

Introduction

In *A Secular Age*, Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor asks, "Why was it virtually impossible *not* to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable?"¹

We call this phenomenon "secularism" or "secularization." It means that among North Atlantic and Mediterranean civilizations, religious belief and authority practically vanished as guides for organizing society, for promoting material well-being, for educating the young, for exploring philosophy, and for speaking about ethical theory and moral behaviors.



The terms *secular* and *religious* are often used to define particular groups and movements. Yet within particular groups and movements there is a broad range of concerns, both secular and religious. For some, to be secular means to explicitly reject all religious belief as just illusion; for others it means just ignoring religion as irrelevant to real life and not worth the bother; for still others it means tolerating and even respecting religion but not participating in one. As one commentator puts it, "... the culture as a whole has become steadily more disengaged from organized faith. There is still a religious middle today, but it isn't institutionally Judeo-Christian in the way it was in 1945. Instead, it's defined by nondenominational ministries, 'spiritual but not religious' pieties and ancient heresies re-invented as self-help."²

Religions themselves encompass different attitudes. For some, religion is the very atmosphere they breathe. They believe that God creates everything, holds everything in existence, governs the workings of the universe, guides the believer in everyday decisions, and awaits the believer in eternal life after death. They pray in solitude and they pray with others. Considering themselves sent by God, they reach out with a love they regard as God's own love for their neighbor. For others, religion is just a useful myth to help people get along. They participate in their religion not because it says anything true about reality but because it gives people comfort, assurance, and moral guidance, which are important for raising children. They seldom wonder about the source and destiny of everything, or about divine action in human history, or about

the unlimited nature of their own wonder and awe. It may never have occurred to them that “there’s more to *everything* than meets the eye.”

I suppose that most of us, in North America at least, fall between these extremes. On the moderately religious side are people who observe religious practices and accept all the social engagements that come with sharing a religion with others. But for them, “believing is belonging.” It is *because* they belong to Religion X that they believe what Religion X teaches—when logically you’d think the believing would come first and guide one to choose which religion to belong to. Their personal engagement with God is occasional, formal, and distant. They recite a creed as they would a loyalty oath, without any shudder that the words may actually be true.

Also on the moderately religious side are people for whom God is a creator whose main concern is that we live moral lives, and whose main activity is an occasional help in answer to prayer. A recent study of American teenagers showed that their faith is mostly a “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.”³ That is, God wants us to be good (Moralistic); God heals our sinfulness (Therapeutic); God is *one* person (vs “trinity”) who watches from a distance as history unfolds (“Deism”).

On the moderately secular side are people who call themselves “spiritual but not religious” (20 percent of Americans, by one estimate).⁴ They sense something inside. They long for a fullness, a harmony in their lives. Standing in a lush forest, they listen, as it were, to hear what its beauty is trying to say. On a moonless night, they stare in awe at the starry universe overhead. They weep with joy at the birth of their child. But they find little guidance about such spiritual experiences from any religion.

What happened? Why are there such different views about secularity and religion? More importantly, what parts of secularization are genuine gains and what parts are genuine losses? Among the gains, educated people on both sides have driven out many naive intrusions of religion into secular affairs. Among the losses, many legacies of religious ancestors whose desires and visions were beneficial for society have been abandoned. Also, in our rush to embrace the secular sense of *mastery* over our lives, conversations about the *mystery* of our lives have waned. In any case, it is no easy job to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. After all, by what criteria do we name anything a gain or a loss? Secular criteria? Religious criteria?

Historical Developments of What the “World” Is.

If Taylor is correct, that the idea of secularism appeared in Western society only about 500 years ago, we can better understand our current

secular/religious culture if we trace its history. One important thread running through the history of any religion is how people envisioned the *world*—the “everything” that they ever saw personally, or believed on the word of others, or deduced from some principles, or inferred from analogies, or simply imagined, based on stories passed down through their cultures.⁵

1. An Enchanted World

In primitive societies, people *imagine* the world as full of spirits. Indeed, imagination is the dominant way they think about anything. These spirits are invisible but nonetheless imagined as dwelling in specific locations, at specific times, and as active in all ordinary affairs. People give them names; worship some and avoid others. Certain places and times are designated as sacred—the shrines and the holy days characterized by more intense activity by the spirits. Certain actions bring good luck and others are taboo. The world itself is an enchanted place, and there is no other, higher place. Ancient Egyptian kings and Roman emperors were regarded as gods.⁶ These images of spirits in the world appear in most primitive art and literature, not only in ancient times but even among primitive societies and many children in our own time. There simply is no meaningful distinction between secular and sacred.

In an enchanted world, the notion of duty mainly regards pleasing or placating the spiritual forces that run the universe. There is little sense of personal responsibility or of a shared responsibility to improve life “on our own,” as it were. Human efforts had little guarantee; ultimately, everything is ruled by fate or the fickle gods.

This instinct is not as strange as it might seem. In the last 500 years, the people of Tahiti and the Americas encountered by European explorers lived totally in this world of enchanting spirits. Even today, many self-proclaimed worldly-wise people have a rather spontaneous assumption that certain actions bring good fortune and others bring bad. Some carry charms and cross their fingers for luck. Children wonder what happens if they step on a sidewalk crack. The superstitious are extra careful on Friday the 13th. Religions tolerate the belief that touching the relics of holy men and women will magically sanctify you. In deep forests, we feel enchanted by arboreal spirits. We feel the presence of a specter hovering over a spot where a loved one died; we must be quiet.

2. An Ordered World

Between 1000 and 300 BCE, two world views emerged in many cultures that replaced the Enchanted World with an Ordered World. As Hebrews embraced monotheism, and as Greeks explored the mind, the “world” became regarded as ordered under a single principle, governance, plan,

or power. Where in an Enchanted World each thing is just happenstance, luck and randomness, in an Ordered World, everything is connected within a universal, total framework.

By the 800s BCE, many Hebrews had abandoned beliefs in many gods with their god special to them and embraced the idea there is only one God, the creator and governor of everything: "Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your being and with all your might."⁷ The abandonment of many gods dis-enchanted many special places, times, and actions. In its place was a realization that the entire familiar world is in the hands of a single, unimaginable and all powerful divine creator, whose presence could be approached in the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem.

Among Greek cultures in the 400s BCE, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle promoted the idea of a *Universal Intelligence*. This was not just another god tied to various human times and places but a single, spiritual mind, transcending time and space, and governing the entire world. This Universal Intelligence comprised Ideas such as Justice, Goodness, and Beauty. These Greeks posed questions about the human mind that established the discipline of philosophy that continues today.

Probably the most significant result affecting those cultures that moved beyond the Enchanted World into an Ordered World was the realization that human fortunes depend not on fickle, imaginary spirits but on how we personally order our lives—whether by obeying the commands of the Lord God or by following the dictates of our intelligence. In other words, the world is largely our responsibility. Although some disasters are unavoidably caused by nature, we humans bear responsibility for many others. However, while we are responsible for our lives, we are also free to shun that responsibility. Where people of an Enchanted World imagine their achievements and disasters as no more than the same mess of good and bad luck experienced by their ancestors and anticipated in all generations to come, people of an Ordered World imagine achievements and disasters as marking progress and decline in a forward movement of all history for which we are responsible.

Another less noticed but equally important factor is that in both the Hebrew and Greek developments the idea emerged that things can be true even though impossible to imagine. It seems like common sense to expect that if something exists, it must be somewhere. But the Hebrews and Greeks believed that for something to *be*, it need not *be somewhere* or *at some time*. Thus, there was a deep conviction that there really is an order that is not tied to specific places and times. Despite our religious words of heaven *above* and of a life *after* life, there is an order of reality

that is not locatable in space and time, yet one that encompasses and governs everything in our space and time.

For the Greeks, this order is intellectual. They refer to it as *divine*. It encompasses the physical and governs ordinary space and time in many ways. It cannot be pictured, but it can be accepted as true that some higher order governs ordinary cause and effect in earthly life. It is higher not as a roof is higher than a floor but as the law of gravity is higher than a falling apple. It is higher as our careful reasoning is higher than our spontaneous reactions. The higher level gives direction to operations on the lower level. Events at the lower level are material and visible, but events at the higher are not.

For the Hebrews, in contrast, this higher order is fully personal. There is God, who created everything, whose own will is what governs ordinary cause and effect in earthly life, including the very space and time in which all earthly beings exist. Hence God alone, as fully divine, is beyond space and time. Among Christians, St. Paul ridiculed people who discussed what sort of body people would have in the resurrected life. To him, the question was stupid, since the heavenly is "beyond all knowledge" and "infinitely more than we can ask or imagine."⁸

Here, then, in the Ordered World we find an awareness of two realms of "everything": A human, ordered realm of space-time, and a divine, ordering realm that encompasses and orders space-time. This is not a split between the human and the divine. It is better described as an active presence of the divine in the human. This world view has hardly vanished. We find it a constant theme among poets such as Gerard Manly Hopkins: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. . . . There lives the dearest freshness deep down things."⁹

3. A Theocratic World

The next major development of the relation between divine and human affairs produced a long and miserable alienation between the two.

The Dark Ages

The historical setting for this alienation can be found in establishment of the Christian religion as a dominant cultural force in Europe and parts of the Middle East. Beginning with Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 CE), which protected and even promoted Christian worship, significant elements of political authority were assumed by bishops. The clergy became an educated class responsible for administering much of the everyday affairs of local communities. The practical world was increasingly run by men conferred with sacred orders. The notion of individual responsibility shrunk to the single virtue of obedience to

religious authority. Invention was suspect. "Home" was in the unchanging, eternal Church. We call such a governing social order a *theocracy*.

What followed was a long period of social instability, minimal education, and stagnated creativity. It has been referred to as "Christendom," which depicts a political order based on Christian belief. It has also been referred to as the "Dark Ages," which depicts a decaying cultural order in which the Ordered World gave way to a Theocratic World in which God was easily accessible through certain ritualistic practices and God's will was easily accessible through the word of religious authorities. Images of God were dominated by views of reward and punishment drawn from secular economics and law. Cultures familiar with philosophy and theology disappeared. The divine order was less a present, mysterious dimension of all ordinary affairs and more a mindless submission to religious authorities and happy reward to be enjoyed only after we die.

A Light Dawns

This contraction of Christian faith into religious observances and blind faith in authorities began with the decline of the Roman Empire in the 400s and did not hit bottom until the 1000s. At that time, newly emerging Latin translations of the Greek works of Plato and Aristotle became available for philosophers and theologians among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions. Greek philosophic thought about logic and truth now began to rise above the highly imaginal and symbolic worldviews previously embedded in sacred writings and in the word of religious authorities. Thus, older convictions were recovered that not everything can be imagined and that the driving energies of the universe were ultimately spiritual and unbound by time, not material and time-bound.

The Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), set an orderly intellectual foundation for the Christian faith that lasted well into the late 1900s. He relied on Aristotle's philosophical concepts and logical methods to recover profound dimensions of Christian beliefs. With this approach, he also eliminated hundreds of apparent contradictions among biblical passages and official church documents.¹⁰ Regarding questions about of God, he brought back into theology the teaching that we cannot explain anything about God without using some sort of secular analogy. We cannot think, let alone speak, about the divine without imagining a place and a time. So we talk of heaven as *up* and *after*, but these are only analogies that reveal little about divine realities unbound by space and time. Just as cats live in a house with no grasp whatsoever of how thoroughly technologies define their lives, so we humans live in a divine order with no possibility of grasping how thoroughly its meanings

penetrate our lives. But—and it's a crucial *but*—we *can* grasp it if *the divine reveals it*. Here, Aquinas affirmed that Christians can assent to revealed truths—such as that God truly comes to humans: God comes to secular history in the person of Jesus the Nazarene, and God comes to ordinary hearts in a Holy Spirit of love.¹¹

4. A Secular World

Still, these achievements in philosophy and theology that had the potential to integrate the secular and the religious worlds would take several centuries to penetrate the lives of ordinary people. Beginning in the 16th century, three historical movements impeded an overall progress toward a unity of faith and secular affairs: the Protestant Reformation, the Wars of Religion, and the Enlightenment. Taken together, they effectively replaced religion as a force for human harmony and happiness. Here is where the word *secular* became distinct from and opposed to *sacred*.

Protestant Reformation

For about 1,200 years, Western Christianity thought of itself as the "catholic" (universal) religion. Then, in the 1500s a split occurred between Christians who proposed reforms and Christians who maintained the status quo. Reformers stressed the rights of individuals and the primacy of conscience over religious authorities. They were named *Protestants* because they protested against the idea that religious authorities had the last word on what the Bible means, on how one should live and worship, and on the practice of selling the "indulgences" of God's forgiveness.¹² Yet even these protesters, feeling a new power in protesting, began protesting among themselves, with the result of numerous protestant denominations. The meaning of *catholic* was soon understood not as the universal needs and desires of all humans but as the group of those Christians with allegiances mainly to Rome who did not protest. The unity of the Christian faith became splintered into mutually-suspicious communities.

Religious Wars.

From the mid-1500s and continuing for almost 100 years, there were three major wars between Christians: (1) Protestant Huguenots vs. Catholics in France (36 yrs); (2) Spanish Catholics vs. members of the Church of England (21 yrs); (3) German Lutherans vs. Catholics (30 yrs).¹³ The very idea of religion as a haven of truth and an indispensable bond of a social order became increasingly discredited—an attitude firmly rooted in most Western cultures today.

Enlightenment

A third threat to an integration of religious faith and secular affairs came with discoveries of new capacities of the human mind that apparently need no divine help. Beginning in the 1600s the Enlightenment promoted human reason—sometimes as a test of religious beliefs and sometimes as their replacement.

The **modern science** that we take for granted today was a complete innovation at the time. Rather than explain things as caused by God, it explained them by appeals to observable evidence. Science now explains the motion of the planets (Copernicus; d. 1543), the emergence of biological species (Darwin; d. 1882), and the sources of our thoughts (Freud; d. 1939). Empirical methods based on evidence became a normal way of thinking.

In a **political philosophy** emerging in the 1800s, Karl Marx declared religion to be “the opium of the people” that numbed them to the many ways they are oppressed by capitalists. Friedrich Nietzsche proposed that everyone naturally desires power, and that religion is only an invention of the powerless to canonize their humbled state as a way to take an “imaginary revenge” against those dedicated to the power of self-affirmation and pride. Critical-mindedness about religion became a normal way of thinking among sociologists and economists.¹⁴

German scholars developed the techniques of **critical history** by which they aimed to replace biblical stories about the past with explanations based on evidence. Historical consciousness became fundamental for historians. Histories of religions written for promotional purposes were gradually displaced in favor of histories written to establish what actually happened, some of which brought shock and shame to believers.

In the 1800s, the sacred scriptures of all religions came under the scrutiny of **critical hermeneutics** which treated them with the same rules for interpretation as they would any secular text.¹⁵ An author-engagement hermeneutics became a standard among scholars. Long-standing interpretations of biblical texts based on inspiration were revealed as being far from and sometimes even opposed to what the authors had in mind.

Reactions

By the 1900s, it was common to find extreme reactions to these three developments. Far on the secular side were militant atheists who attacked all religion as nonsense,¹⁶ and non-militant secularists who

simply dismissed questions about God as irrelevant. Far on the religious side were equally militant dogmatists who insisted on literal interpretations of biblical accounts, on blind acceptance of pronouncements by church authorities, and on a *fideism* that relied on religious faith to the exclusion of deeper insights into the human condition provided by psychology, historical studies, and philosophy.

In short, secular concerns took over major realms of life formerly dominated by the Church and religions in general. The “world” had become a place of tension between reason and faith, between science and religion, between critical scholarship and pious legend, between secularism and fideism.

5. A Self-Transcending World

These arguments continue today. But are we doomed to argue forever about the tension between the secular and the sacred? Perhaps not.

In the mid-1800s, there appeared a number of philosophical theories bent on overcoming the narrow emphasis on *reason* as the major way people deal with life.¹⁷ These were not religiously-motivated attacks against reason; they were independent philosophical concerns about what reason can and cannot do, along with proposals regarding other aspects of human consciousness:

Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860) investigated the role played by human *will* in our knowledge of things-in-themselves.

Sören Kierkegaard (d. 1855) examined *faith*.

John Henry Newman (d. 1890) examined *conscience* and the way the mind *assents* to any truth.

Pragmatists (late 19th century) focused on *decision-making*.

Personalists (early 20th century) highlighted *intersubjectivity*.

Logical Positivists (mid 1900s) focused on what humans can *verify*.

Mircea Eliade (d. 1986) traced how *symbols* function in history.

These theories about the many kinds of events in human consciousness strongly affected religious and secular disciplines alike. They affected psychologists such as Abraham Maslow (d. 1970), historians such as Eric Voegelin (d. 1985), theologians such as Paul Tillich (d. 1965) and Karl Rahner (d. 1984), and philosophers such as Bernard Lonergan (d. 1984), and Paul Ricoeur (d. 2005). From their different perspectives, these and many others sought to develop a common ground that incorporated reason within larger perspectives that included the various dimensions listed above. Yet in various degrees they share a common notion about being human:

To be fully human is to be self-transcending.

This notion retrieves the central idea of an Ordered World inasmuch as it has the clear implication that there is an objective order that *transcends* the merely secular. Voegelin explains great historical developments as a search for meaning, driven by a conviction that there exists a “beyond” toward which we are all “pulled.”¹⁸ Tillich finds in all humans an “ultimate concern.”¹⁹ Rahner finds in each person a “supernatural existential”—a directly experienced capacity for the divine.²⁰ Lonergan identifies five levels of consciousness by which we transcend ourselves and engage whatever is real, both natural and supernatural: being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and in love—including being in love with God.²¹

These developments represent a growing awareness of the importance of “openness” in one’s outlook. They bridge the apparent gaps between reason and faith, science and religion, critical scholarship and pious legend. This bridge is our intrinsic openness to complete beauty, complete understanding, complete truth, complete goodness, and complete love.



What Happens at the Bridge?

The bridge between secular and religious consciousness is a two-way street. If a “secularized”

woman is going to be thoroughly secular, she needs to take seriously the methods of science and scholarship, which refuse to exclude any data that may be relevant to understanding reality. A key part of that data is her personal experience of wanting to understand more, to live in reality rather than myth, to do not only the good but also the better, and to love more deeply from her heart and more widely in her worlds. If these desires are some form of love, then to be a fully open person she needs to ask herself, “With whom, then, am I in love?” This is a question of God.²²

Crossing the bridge from the other direction, if a “religious” man is to be thoroughly religious, he needs to take seriously the divine gifts of intelligence, of truth-seeking, of moral desire, and of a love he did not create but rather discovered in his heart. He needs a spirituality that is *open* at all levels of his spirit—not only in imagination and feeling but also in his intellectual pursuits and his responsibility for life around him. He

needs to rely on the accomplishments of modern science to understand the natural world. He needs to rely on modern scholarship to understand the developments of both the secular world and of his own religious tradition, especially newly-emerging insights into what the authors of the Bible and Quran really meant and what actually happened in the history of his own religion. He needs to draw on views of secular philosophers about what makes any authority legitimate—including the authority of religious leaders. He needs to pay attention to what secular thinkers are saying about social justice, gender equality, end-of-life care, and preemptive war. And he needs to devise ways to bring the word of God to this actual, emerging “world,” not some world that has long disappeared or that exists only in people’s fantasies.

Here, at the bridge, the woman and man meet. They reveal to one another their deeper desires to live in self-transcending ways. They welcome one another’s perspectives. They appreciate any help they can get in uncovering their oversights. They cherish their common desire to be completely open in a world that is ever alluring and mysterious. They each reject a *secularism* that rejects religion altogether, but accept *secularizing* initiatives that can complement religious beliefs in ways better able to meet newly emerging problems. They each recognize *sacralized* dimensions of every culture while discerning what is, or is not, *truly sacred*. What happens at the bridge is not necessarily a conversion, but it is a discovery that both the secular and the sacred rely on people being self-transcendent. Upon this discovery, they may well welcome the company in pursuing it together.

Secularism Today

So where are we? Well, of course, we’re in the middle of many things moving forward simultaneously. There are plenty of people around who live in one of the first four worlds we described above—the enchanted, the ordered, the theocratic, and the secular. There is a growing number who, having learned about the history of secularism and having discovered at least the question of God in their hearts, realize that they have a personal responsibility to be completely open. And there is a growing number who, being firmly rooted in faith, will not close themselves to any questions from science or scholarship or philosophy about what is truly beautiful, what makes more sense, what is really so, what is truly better, and what enriches their lives by love. They assume that being open is among the highest of human achievements and the deepest of human needs. They realize that their efforts to be open will be opposed by individuals and cultures that prefer, even promote, being

closed. So they accept the reality that the self-transcending world is ever a world struggling to overcome closedness with openness.

Perhaps you have noticed your own hope to live out this struggle as one of the open persons.

1 Taylor, Charles, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2007), p. 25.

2 Ross Douthat, "The Promise and Peril of Pope Francis," *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 2013, SR 12.

3 See *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2005). Information on this work is taken from "Teen Spirit," a review by Tom Beaudoin of Kenda Creasy Dean's *Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (*America magazine*, Nov 1, 2010) p. 27.

4 It is estimated that about one fifth of Americans describe themselves as "spiritual but not religious." See, in Doc Sharing, "Spiritual but not Religious." An Internet search for this phrase gives further comments on the phenomenon.

5 Much of this historical account is drawn from Bernard Lonergan, "Sacralization and Secularization," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, volume 17 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 259-281. (Originally delivered in November 1973) Additional insights were taken from Larry Shiner, "Gogarten and the Tasks of a Theology of Secularization," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 36/2 (June 1968) 99-108. This may be accessed at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1462010>, but be advised that this site is available only through libraries.

6 Discussed by Bernard Lonergan in "Sacralization and Secularization." He takes this material from Christopher Dawson, *The Age of the Gods* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933) pp. 11-13.

7 Deuteronomy 4:5. Translation by Robert Alter in his *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), p. 912.

8 See 2 Cor 15: 35-49 and Eph 3: 19-20. See also 1 Jn 3:2: "What we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed."

9 From Hopkins' sonnet, "God's Grandeur": readily available online. Most fiction and poetry rely on the assumption that there's more to *everything* than meets the eye—far more than science could ever explain.

10 In 1120, Peter Abelard published his highly influential, "Yes and No" (*Sic et Non*) in which he presented 158 statements from the Bible and church authorities that clearly contradict one another. This alerted Christian theologians to the need for some system by which apparent contradictions could be reconciled. Aquinas found this system in Aristotle.

11 Notice the word *assent* here. It is what we do when we *assert* our yes or no, true or false. It does not require that a commitment to any specific understanding or description of *how* the assertions work or *what* they must look like.

12 Catholics were taught that good works "merit" heaven, and shortfalls require a stay in Purgatory. But since the Pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth, he oversees a "treasury

of merit" from which he can grant an "indulgence" for an early parole. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (Viking: 2009) 555-56.

13 Protestant Huguenots vs. Catholics in France (1562-1598); (2) Spanish Catholics vs. members of the Church of England (1567-1588); (3) German Lutherans vs. Catholics (1618-1648).

14 In Nietzsche's *The Anti-Christ*, he asks, "what is good?" He answers, "Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. What is evil? Whatever springs from weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power increases—that weakness is overcome." Cited by Peter Wehner, "The Theology of Donald Trump," *New York Times*, Opinion Section, July 5, 2016. See <http://nyti.ms/29ePgqW>

15 As a formal discipline, hermeneutics first emerged among Jews and Christians as rules for how to understand biblical texts: Literally? Allegorically? Morally? Mystically? Modern hermeneutics relies on the method of *author-engagement*. It focuses more widely on any texts whatsoever, as well as on the acts of interpretation that occur in the person reading the texts (called the "exegete"). For example, the exegete must (a) understand the *objects* the author has in mind, (b) the meaning of the *words* used by the author, (c) the *mindset* and purposes of the author, and (d) the author's *effect* on the exegete's own assumptions and perspectives.

16 Percentages of committed atheists today is lower than many expect: 4.4 in the US; 6.7 in Western Europe; 11.3 in Asia; and 1.1 in Islamic nations. See Luke Timothy Johnson's review of Rodney Stark's *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World is more Religious than Ever*, *Commonweal* (February 10, 2017), 36.

17 This list is drawn from Bernard Lonergan, "The Scope of Renewal," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, *op. cit.* pp. 80, 127, 285. Many of these developments were triggered by Emmanuel Kant (d. 1781) who challenged the assumption that human reason can know reality at all.

18 See Eric Voegelin, "Gospel and Culture," *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. D.G. Miller & D.Y. Hadidian (Pittsburg Theological Seminary, 1971) 59-101. See also his 5-volume work, *Order and History*. Volumes 14-18 of the *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (University of Missouri Press, 1989-2007).

19 See, among Tillich's many works, *The Courage to Be* (Yale University Press, 2000).

20 See Rahner's *Hearer of the Word*. Trans. Joseph Donceel (New York, 1994).

21 See, for example, "2. Self-Transcendence," in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), pp. 104-105.

22 "With whom am I in love?" is the question as formulated by Bernard Lonergan. See "Lecture 3: Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'" in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan v 17* (University of Toronto Press, 2004) at the subsection entitled "The Question of God," 205-206.