmic awareness.

For instance, it is costly to human labor to destroy the first fruits from flock and field but ritual sacrifice underscores that without respectful treatment of the fertile cycles of both moon and woman, the human species would be extinguished. By summoning human emotions, religious ceremonies indelibly impress proscribed behavior upon collective and individual psyches. Thankfully, most religions have a failsafe escape to distinguish “good” religion from “bad” religion and authentic prophets from the false ones. I suggest that civilizationalists study religion not only in terms of doctrine but also for ritual.

To fully grasp analogical thinking, however, civilizationalists must not forget that it is analogical, neither literal nor scientific. When the ancient Greeks said that Apollo...
carried the sun in his chariot across the sky, they spoke in analogy. It would be a grave disservice to Greek civilization to interpret this myth literally, as if the Greeks believed in a superman in the sky with super-horses carrying a cargo of the sun. The analogy served instead to compare the rising of the sun to the king riding in a chariot among his subjects.

**Earth Religion and Book Religion**

Let us turn to the changing shape of religion. For most of pre-literate human history, the earth itself was the conduit for religious linkage with the Other. A glorious sunset, a flashing comet, an uncanny flood could manifest the Other. With the invention of writing, however, religious linkages were mediated by the scripture. This process invokes Thomas Berry’s distinction between “Book Religion,” and “Earth Religion.”

Book Religion did not destroy the earlier Earth Religion, but rather subsumed and codified it. No longer was it necessary for each individual to “feel” the Other in the sight of glorious nature: it would suffice to recapture the experience of someone else who had had that religious experience before putting it in writing. Book Religion, I stress, required the invention of faith, which is the acceptance of a religious truth based on trust for the one providing testimony about religious experience. When scripture asserts, “the heavens proclaim the glory of God (Ps. 19:1),” faith does not require the believer to gaze at the nighttime sky, but only to recognize that the psalmist had been inspired when he did. Faith is placed in the word of the writer. Scripture thus relieved the individual of personally having to undergo each and every religious experience because, as long as someone had written down a personal epiphany, others could read about it and accept it as true.

Faith expansion created the possibilities for world religions. Just as writing provided a guide to civilized behavior in commerce and in war, scripture did the same for religion. Religious texts were read by the few and ritually performed by the many. Writing did not create religion’s power: it diffused it. Religion continued as handmaiden to science. The accurate glyphs of the Mayan calendar came from analogical thinking as did the Babylonian cuneiform tablets that set up basic commandments for a society governed by law.

Writing provided civilization with increasing specialization by members of society, and similarly Book Religion promoted the rise of specialized classes of prophets and priests. It was these elites who now shaped analogical thinking by composing scriptures and regulating rituals. The individualized and immediate experience in Earth Religion was consequently to be filtered through the written word, thus creating a new religious moment.
While the religious elites' control produced an ever-refined commentary on humanity, they could also censure spontaneous religious experience. If direct Earth Religion experiences clashed with the written word as interpreted by the elites, authenticity could be questioned and the self-styled prophet might be cast out as a heretic, thus preserving the status quo. Religious power was moved away from personal saintliness and deposited instead in the hands of scribes codifying how scripture regulated life.

Toynbee analyzed the symbiosis of religion and civilization extensively. He understood that scriptures validated the authority of the state grown large enough to become an empire. The hegemonic elites within such developed political structures could insulate their self-interests in religious language. Those familiar with the civilizational analysis of later writers like Immanuel Wallerstein and Jared Diamond will have to work a bit harder to apply these approaches to religion. Nonetheless, I believe that any analytical approach useful to study civilization can be applied to religion.

The interaction of religion and state is sometimes viewed cynically as manipulation. But this kind of reductionism does not account for how populations in the past accepted the merging of interests of religion and politics. We must also recognize that rulers really did believe that God had chosen them to defend faith and nation. The Hebrew King David, for instance, fought against the reappearance of regional "hill shrines" that constituted the Earth Religion of the conquered non-Jews of his kingdom. His pursuit of religious purity conveniently increased his monarchical power, but his stated intention was to serve God. Analysis of his rule cannot discard his religious sincerity. Later, Christianity would repeat the same validation of authority when as the official state religion it fought "paganism," a term for persons outside the reach of scripture, the paganus, i.e. the "rustic." These are examples of how literate elites use Book Religion to serve interests of state. But such manipulation of interests does not automatically negate the power of the religious commitment.

Moreover, it is not inevitable that Book Religion surrenders to politics. Religious history offers instances wherein reformers literally "threw the book" against the reigning elites. The reformers called for revolutions against those who claimed authority over the scriptures, rather than against the scriptures themselves. The Hebrew prophets were forever denouncing evil kings for having abandoned God's word. Christianity and Islam have done much the same against unholy Christian and Muslim rulers. Such prophetic dissent against scripture sometimes produces "new religions." Christians and Muslims, for instance, hold to the same basic bible of the Hebrew experience, but invoke new forms of interpretation proclaimed by Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad. The Protestant Reformation presented itself not as a radical divergence from Christianity, but as a "fulfillment" of previous forms. Hinduism and Buddhism have a similar fulfillment premise that has left a common
faith in *karma* despite dissent in other doctrines. In sum, religion can shift its shape from “state supporting” to “state destroying.”

From Matt Melko’s concept of how conflict in war can be creative for civilization, we can learn how heresy feeds faith. If civilizations overrun by barbarians will nonetheless prevail, we should not be surprised to find that religion persists or even grows stronger after attack and may rise purified out of the mud of corruption. Let us call the capacity of religion to shift its shape as “*religious revitalization*.” Revitalized religion rejects stale nostrums and breathes immediate and personalized religious experience into a dying institutional corpse. The new message may be clothed by visions, new revelation, or some other mystical and unmediated contact with the Other. But in all instances, it projects the human situation striving to escape contradictions. Just as body and soul must be joined to have life, reason and emotion must be blended as analogues for reality not yet fully understood.

It is difficult to develop this appreciation for analogical thinking without having simultaneously to reject the Enlightenment notion that pure rationalism is the superior mode of knowing. In that Enlightenment paradigm, myth is falsehood and religion is superstition; for the rationalist, belief is the opposite of certitude and science is the only source of reliable knowledge. I maintain, however, that through most of the human experience, religion with its metaphysics of hope and love has characterized the moral discourse of societies. One is free, obviously, to live a life that rejects religious belief: however, projecting one’s own frame of mind upon the past is a poor departure point for understanding history. The rationalist bent and the scientific method are after all only recent creations. If we were to consider “normal” in terms of the longest continuing practice by the majority of people human history, I believe it can be said that analogical thinking represents the normal mode of human communication for our species. Primordial to our human being, it has a special place in civilizational studies.

**Analogical Thinking and the Scientific Method**

I want to propose here that religion’s protean nature enables it to escape the cage constructed by rationalism, secularism and *Realpolitik*. After religion suffers defeat on the battlefields of cultural or social hegemony, it sometimes remerges with new energy. Religion may become important at crucial moments in history because it provides new paradigms necessary to improve the human situation and to remedy the imperfections of civilization. The rumors of the “death of God” are often greatly exaggerated.

The presumed eclipse of religion recalls the dispute between Sigmund Freud and Carl G. Jung. Freud insisted that psychological health consisted of eliminating emotion from reasoned behavior. Jung differed, saying that psychological maturity required...
the personality to integrate emotion and reason. Rather than repressing the trauma of emotional ups and downs of love and hate, Jung said such deep-seated non-rationalized feelings were part of humanity’s collective memory. Without experience of these emotional journeys, said Jung, an individual would not function socially.27

Examples of Religion at Certain “Break Moments” of Civilization

While there are undeniable advantages in the acquisition of scientific method as humanity’s “second language,” if you will, it can never completely replace religion’s analogical thinking that links together emotions, normative behavior and morality. History provides examples of how the humanizing impact of analogical thinking has emerged at break moments in civilization to restore what the scientific method has taken away. Allow me to conclude with three examples from three different centuries to frame my argument in civilizational terms.

Latin America, the Lost Tribes of Israel and the Apostle Thomas.

In 1607, the Spanish Dominican missionary priest, Gregorio García Baeza, (1554- id., 1627) published in Mexico City his Origin of the Indians of the New World, dismissing the suggestion that the Native Americans were survivors of Plato’s Atlantis because, as he wrote, navigational science before Columbus was incapable of a trans-Atlantic sailing. Nonetheless, Garcia admitted to similarities between religions of the natives and rituals of the Hebrew religion in the Bible, such as ritual sacrifice of a lamb each spring. Within a score of years, the Sephardic adventurer, Antonio de Montezinos, claimed he had found a Brazilian tribe that lived by Jewish customs. Menasseh Ben Israel [Manoel Dias Soeiro] (1604 – November 20, 1657), an erudite Portuguese rabbi in Dutch exile, was so impressed with this comparison that he had found a Brazilian tribe that lived by Jewish customs. Menasseh Ben Israel [Manoel Dias Soeiro] (1604 – November 20, 1657), an erudite Portuguese rabbi in Dutch exile, was so impressed with this comparison that he had found a Brazilian tribe that lived by Jewish customs. Menasseh Ben Israel [Manoel Dias Soeiro] (1604 – November 20, 1657), an erudite Portuguese rabbi in Dutch exile, was so impressed with this comparison that he had found a Brazilian tribe that lived by Jewish customs. Menasseh Ben Israel [Manoel Dias Soeiro] (1604 – November 20, 1657), an erudite Portuguese rabbi in Dutch exile, was so impressed with this comparison that he had found a Brazilian tribe that lived by Jewish customs. Although the similarities of native religion with Hebrew practices had been soberly analyzed by Garcia based on meticulous reading of the early Spanish chronicles, Menasseh Ben Israel traveled beyond simple statement of fact in suggesting that Hebrew survival in Brazil was a sign of the eventual restoration of the state of Israel.

Catholics in Baroque Brazil and Mexico used a similar mixture of observational science and analogical thinking. No longer was the issue about Jewish comparisons but rather the Catholic ones. To overcome García’s fact-based observation about navigational science, the new theories invoked Cabral’s “accident” of landing in Brazil while trying to sail southward around Africa. Instead of all Ten Tribes coming to the New World to make Native Americans into Jews, the new theory introduced the Christian apostle, St. Thomas, who besides his fame for doubting was also noted for traveling to remote places to baptize in Jesus’ name.
This apostolic preaching in the Americas, it was said, explained why native symbols were in the shape of crosses, that triangles suggested knowledge of the Trinity and feminine images represented the Virgin Mary. Scholars like the Mexican Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700) collected artifacts from Aztec archaeological sites to prove the theory. The poet, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695), composed lyrical dramas in verse that made Aztec human sacrifice a remnant of memory from St. Thomas’ preaching on the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Sor Juana romanticized the Aztec and Mayan civilizations into the equivalents for the Americas of what the Egyptian and Ancient Greek civilizations were for Europe.

Finally, in 1794 when the world was about to step into the Napoleonic period and Latin America was soon to be unhitched from the Spanish Empire, Fray José Servando Teresa de Mier (1765-1827) delivered a synthesis of all these theories in a famous sermon in the Cathedral of Guadalupe. Like Menasseh Ben Israel before him, Fray Servando reached into religious codes to justify his political critiques of the existing civilization and propose something new.  

As D.A. Brading observes, this sermon provided justification for Mexican political independence. Spaniards in the time of Columbus had secured a papal right to dominion over the Americas as compensation for the costs incurred in bringing Christianity to the natives. But, argued Meir, the archeological evidence proved that Christianity had arrived in Mexico long before the Spaniards. Since the only justification for Spanish rule was the missionary role, when the need for evangelization disappeared he reasoned, so did Spain’s imperial claims. Moreover, the Enlightenment at the time was intent upon making the white people of Western Europe the measure of humankind’s progress. Thus, the Mexican’s sermon became a statement in analogical language of opposition to the racial theories of European rationalism.

**Ghost Dance.** The Ghost Dance among North American Native Peoples in the last decade of the 19th Century is an example of religious revitalization. The Ghost Dance promised its participants that this new religious belief and ritual would unite the factious tribes, restore the buffalo and usher in a messianic peace and prosperity. The Ghost Dance was a religious innovation that synthesized various tribal beliefs with some concepts taken from Christianity. We may speculate, for instance, that the Ghost Shirts believed to ensure invulnerability from bullets were variations of the “endowment robes” found in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where protection against sin is intended.

Washington’s Bureau of Indian Affairs first ridiculed and then feared the Ghost Dance. I wish to suggest here that they simply misunderstood analogical language. The belief and the ritual were not literal in the sense that they mobilized the dancers for a war against the whites. Rather they prepared the dancers for a millenarian
moment in which racial hostilities would cease and new native unity would be achieved.

**Gandhi and Civil Disobedience.** My third example is Mohandas Gandhi’s (1869-1948) application of Hindu *ahimsa* as practiced within Jainism and made into a modern tool of political transformation. Just as non-violence towards all created things required the Jains to abstain from killing any animals for meat in order to achieve spiritualized peace with nature, Gandhi analogized that a just political order would be restored by non-violently confronting structural violence with non-participation. While *ahimsa* had been a principle of Indian religion for centuries, Gandhi made it political by employing analogical thinking. He linked this religious motivation to the traditional political tactic of boycott. The argument I make here is that the religious analogy with *ahimsa* transformed a dietary practice into a revolutionary political tool and gave the boycott a spiritual meaning. Separate, neither the religious practice nor the political practice would have had the same decolonizing effect on civilization: together, they ushered in the end of British colonialism.

**Conclusions**

This presentation has reviewed how religion has been a shape shifter for much of the human experience. Religion existed before civilization and even if civilization were to end by nuclear explosion, the crash of the world’s financial system or the cataclysm of global warming, religion and humanity could survive. Going beyond the merely factual and scientific, religion adds a moral dimension to truth and grounds human experience in ways not generally accessible to ordinary analytical tools. Religious analogies are not “fairytales” but non-scientific statements of truth. In one sense, by combining behavioral motivation with communitarian emotions, a particular religious truth becomes more humanly true than any scientific statement could ever be.

But what does this tell us about the future of religion and civilization? Allow me to conclude with some speculation. I consider the most likely “new front” for religious innovation to be the environment. Faced with the exploitation and destruction of the planet being conducted by unfettered enterprise, ecological preservation has become a moral issue for civilization. Until now, “going green” has generally been cast as a stylish fad of elites whose concern for endangered species somehow stands in the way of business, jobs and capitalism. It would not be difficult to find disdainful references from noise radio about “the tree huggers.” But what if those “tree huggers” presented themselves instead as “God-lovers”? Such trends are already discernable and, I submit, have the potential of influencing civilization. The one thing you cannot do to a shape-shifter is keep it in a cage: it will slip through the bars. For religion, as for
civilization, there are no bars to its ceaseless liberation of humanity’s indomitable spirit.

ENDNOTES

1 This manuscript was developed from the Keynote Address presented at the Annual Conference of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations: June 15, 2010, Brigham Young University: Provo, Utah.

2 See the extensive development of such definitions on the ISCSC website: http://www.wmich.edu/iscsc/civilization.html#early-definitions


6 This is the phenomenon of “secularization” that is generally considered to be irreversible in many sources as different in tone as Karl Marx, Max Weber, the Huxleys, and the contemporary Christopher Hitchens.


This example is not original with me. See Nor Hall (1980, *The Moon and the Virgin: Reflections on the Archetypal Feminine.* San Francisco: Harper and Row).

Desire came upon that One in the beginning/that was the first seed of mind. /Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom/ found the bond of existence and non-existence. (Translation by Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda – Anthology.* Penguin: 1981)

See the Summa Theologiae, I, q. 3, a. 4 for the definition of *ipse esse subsistens.*

This argument of metaphysics was incorporated by medieval scholars of the Abrahamic religions as one of the proofs for the existence of God. Thomas Aquinas provides one of the most accessible of these adaptations in the Summa Theologiae, I, q. 2, a. 3.


This is the approach of Rudolph Otto in his classic 1923 work, *The Idea of the Holy.*

For a fuller application of these notions to civilizational theory, see my 2003 articles. “Earth Religions and Book Religions: The Religious Door to Civilizational Encounter.” *Comparative Civilizations Review* 48 (Spring 2003) 65-82. First of two parts. and “Earth Religions and Book Religions: Baroque Catholicism as Openness to Earth Religions.” *Comparative Civilizations Review* 49 (Fall 2003) 54-75. Second of two parts.


discussed throughout by Immanuel Wallerstein. World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction. (2004. Durham: Duke University Press), although little attention is given to religions as pre-capitalist world systems. See also, Jared Diamond (1999, New York: W. W. Norton and Company) “From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy,” pp. 265-292. The latter authors do not develop the symbiosis with religion that is found in Toynbee, but their concept of social dynamics can be applied to this current subject.

24 The prophet Elijah was specific in his denunciations of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. See I Kings: 19-21.


28 The book was originally written in Hebrew (transliterated as Mikveh Israel) and followed by a Latin edition (Spes Israelis) issued in 1648. The greatest impact was produced by the English translation, published in 1650 in London as “The Hope of Israel.”


30 Other sources that repeated these ideas during the lifetime of Servando de Mier include: History of Mexico by Clavigero (2 Vols.), 1st English edition in 1787, 2nd in 1807, translated by Charlie Cullen; A Star in the West, by E. Boudinot, 1816; Spanish Colonies, by William Walton, 1810; Researches in Mexico, by A. De Humboldt, translated into English by H. M. Williams, 1814; History of America, by Herrera, 1725; A View of S. America and Mexico, by Niles, 1826; Spanish America, by R. H. Bonnycastle, 1818; European Settlements in America, by Burks, 1808; Bullock's Mexico, 1824; Researches on America, by James H. McCullah, 1817; Archaeologia Americana, 1820; Notes on Mexico, by Poinsett, 1825; The American Geography, by Jedidiah Morse, 1789; History of the American Indians, by James Adair, 1775; View of the Hebrews, by Ethan Smith, 2nd Ed., 1825; The Wonders of Nature and Providence, by Josiah Priest, 1824.