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ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY BETWEEN
CHRISTIANITY AND HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY

A Reply to Jan-Olav Henriksen

Spirituality is obeying God's will
AGREE, 7 %
Responses to questionnaire administered in the holistic milieu, Kendal, UK

Spirituality is obeying God's will
AGREE, 57 %
Responses to questionnaire administered in the congregational domain, Kendal
(data available at www.kendalproject.org.uk)

An hour on a Sunday morning – it's not enough to deal with your self-esteem issues is it?
Comment by a Unitarian who is also an active participant in the holistic milieu, Kendal

In the last issue of Tidsskrift for kirke, religion og samfunn Jan-Olav Henriksen (2005) offers an insightful reflection on The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). With an unerring sense of direction he homes in on the point of greatest contention in the theoretical scheme which structures the book and its findings.

Henriksen questions our hard-and-fast distinction between «life-as religion» (exemplified by Christianity) and «subjective-life spirituality» (exemplified by holistic spirituality), and is not convinced that it will hold up to empirical or theoretical scrutiny. «The issue,» he writes, «is how the relationship to experience shapes a clear-cut distinction that makes it possible to delineate more clearly between (traditional forms of) religion and more recently developed forms of spirituality» (2005:75–76). If we are drawing a distinction between religion understood as socially-conditioned experience, and spirituality understood as «pure», pre-social, individual experience, then it will not stand up to scrutiny. We are guilty of adopting the standpoint of holistic spirituality itself rather than a more «research-based perspective» (2005:76–77).

I am grateful to Henriksen for pressing this point, for if such a generous and careful reader can take this to be our meaning, we have not been clear enough in the way
we explained the distinction between religion and spirituality. In this response I shall
defend the distinction by saying more about its theoretical and empirical basis. I will
do so not by contrasting the pure subjective experiences of spirituality with the social
imperatives of religion, but by contrasting the significantly different «feeling rules» or
socio-emotional profiles of the two spheres. Although more work on this topic is
needed, I hope to do enough to show that our distinction can withstand the criticisms
levelled against it.

The contrasting emotional worlds of congregational Christianity
and holistic spirituality

Henriksen's comments allow me to see now how the term «subjective-life» spirituality,
as contrasted with «life-as» religion, might lend itself to an interpretation which
identifies spirituality with personal experience and religion with conformity to impers-
sonal rules and roles, so I need to stress that that was never our intention. To have
claimed that traditional religion is devoid of emotional and experiential significance
would be to fly in the face of some of the intellectual heroes of The Spiritual Revolu-
tion. For Durkheim, for example, collective religion has even more to do with deeply-
felt experience than individual «magic», for only the social group is capable of gener-
ating the collective effervescence which is the ground of the sacred. And for Clifford
Geertz, all forms of religion must be understood first and foremost as systems of
symbols which act «to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and
motivations…» (1966:4).

To identify spirituality as uniquely rooted in pristine personal experience would
also be to fly in the face of much recent work on the emotions which shows them to
be irreducibly social, not only in the sense that they are inter-subjective, but in the
sense that different societies have different «feeling rules», which shape even what we
take to be our most inward and deeply personal feelings (Hochschild 1983; Lupton
1998; Solomon 1993). If one puts together these two bodies of reflection, one is
drawn to the conclusion that (a) all forms of religion and spirituality have to do with
emotional experience and (b) such experience is never entirely personal or pre-social.
Since we accept this conclusion, we accept that the distinction between religion and
spirituality is not between something which has to do with «moods and motivations»
and something which does not, but between two very different sets of feeling rules,
two very different socio-emotional worlds. It is here that the real distinction between
life-as religion and subjective-life spirituality is to be found.

Beginning with the churches and chapels in Kendal, which we found to be illustra-
tive of life-as religion, an emotional profile must focus on the emotions generated by
the Sunday worship services, since these continue to constitute the core activity of
each congregation. Although it is dangerous to generalise too much about the intern-
ally differentiated life of the congregational domain in Kendal (which comprised 25
different churches and chapels in 2001), our research did suggest that within all con-
gregations the most characteristic emotions are those which take the individual «out
of him or herself, shifting focus to something beyond one's everyday concerns. In Robert Solomon's (1993) helpful classification of the emotions, the worship service scripts mainly «outer-directed» (rather than «inner-directed» or «bipolar») emotions, which focus on that which is outside the self.

The key emotion of the Sunday service is that of worship, both in terms of what individuals actually experience and in terms of what the service is designed to produce. Whilst it may sound surprising to classify worship as an emotion, I am persuaded by Solomon's (1993) arguments for so doing, which rest on his observation that all emotions are cognitive and, as such, have criteria, a focus, an object, make a judgement/evaluation, and are normally associated with an ideology and/or mythology. Thus Solomon observes that «the number of emotions is all but indeterminate, depending on how finely one is willing to carve up and individuate the small distinctions between similar emotions… there are no 'basic' emotions, only those emotions which are prevalent – in word or in fact – in a particular society» (224–225). For Solomon worship is one of the characteristic emotions of modern western societies (305–308). It combines awe, admiration, and fear at the contemplation of an infinite power and goodness in relation to which the individual self appears small and vulnerable. It is encouraged by a variety of means working on many of the senses. Imposing architecture, stirring music, the words of the liturgy, the ritual actions and dress of the priest, the sanctification of the elements – all these features and more contribute to generate the emotion of worship.

Also important right across the congregational domain is the emotion of love in its more «outer-directed» manifestations (for love may also be self-referential or bipolar/relational). Since love implies greater equality between the person feeling the emotion and the object of love than does worship, it is felt towards the divine largely insofar as the divine is made human – which can be the case in some contemporary evangelical understandings of Jesus as friend or romantic companion. It is more likely, however, that a worshipful emotion will be directed toward God, even if it is called «love», and that the feelings of love which characterise congregational worship are directed toward other human beings. In sermons, hymns and prayers, considerable emphasis is given to God's love for humans, as well as to human duty to love one another. Thus participants may experience love towards one another (the congregation), and perhaps more widely – towards «the neighbour» in general. Again, this love is legitimated, encouraged and stoked by the feeling rules expressed by way of the many media used in the service. It may be felt so intensely that it influences attitudes and behaviours towards others throughout the week ahead.

Although these «peak» emotions of congregational life are outer-directed, the worship service may also generate more inner-directed emotions. Of these the feeling of guilt and sinfulness is the most important, the most clearly scripted, and a natural partner of the emotion of worship (the greater the object of worship, the lesser the worshipper – and vice versa). Guilt is an inner-directed emotion which judges the self inferior, and which may focus on particular misdeeds or on a generalised sense of wrongfulness. Confessional prayers, certain sorts of hymns (e.g. many by Charles Wesley focusing on the unworthiness of the redeemed sinner), recollection of sins, and repeated liturgical declarations of human sinfulness help generate the emotion. So too
does strong emphasis on the suffering of God in Christ, necessitated by our sinfulness. The emotion of guilt may be closely linked to that of gratitude: gratitude that such a high price has been paid to redeem the believer and cancel his or her sins. Indeed, the emotional narrative of many church services deliberately moves from confession of sin through to redemption of sin, and thus from guilt, sorrow and fear through to gratitude, joy, love and peace. (Although fear – of condemnation and damnation – seems to have been a common and scripted emotion in many forms of revivalist Protestantism in the past, it was not something we found to be prominent in the congregations of Kendal today.)

We found these «common emotions» of congregational life to be differently distributed and differently emphasised in different congregations, often quite significantly so. In congregations of humanity (liberal mainline), for example, the emotions of worship and love were most emphasised, with high liturgical congregations (e.g. high Anglican) placing more emphasis on worship, and «lower» less sacramental, congregations (e.g. Methodist and United Reformed) placing more emphasis on love. Congregations of difference (Biblical-evangelical) placed more emphasis than any other type of congregation on guilt and sinfulness, to such an extent that the emotional tone of at least one congregation was of sorrow, grief and contrition (with a few individuals weeping openly whilst listening to readings and sermons on the redeeming work of Christ). These evangelical congregations were differentiated from those that were moving in a more charismatic direction (congregations of experiential difference) by the fact that the latter had an emotional tone was not of sorrow but of ecstatic joy – a joy whose object is sometimes the greatness of God and the magnificence of his redeeming work, but which is most often called forth by the belief that one has been released of one's burdens since giving one's life to Jesus, and that has now acquired a personal friend, guide and saviour. Although charismatic services would often begin with melancholy choruses reflecting on human sinfulness, they would always move onto a crescendo of joy and celebration. Such highly expressive joy would be entirely out of place within congregations of humanity as well as congregations of difference and was, indeed, the point of tension and differentiation between different congregational orientations – more important, indeed, than doctrinal differences. The real point of differentiation was not the emotion of joy per se, but the expression of any emotion in a way which seemed to be «out of control» (both individual and group control) and – to its critics – «self-indulgent», i.e. having more to do with personal gratification than with the glorification of God and the consideration of others.

What we observe in the congregational domain then is not an absence of deeply-felt experience, nor a desire to suppress emotions, but a selective cultivation of emotions along particular feeling-lines. In many ways Galatians 6.22–24 still serves as a good summary of the ideal socio-emotional profile of congregational life, characterised by: «love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control…those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires». As illuminating historical studies by Sorabji (2000) and Dixon (2003) show, Christianity rejected the Stoic ideal of apatheia (at least in this life) in favour of an ideal of moderated and controlled emotions. Its theological tradition differenti-
ates between acceptable emotions («sentiments») which are to be cultivated, and un-
acceptable emotions («passions») which are to be reined in and ultimately defeated. The emotions – «passions» – it finds most unacceptable are anger and hatred; sexual
desire, pleasure and gratification; self-assertion and pride. I would argue that it also
harbours strongly negative attitudes towards personal contentment and happiness
(which is different from God- and other-centred joy). Whilst all of these emotions,
except anger and hatred, have a tendency to inner-directed rather than outer-directed,
what really unites them all is the way in which they empower an individualist, person-
ally bounded, subjectivity by making individual self-esteem and contentment a matter
of importance second to none. In doing so, they carry the danger of disempowering
God – and the church – and substituting a subjective-individualist ethic and world-
view for a God-centred and/or community-centred one.

It is at this point that we can begin to see the contrast between the congregational
domain and the holistic milieu come into view, and the real basis for the sharp differ-
entiation which we draw in *The Spiritual Revolution* emerge. Henriksen is quite cor-
rect in saying that this difference cannot possibly lie in the fact that the subjective-life
spirituality of the holistic milieu encourages individuals to feel and express their emo-
tions, whilst the life-as religion of the congregational domain demands that they sup-
press their emotions in order to live by way of imposed roles and rules. The genuine
difference, rather, lies in the fact that each sphere works has a different set of feeling
rules, a different socio-emotional profile (both ideal and real), and a different emo-
tional logic. Thus each sphere also produces, performs and validates different modes
of selfhood and relationality/community.

Whereas the characteristic social form of the congregational domain is the Sunday
worship service, the characteristic formation of the holistic milieu is the small group
or the one-to-one consultation. The setting is likely to be cosy, intimate and comfort-
able rather than grand, imposing and awe-inspiring. And the central, peak experience
which the milieu seeks to foster, and from which it derives its identity, is that of
«wellbeing» (a word/notion which holistic spirituality virtually claims as its own).
Whereas the love and worship of congregational services are outer-directed, wellbeing
is a feeling-state focused not on an external object but on subjective life itself. Its
meaning and significance is left open, for it is something which individuals are told
they must experience for themselves, with holistic practices being presented as the
means by which individuals may achieve wellbeing. Even though it is a state to which
individuals are said to have a natural inheritance, it may be necessary to help them
remove the «blockages» which stand in the way of wellbeing. Thus wellbeing is pre-
sented as the feeling state which one enjoys when one is truly oneself, and without
untoward (uncontrollable) emotional disturbance. «The more you get in touch with
your true nature, the more peace and love you have», comments an aroma therapist in
Kendal, whilst a Shiatsu brochure says that, «When our energy is moving freely, we
experience overall wellbeing and vitality» (Heelas and Woodhead 2005:29). Unlike
worship, an emotion focused on the greatness of God in which the individual is taken
out of him or herself, wellbeing is thus based around an individual who is settled
deeply in him or herself, and who feels him or herself to be in a state of harmony – in
their relation of body, mind, and spirit, and in their relation with other people and things.

Like the most characteristic emotions of the congregational domain, the feeling of wellbeing is something which may be very deeply-felt, but which is not expected to be expressed in a dramatic or uncontrolled fashion. As with most congregational emotions, it has more to do with self-control and «centredness» than ecstasy, even though the centre is inward rather than outward. Such an emotion is scripted by various means within the holistic milieu, including the use of gentle and soothing music, fluid and gentle bodily movements (as in Tai Chi), the use of touch, and the «modelling» of the emotion by practitioners and group leaders who behave in ways which present calmness, reflectiveness and self-control. The intention is to turn emotion and affect inward, promoting self-awareness rather than outer-focus.

However, even though the feeling rules of holistic spirituality are aimed around the production of wellbeing, this is often approached by way of attention to feelings of «ill being». For many of the holistic practices we observed, the starting point was attentiveness to one's own inner feeling states, negative as much as positive. Various settings and techniques were used to generate self-awareness, with silence, stillness and meditation being one starting point, and attention to the body being another. By such means, and with the support and encouragement of a practitioner or fellow group members, the individual is required to get in touch with, become aware of, and be entirely honest about their feelings and emotions – whether of pain, frustration, sadness, anger, hostility, depression, jealousy, fatigue, boredom or whatever. In this context nothing is deemed unacceptable, and open expression of any emotion is encouraged (in some settings, as in rebirthing, the expression of weeping, screaming and other out-of-control emotions is encouraged). The body is used as a means to give access to deeper emotional disturbances, and emotions and sensations are treated as reliable indicators of the state of health of «the soul».

Thus holistic participants are often expected, and scripted, to experience painful emotions before they can «move on» to a state of wellbeing. It is believed that it is only by bringing all emotions to «the surface» – i.e. experiencing and publically expressing them – that they can be recognised, owned, and dealt with. In contrast to Christianity (except, in some respects, the personal testimony narrative of some forms of evangelicalism, and – in a very different way – the private confessional of Catholicism), all emotions are welcomed into the open, even if the ultimate intention is to transform and leave them behind. Ultimately the more personally and socially disruptive emotions will be gently discouraged. As a Tai Chi practitioner puts it, it is necessary to, «embrace things like our anger – love it, and by doing so gradually transform it» (Heelas and Woodhead 2005:29). By managing one's emotions in this way, a sense of self-esteem, self-control and self-responsibility encouraged. «Rebirthing sessions develop awareness, sensitivity and self-confidence», says an advertising flier, «a developing sense of physical safety, of trust in relationships» (Heelas and Woodhead 2005:29).

Thus holistic spirituality shares with most congregational Christianity the aim of cultivating an emotionally-controlled selfhood, but centres this selfhood not on others nor on God, but on the embodied self. In working on the body, it works on body-
image, self-image and subjectivity. This self is performed into being in an intimate social context by a set of feeling rules which privilege individual feeling itself, above all the feeling of emotional awareness and self-control called «wellbeing». Thus holistic practices generate a «core self» which is one's own possession rather than the possession of others, and under one's own control rather than the control of others and other forces. To be a subject is to be someone who has a body and feelings, is aware of them, takes responsibility for them, and «manages» them successfully. It is to be a bounded emotional self, which is open to impressions from outside, but able to respond to them appropriately. Practitioners' attentiveness to the bodily and the emotional states of a clients or group member play a vital role in the construction of this sense of bounded individual selfhood. By acting as facilitator of self-awareness rather than an authoritative mentor the practitioner authorises a self which is rooted and grounded in the emotions of that unique self itself. By being recognised, valued and discursively represented, the embodied emotional self comes into being.

Despite an important commonality – in the production of self-controlled selfhood – this description of the emotional logics of the holistic milieu and the congregational domain thus highlights the profound differences between them. The difference is made even clearer in the way they assess one another. Participants in the holistic milieu were less likely to be condemnatory of Christianity than Christians were of holistic spirituality, with 20 % of holistic questionnaire respondents «critical of Christianity» and 49 % saying that although they were not a committed Christian they «supported Christian values». When they did make criticisms these tended to be along the lines of the quote at the start of this paper – that Christianity was simply not able to offer them what they were seeking in terms of self-knowledge and self-esteem. By contrast, active Christians were more likely to be suspicious of or negative about holistic spirituality, with many members of evangelical and evangelical-charismatic churches and some members of a Roman Catholic congregation the most critical. Only 6.4 % of the congregational members who responded to our questionnaire agreed that «alternative or complementary non-church forms of spirituality have things to teach Christianity» whilst 60 % of the charismatic-evangelicals surveyed thought such spirituality «unacceptable for Christians». Most telling of all – both in Kendal and in Christian critique more generally – is the common criticism of holistic spirituality as «selfish», «narcissistic», «all about me, me, me», and incapable of meaningful social or political action. From within a Christian emotional world such criticisms have a natural logic, since holistic spirituality does believe that the cultivation of one's own emotional wellbeing is first priority, and that love consists in helping others to do the same. By contrast, Christian understandings of love emphasise self-sacrificial concern for the being and wellbeing of others, with maxims like «God first, neighbour second, self last», «what's in the middle of sin? T» and «JOY – Jesus, Others, You» being regularly cited by congregational members. There is also a striking and revealing contrast in the amount of attention paid to bodies and bodily wellbeing between the two worlds.

Thus it is not surprising that we found such a small number of individuals actively involved in both holistic spirituality and congregational Christianity in Kendal, with only around 4 % of congregational members having participated in the previous week.
in holistic activities they regarded as having spiritual or religious significance (2005:31–32). Follow-up interviews carried out with these «boundary crossers» revealed that they were nearly all Unitarians or high Anglicans who have distanced themselves from more widespread congregational beliefs and attitudes, have an immanent conception of God, and tend to use the liturgy as an aid to contemplative, inner-directed, practice.

Social contexts and consequences of the contrast

This sketch of some of the key feeling rules of congregational religion and holistic spirituality should indicate my wholehearted agreement with Henriksen's observation that participants are socialised into both, and that even the most apparently personal experiences are made possible by particular social practices and settings.

In *The Spiritual Revolution* we suggest that the last decade or so has seen holistic spirituality become more integrated into the general culture than Christianity, and illustrate this point by reference to a number of generally-accessible cultural spheres, including those of education, nursing, and purchasing culture (2005:68–73). We discuss the explosion of content related to holistic spirituality in newspapers and magazines, and the rapid growth in publishing of books addressing themes in holistic spirituality. One result which I note in my own teaching is that terms in common usage in the world of holistic spirituality like «chi», «prana» and «chakra» are now more familiar to younger generations in countries like the UK than «resurrection», «grace» or «sacrament». As we note in *The Spiritual Revolution*, such familiarity is not uniform across the culture, but is particularly characteristic of certain social groups, most notably women who participate in the health and beauty industry (which has appropriated a good deal of the cultural apparatus of holistic spirituality), and those involved in the world of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Whilst the effect may be to make subjective-life spirituality appear to require much less by way of socialisation than Christianity and hence to be more «natural» and «instinctive», I agree with Henriksen that this is only an appearance.

I also agree with Henriksen that the holistic milieu – and the feeling rules it engenders – may be helpfully viewed as strategies for coping with some of the opportunities, costs and contradictions of late capitalism, and I think he is right that we «might have benefited» from doing more analysis of this topic in *The Spiritual Revolution* (Henriksen 2005:80). Both Henriksen and I seem to share an unfashionably Marxist orientation, for like him I have recently argued elsewhere (Woodhead 2006) that it is necessary to focus upon the nature and costs of labour in the contemporary workplace, and the forms of identity it sustains, if we are to arrive at an adequate explanation of the rise of contemporary spirituality and women's disproportionate involvement within it (in Kendal 80 % of those involved were female, compared with 60 % in the congregational domain). Henriksen takes a parallel track in arguing that we must focus on the way in which the current labour market restricts humanly-meaningful work and the time needed to perform and reflect upon it. He views the holistic milieu
as offering compensation, both for those who work within it and those who become clients (to the advantage of «capital»). His theory is supported by a number of interviews we carried out in Kendal with holistic practitioners who had left increasingly privatised institutions like the health service because they felt that their ability to care well for their patients and colleagues had become impossible in that context.

Where holistic practitioners rather than clients are concerned, however, they seem to be attracted to the milieu not because of a frustrated desire to care, so much as a frustrated desire to receive care. Thus the rise of holistic spirituality is, I believe, explicable only within the context of what Hochschild (2003) identifies as the «crisis of care» facing contemporary western societies. Though some sociology would not recognise it as such, this is also an issue of work, since care is one of the primary forms of work required by any society (it is only persuasive definitions with a gender bias, cultural taken-for-grantedness, and lack of economic reward that render care invisible as work). Traditionally the work of care, chiefly care for the bodily and emotional wellbeing of others, has been carried out by women, and despite women's entrance into the workplace since the 1960s this continues to be the case (Hochschild 2003a). Much care work is unpaid (e.g. housework and childcare), whilst care work within the marketplace tends to have low social and economic reward (e.g. nursing, care of the elderly, nannying), or to be required but overlooked and unrewarded (e.g. secretaries' work of care for their bosses).

Those who enter the holistic milieu as paid practitioners, or trainers, have found a way of dealing with the crisis of care by entering a social sphere shaped by women where women's traditional skills of bodily and emotional care are recognised, valued and rewarded. There is time to do the job well, without «managers» dictating efficiency, and there is satisfaction to be gained from skilful work with appreciative clients, and often from a supportive network of other practitioners as well. Equally, those who enter the holistic milieu as clients are often dealing with self-esteem and self-control issues brought on by trying to care for others (at work and/or at home) in a way which is insufficiently recognised and rewarded. Many of our interviewees spoke of «loosing themselves» in care for others, of not knowing who they were any more, of low self-esteem, and of crises precipitated by having a life journey based around care for male partners, or by the departure for college of teenage children. In the holistic milieu they enter a sphere where care is directed to them, and their bodies and emotions become the centre of attention, perhaps for the first time. The emotional coaching and reconstruction they are offered helps them to recognise and pay attention to their own bodily-emotional complex – in other words to turn their own «feminine» skills which have previously been other-directed towards themselves. Thus they become their own managers and carers, gaining greater self-esteem and control over their lives in the process.

This harnessing of women's work of care for the care of women (who now have sufficient economic means to pay for it, for we are speaking of middle class women), undoubtedly has the effect of making women not only more selective in where and how they supply their own work of care, more conserving of personal energies, more self-directed and self-controlled, and hence more effective competitors with men in the modern marketplace. Despite, or rather by way of, its emotional focus, holistic
coaching constructs selfhood characterised by choice, mobility, control and freedom, which is responsible, ideally empowered, authentic and in control. This is very similar to contemporary models of masculinity which are also shaped, in part, though workplace demands. What is new is that although such masculinity has generally been sustained behind the scenes by the unpaid care work of wives, women are now harnessing that care – and seeking the selfhood which builds upon it – for themselves. Hence Henriksen is right that holistic care serves the workplace well, just as women's traditional work of unpaid care did in the past. The crisis will come, Hochschild suggests, when and if women begin to withdraw their labour of care except where it is given proper recognition and economic reward. The widespread social anxiety about «selfish» and «narcissistic» women who «pamper» themselves with alternative spirituality (rather than attending to others) is undoubtedly a symptom of this well-founded anxiety.

As Henriksen points out, the Christianity – and Christian socio-emotions – have also been shaped by prevailing modes of production, though the decisive shaping was at an earlier phase in the development of capitalism. Contemporary churches are still in hock to the legacy of their time of greatest success, i.e. the period which saw the rise and triumph of male-dominated industrial capitalism. Throughout the nineteenth century and right up to the 1950s, congregational feeling rules seem to have offered vital support to the modes of highly sex-differentiated labour which capitalism required. On the masculine side, the emotional world of Christianity supported a paternalism which pertained in the heavens, the home, and the workplace. Even men who were not in positions of power in the workplace could exercise power over their own families, and in both spheres the feeling rules of Christianity played a key role in shaping the exercise of power in a way that was gentle, loving and protective. The cultivation of the emotion of worship towards the divine Father helped both men and women accept this authoritative exercise of paternal power, and know what to expect from it. On the feminine side, Christianity supported the cultivation of a self-sacrificial love which asked for no reward, and which provided the love and care which made the harsh conditions of life and labour faced by men and women bearable. Men were better able to survive in the «iron cage» because they were physically and emotionally sustained at home by the unpaid care work of women. Christianity's feeling rules discouraged either sex from desiring too much in the way of comfort, happiness or contentment in this life, and disallowed the anger which might foster rebellion against the status quo.

Though I am unable to gather the evidence here, I believe that in the wake of the 1960s this «paternalistic covenant» collapsed, undermining the Christian feeling rules which sustained it and were sustained by it. The covenant offered both employees and wives security in return for loyalty and dedication. Such paternalism has been replaced by more casual contracts, both in the public and private spheres. Whereas the former was covenental and hierarchical, the latter is more egalitarian and contractual (though with its own costs and risks for the weaker partner). For Christianity the effect is to render its feeling rules, still largely premised on paternal hierarchy, less relevant to contemporary identities – resulting in a collapse in support (Brown 2000; Woodhead 2005). In striving to adapt, churches have bifurcated into those which still
posit separate roles for men and women and those which embrace a more egalitarian vision. Some of the former still exercise considerable appeal for men and women who support the offer of paternal protection in exchange for feminine care – a constituency which is much larger in the USA and in parts of the southern hemisphere than in Europe. By contrast «liberal» churches re-focus their emotional lives around universal, humanitarian, care and compassion. Many contemporary westerners value this emphasis, are pleased that their churches keep it alive, but because it is not directly relevant to their working and domestic lives, they support it only from a distance. They want the churches to cultivate humanitarian love and care, may be willing to pay for this work, but only participate in it fleetingly – at Christmas, funerals, weddings, civic events (Davie 2000). Here again the contemporary crisis of care becomes evident: care is something we value and something we want, but something fewer and fewer people are willing to offer for inadequate reward and recognition. By refocusing care around women's desires to cultivate greater self-esteem, self-development, and self-control, holistic spirituality carves out an important niche for itself in the contemporary sacred marketplace.

Scope of the contrast

A final suggestion made by Henriksen is that our assertion of a sharp distinction between life-as religion and subjective-life spirituality in The Spiritual Revolution may be time- and context-dependent. It may hold good in Kendal, UK, at the turn of the second millennium, but are we right to assume that holds good for other places and other times?

In part this is an empirical question, and to settle it we simply need more research. Whilst I remain convinced that the emotional worlds of the vast majority of congregations, wherever in the world, will be found to be different from those of holistic spirituality in many of the ways I have described, I agree with Henriksen that there are a number of Christian sites in which a rapprochement is possible. Building on his suggestions, I think some of the most likely are:

– Monopolistic churches, state churches, churches embedded into a welfare system, and other churches which for various reasons have the freedom to represent the whole of society and cater to its needs, e.g. Church of Sweden.
– Sites which are marginal to congregational life, outside clerical control, but with their own resource base, and with a clientele drawn from the general population, e.g. hospital chaplaincies, university chaplaincies, retreat centres.
– Christian institutions controlled by as well as catering for women, including those with a tradition of care work, e.g. convents.
– Independent congregations in a free market of religious provision which caters for a diverse clientele e.g. congregations in large cities on the seaboards of the USA.

In part Henriksen's question concerning the scope of the distinction between religion and spirituality is also, as he indicates, theological. For if there is a fundamental logical/metaphysical incompatibility between the worldviews of holistic spirituality and
Christianity, that surely means that the current distinction between the two is more than merely a matter of historical contingency. This issue also requires more research, perhaps by historical theologians. It seems to me that recent theological approaches to the topic, most notably the Vatican's critique of «New Age» as a Gnostic heresy which tries to turn man into God, are significantly off-beam. I would characterise the theology/metaphysics of much contemporary holistic spirituality (which has strong internal consistency) in rather different terms. It takes a benign view of the universe, understanding it as the manifestation of an «energy» which is a creative force of life, harmony and order. Far from trying to make themselves into God, human beings are understood as small centres/manifestations of this universal energy, which emerge from it and dissolve back into it. As such, their «natural» state is fundamentally good. The goal of life and recipe of happiness is simply to trust one's natural instincts and emotions, and thus allow one's natural «chi» to flow freely. In doing so, one realises one's true potential, discovers one's place in the harmony and order of things, and is able to recognise all other forms of life as having the same value and dignity. Once all humans come to live like this, a state of true «wholeness» will pertain and an age of harmonious love and co-operation will dawn.

Theologically then, the question of Christian-holistic compatibility turns upon whether there are elements within the Christian tradition which can support a similar sort of vision. The sticking point, especially for the Protestant-Augustinian tradition will surely be a doctrine of original sin which holds that the entire created order, including human nature, must be repudiated in order to «put on» a new life whose centre of gravity is not self but God. The really interesting question for investigation, it seems to me, is whether Christian mystical traditions (Eastern as well as Western), and/or the scholastic humanism of the Roman Catholic church and some liberal Protestantism, support alternative theological anthropologies which have points of genuine rapprochement with the anthropological stance of holistic spirituality.

**Conclusion**

I have tried to show that the distinction between religion and spirituality which structures *The Spiritual Revolution* should not be understood as a distinction between experience and rules, but between different sets of feeling rules. Each has its own logic, and each supports a distinct mode of selfhood and social relation. Each shapes emotional life in ways which allow different social groups to meet, and control, the demands of the modern workplace. Where holistic spirituality is currently successful is in making use of women's traditional work of emotional and bodily care, traditionally utilised to sustain forms of masculine identity appropriate to the world of work, to enable women to develop forms of selfhood and emotional life appropriate to the competing demands of home and workplace.
REFERENCES


