The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity

James C. Russell

THE GERMANIZATION OF EARLY MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

This page intentionally left blank

The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity

A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation

James C. Russell

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
New York Oxford

Oxford University Press

Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

First published in 1994 by Oxford University Press, Inc.,
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

First issued as an Oxford University Press paperback, 1996.

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
James C. Russell
The Germanization of early medieval Christianity:
a sociohistorical approach to religious transformation / James C. Russell
p. cm. Revision of the author's thesis (Ph.D.)—Fordham University 1990.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-19-507696-6; ISBN 0-19-510466-8 (pbk.)
1. Church history—primitive and early church, ca. 30–600.
2. Sociology, Christian—History—Early Church, ca. 30–600.
3. Germanic tribes—Religion. 4. Europe—Church history. I. Title.
BR203.R87 1994 274.3'02—dc20 92-13182

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

To My Family

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

On June 30, 1988, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre consecrated four priests of his Catholic traditionalist Society of Saint Pius X as bishops, thus triggering a schism within the Roman Catholic Church. Although the theological origins of Lefebvre's disagreement with the Vatican may be traced to his rejection of certain documents promulgated at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965),[1] a significant degree of his popular support may be attributed to resentment toward the many liturgical changes which followed the Council. The most visible of these was the replacement of the traditional Latin Mass with the *Novus Ordo Missae*.

On a religiocultural level, this schism may be considered the end of the image of the Roman Catholic Church as a popular expression of European Christianity. For at least the preceding millennium, from the coronation of the Saxon King Otto I as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII on February 2, 962, to the opening of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII on October 11, 1962, the religiocultural orientation of popular Roman Catholicism was predominantly European and largely Germanic.[2] An example of a popular pre–Vatican II Eurocentric view of Christianity has been provided by Avery Dulles in his study *The Catholicity of the Church,* where he cites Hilaire Belloc's affirmation, "The Faith is Europe. And Europe is the Faith."[3]

[1] The primary Vatican II documents rejected by Lefebvre were *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) and *Dignitatis Humanae Personae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom). Additional information regarding the events and documents preceding the schism may be found in *L'Osservatore romano,* English edition, June 27, 1988 and in François Laisney, *Archbishop Lefebvre and the Vatican* (Kansas City, Mo.: Angelus Press, 1989).

[2] An interesting Russian Orthodox parallel is discussed in Ernest Gordon, "A Thousand Years of Caesaropapism or the Triumph of the Christian Faith," *The World & I,* 3:8 (1988): 681–98.

[3] Hilaire Belloc, *Europe and the Faith* (London: Constable, 1920), p. 331; quoted in Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 75. Dulles comments: "Originally centred in the Mediterranean countries, Catholic Christianity later found its primary home in Europe. . . . As a plea to Europeans to recover the religious roots of their former unity, this slogan could be defended. Christianity was in possession as the religion of Europeans, and the Christianity that had united Europe was Catholic. But what about people of different stock? Did Belloc mean to imply that to become Christian they would first have to be

The claim of "catholicity" by the Roman Catholic Church and of universality by Christianity in general is central to the current inquiry. Primarily to advance the perception of its universality, the post–Vatican II Church has sought to shed its predominantly Western, European image. This modification may be witnessed in the Church's ecumenical relationships with representatives of non-European Christianity and non-Christian religions, in its appointment of more non-European prelates, in its canonization of more non-European saints, and in its virtual elimination of Germanic elements from liturgical rites.[4] The increased involvement of the Church in social-justice issues may also reflect an attempt to distance itself from the aristocratic character of a Germanized medieval Church and an attempt to recapture the religiocultural orientation of the early Church of the apostolic and patristic eras. One reason for this current direction may be that the present era, with its densely populated cosmopolitan areas that contain sizable, alienated underclasses, has a social environment somewhat more akin to the urbanized Roman Empire of late antiquity than to the rural-agrarian-warrior societies of early medieval Germanic Europe.

At the same time that this "de-Europeanization" of the Church is being pursued, however, the popularity of Catholic traditionalist movements among persons of European descent suggests that the Germanic elements within Christianity have not lost their appeal. It is hoped that, in addition to contributing to the study of religious transformation, the present inquiry may be of some value to those engaged in pastoral and missiological activities, as well as those pondering the forces involved in the development of their own personal religious identity.

The present book is a revised version of my 1990 doctoral dissertation in historical theology at Fordham University. I wish to thank my mentor, Richard F. Smith, S.J., for his guidance, patience, and kindness. To my readers, Louis B. Pascoe, S.J., and Jose Pereira, and my examiners, Ewert H. Cousins and Joseph F. Mitros, S.J., I owe much useful advice. To those who have read the manuscript, including G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., C. Scott Littleton, Edward Peters, J. N. Hillgarth, David Harry Miller, Peter Brown, Detlev Brand, Paul Math, and John Van Engen, I am also grateful. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the late Robert E. McNally, S.J., who encouraged me to pursue my interest in the Germanic impact on early

Europeanized? If so, his thinking was too particularist." Dulles's thoughts on the catholicity of the Church in the future are the focus of his article "The Emerging World Church: A Theological Reflection," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 39 (1984): 1–12.

[4] It is noteworthy and perhaps ironic that much of the impetus for this movement came from contemporary Germanic Council Fathers at the Second Vatican Council (e.g., Cardinals Bea, Suenens, Döpfner, Frings, Alfrink, and König) and from Germanic theological consultants (e.g., Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger, Aloys Grillmeier, Otto Semmelroth, and Edward Schillebeeckx). Additional information on the influence of the Germanic Fathers at the Council may be found in Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: The Unknown Council* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967).

medieval Christianity. The staff of the Fordham University Library also deserves acknowledgment for their many years of professional service.

I wish to thank Robert A. Markus, Patrick J. Geary, G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., James Muldoon, Solomon A. Nigosian, Andrew P. Porter, and Edward C. Hobbs for providing me with pre-publication or unpublished versions of their work. To Cynthia A. Read, Paul Schlotthauer, and Peter Ohlin, my editors at Oxford University Press, I owe assistance and encouragement. My wife, Patricia, and my daughters, Megan and Marie, have patiently endured many sacrifices of time and pleasure to accommodate the completion of this book. Finally, to my parents, Roy and Agnes Russell, and to my aunts, Marie Wilson and Emilie Prucha, I am indebted for the continued support of my academic endeavors over the years.

White Plains, New York J. C. R.
June 1993

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

This page intentionally left blank

Abbreviations

AHR	*American Historical Review*
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JIES	*Journal of Indo-European Studies*
JL	*Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
AA	*Auctores Antiquissimi*
Ep. sel.	*Epistolae selectae*
SRM	*Scriptorum rerum Merowingicarum*
SSrG	*Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina.* J.-P. Migne, ed. (Paris, 1844–)
RBPH	*Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*
SCH	Studies in Church History
Settimane	*Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1954–)
____ 7 (1960)	*Le chiesi nei regni dell'Europa occidentale e i loro rapporti con Roma all'800.*
____ 14 (1967)	*La conversione al Cristianesimo nell'Europa dell'alto medioevo.*
____ 36 (1989)	*Santi e demoni nell'alto medioevo occidentale.*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*

This page intentionally left blank

THE GERMANIZATION OF EARLY MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

This inquiry applies recent observations from the behavioral sciences, medieval history, the history of religions, and Indo-European studies, as well as from what has become known as "metahistory,"[1] to the pivotal religious transformation which occurred as a result of the encounter of the Germanic peoples with Christianity. This transformation is examined primarily from the entrance of the Visigoths into the Eastern Roman Empire in 376 until the death of St. Boniface in 754. It is proposed that Christianization efforts among the Germanic peoples resulted in a substantial Germanization of Christianity.

This inquiry is divided into two parts. Part I develops a model of religious interaction between folk-religious societies and universal religions. Part II applies this model to the encounter of the Germanic peoples with Christianity.

In order to provide a basic framework for the study of the Germanization process, Part I focuses on the development of a general model of religious transformation for folk-religious societies that encounter universal religious movements offering this-worldly socialization and other-worldly salvation. Prominent in this model is the association of pre-Christian

[1] A somewhat similar approach is advanced by Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred* (New York: Free Press, 1976), who describes his general, social-scientific theory of religion as "an attempt to integrate anthropological, historical, psychological, and sociological approaches to religion into one conceptual scheme" (p. ix). Herein, "metahistory" or "megahistory" refers to the effort to establish and systematically apply a paradigm to major historical developments. The metahistorical approach has been encouraged by Katherine Fischer Drew in the opening remarks of her presidential address to the 1987 annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America, published as "Another Look at the Origins of the Middle Ages: A Reassessment of the Role of the Germanic Kingdoms," *Speculum* 62:4 (1987): 803–12: "Megahistory has not had much appeal to medieval historians, especially in recent years. Most of us are rather tightly bound to a limited body of source material, and we have been able to concentrate on topics of limited scope, expecting to become familiar with all the literature on this subject and to produce an answer to our questions or an interpretation of our problems that takes into account all the relevant evidence. In the process I think that many of us have lost sight of the larger world or even just the world of the Western Roman Empire" (p. 803). The dangers of generalization, superficiality, and pedantry in writing metahistory are aptly discussed by Christopher Dawson, "The Problem of Metahistory," *The Dynamics of World History,* ed. John J. Mulloy (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), pp. 287–93, who nevertheless concludes that "metahistory is not the enemy of true history but its guide and its friend, provided that it is good metahistory" (p. 293).

Germanic social structure, religiosity, and ideology with that of other folk-religious Indo-European societies. Thus relevant insights from the study of the transformation of Indo-European Greek and Roman religiosity have been incorporated.

With all due concern for the dangers of overgeneralization, the fundamental postulate derived from this model is that the world-view of the Indo-European Greek, Roman, and Germanic religions was essentially folk-centered and "world-accepting," whereas the world-view of the Eastern mystery religions and early Christianity was essentially soteriological and eschatological, hence "world-rejecting." Equally significant, and related to this distinction, is the assertion that the social structure of the Germanic peoples at the time of their encounter with Christianity reflected a high level of group solidarity, while the urban social environment in which early Christianity flourished was one in which alienation and normlessness or anomie prevailed. It is therefore emphasized that a primary appeal of the early Christian Church was its fulfillment of the need for socialization and its promise of otherworldly salvation.

The Greco-Roman Christianization scenario in which a religious community fulfills the socioreligious aspirations of a highly anomic society would be dysfunctional if applied to a predominantly rural, warrior, pastoral-agricultural society with a high level of group solidarity. For Christianity to be accepted by the Germanic peoples, it was necessary that it be perceived as responsive to the heroic, religiopolitical, and magicoreligious orientation of the Germanic world-view. A religion which did not appear to be concerned with fundamental military, agricultural, and personal matters could not hope to gain acceptance among the Germanic peoples, since the pre-Christian Germanic religiosity already provided adequate responses to these matters. An unintended result of implementing a missionary policy which accommodated Germanic concerns was the Germanization of early medieval Christianity. Although this accommodation apparently was originally intended to have been merely a temporary and regional transition to a more thorough doctrinal and ethical acceptance of Christianity, three factors altered this expectation: an underestimation of the vitality of the pre-Christian Germanic world-view; an overestimation of available instructional resources; and the future religious influence of the Ottonian emperors (962–1002), Henry II (1002–1022), and Henry III (1039–1056) on the papacy and the Church in general. In his study of the Germanic influence on early medieval Christianity, Josef A. Jungmann has concluded that "from the 10th century onwards, the cultural heritage which had accumulated in the Carolingian North, streamed in ever increasing volume into Italy and became the cultural standard in Rome itself," and from there, eventually "became normative for all the West."[2]

[2] Josef A. Jungmann, "The Defeat of Teutonic Arianism and the Revolution in Religious Culture in the Early Middle Ages," in *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), p. 19.

Part II of this inquiry applies the model of religious transformation just discussed to the sociohistorical record of the encounter of the various continental Germanic peoples with Christian missionary efforts. The role of Arianism among the Eastern Germanic peoples and Roman Christianity among the Franks, as well as the methodologies of the Iro-Frankish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries, is examined. Evidence of Christianization and Germanization is identified and analyzed throughout. Outlines of individual chapters follow. Part I comprises chapters 1 through 4, while Part II comprises chapters 5 through 7.

Chapter 1 introduces the basic problems related to Christianization efforts. Examples of cultural conflict encountered during contemporary Christianization efforts are provided and discussed. Basic sociological concepts are introduced and the premises of a model of religious transformation are established.

An inquiry into Christianization efforts among the Germanic peoples and the Germanization of Christianity requires a clear sense of the concepts of religious conversion, Christianization, and Germanization, as well as a working definition of Christianity itself. For this reason, chapter 2 provides a semantic evaluation of the concept of religious conversion, and a historiographical overview of the concept of Christianization. This is followed by the establishment of a reference model of Christianity with which the process of Germanization may be compared. Several examples of the Germanization of Christianity are also provided.

Since pre-Christian Germanic religiosity differed fundamentally from early, pre-Constantinian Christianity, and since reliable source materials that might provide insights into Germano-Christian interaction, particularly from the perspective of the Germanic peoples, are lacking, contributions from the fields of the sociology of religion, the history of religions, and Indo-European studies[3] have been sought to elucidate the nature of the religious transformation which occurred. Chapter 3 establishes the sociohistorical and religious *Sitz im Leben* of the Germanic encounter with Christianity within the larger context of the encounter of an Indo-European folk religiosity with a non-Indo-European, universalist, salvation religion. Indo-European religiosity is generally characterized herein as "folk-

[3] The current state of Indo-European studies is greatly indebted to Georges Dumézil, who devoted his career to the comparison of the ideological structures of the linguistically-related cultures of India, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Celto-Germanic Europe, and found them to be remarkably similar. An English-language introduction to his work by his foremost American exponent is, C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of George Dumézil,* 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Mircea Eliade, in *A History of Religious Ideas,* vol. 1, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), incorporated much of Dumézil's Indo-European vision. While Dumézil's focus had originally been on pre-Christian cultures, his observations have been applied to the medieval West by his colleague at the Collège de France, Georges Duby, in *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer, with a foreword by Thomas N. Bisson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

religious" and "world-accepting," while Christianity and its Hellenistic and Judaic antecedents are generally characterized as "world-rejecting" religions of universal salvation. The historical and socioreligious developments in Greek and Roman religion which evolved into the socioreligious environment of early Christianity are examined from the perspective of a "de-Indo-Europeanization" of the traditional world-accepting Greek and Roman Indo-European folk religiosity. This de-Indo-Europeanization is believed to have occurred in response to a decline in group solidarity and a rise in anomie, which in turn are attributed chiefly to urbanization, territorial expansion, prolonged internal conflicts, invasion, and social heterogenization.

Chapter 4 compares the sociopsychological influences on Roman and Germanic society at the times of their respective encounters with Christianity. The prominent appeal of socialization within the early Christian community and its promise of eternal salvation at a time of general Roman social destabilization is established, and is contrasted with the general absence of the need for such socially stabilizing features in Germanic society, owing to its high level of group solidarity. Contemporary medical evidence is introduced to support a relationship between social destabilization and stress, as well as a relationship between socially induced stress and the appeal of religious socialization.

The Germanic influence on early medieval Christianity may be found in the development of a dramatic-representational interpretation of Scripture and liturgy in which the historical drama of the Incarnation, the Passion, and the lives of the saints came to overshadow the soteriological-eschatological essence of early Christianity. Germanic influence also figured strongly in the development of local proprietary churches or *Eigenkirchen,* chivalry, feudalism, the Crusade ideology, and the cult of relics. However, rather than merely document and discuss the results of Germanization, Part II seeks to more fully explicate the underlying process of religious transformation which precipitated and accompanied these developments.

Chapter 5 provides an evaluation of pre-Christian Germanic religiosity from an Indo-European perspective. After examining the social structure, law codes, and epic literature of the Germanic peoples, it is asserted that for Christianity to have been accepted by the Germanic peoples, it had to be reinterpreted in a primarily heroic and magicoreligious fashion that would appeal to military and agricultural concerns. A general perception of Christianity as primarily a cult dedicated to the most powerful god, however, tended to obscure the soteriological, ethical, and communal dimensions of Christianity which had been preeminent in early Christianity. The anomic socioreligious conditions prevalent in the declining Roman Empire are contrasted with the high level of internal group solidarity which existed among the Germanic peoples during their encounter with Christianity between 376 and 754. The maintenance of this intragroup

solidarity through lengthy periods of migration appears primarily due to the operation of the *comitatus* institution and to strong interlocking kinship and community bonds, as well as to a religiosity that provided political reinforcement. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the influence of a society's world-view on its religious development and how this influence may have operated in the encounter of the Germanic peoples with Christianity.

Applying the religious, historical, and behavioral insights gleaned from the preceding chapters to the historical record, chapter 6 presents a sociohistorical analysis of the processes of Germanization and Christianization among the continental Germanic peoples from their entrance into the Eastern Roman Empire in 376 until the Irish missions of the seventh century. The role of Arian Christianity in enhancing a sense of identity and solidarity among the Arian Germanic peoples is discussed, as well as the role of the Gallo-Roman episcopacy in the Christianization of the Franks and in the Germanization of Christianity. The status of catechetical instruction among the Germanic peoples is noted. Also, notice is taken of the metaphysical distinctions between Germanic and Christian notions of time.

Chapter 7 continues the sociohistorical analysis begun in chapter 6 through the period of the Anglo-Saxon missions. The origin and development of the Anglo-Saxon missionary methodology is discussed here with an emphasis on the policy of accommodation. Also, the significance of secular political involvement in the Christianization and Germanization processes is evaluated. It appears that the association of Roman Christianity with Frankish political dominion, while providing Anglo-Saxon missionaries with protection, also served to hinder their Christianization efforts among non-Frankish Germanic peoples. In perceiving the centrality of divine power in Germanic religiosity, the missionaries sought to prove that the power of Christ surpassed that of the local deities, as St. Boniface sought to demonstrate when he chopped down an oak tree dedicated to Thor at Geismar in Hesse. Such emphasis on the superior intercessory power of the Christian God in earthly affairs, and particularly military conflicts, appears to have contributed toward a perception of Christianity as a powerful magicoreligious cult, and thus advanced the Germanization of Christianity. Given the substantial inherent disparity between Germanic and Christian world-views, a missionary policy that encouraged the temporary accommodation of Christianity to a heroic, religiopolitical, magicoreligious, world-accepting Germanic world-view appears to have been developed as a more effective approach than straightforward preaching or coercion. Although the accommodation of the Germanic world-view was originally intended to have been a temporary measure, the general lack of post-baptismal religious instruction, complemented by the vitality of Germanic religiosity, resulted in the Germanization of Christianity.

This page intentionally left blank

I

TOWARD A MODEL OF RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

This page intentionally left blank

1

Transformations of Christianity

Each historical instance of an attempt to Christianize a society is unique and dependent upon many factors. Yet in most instances, the fundamental human equation is the same: an individual or small group of highly motivated advocates of Christianity seek to transform the beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior[1] of a target society. Whether the advocates of Christianity are Anglo-Saxon missionaries in eighth-century Frisia or American missionaries in present-day Uganda, the primary long-term problem is usually one of cultural confrontation.[2]

Distinguishing between that which is essential to Christianity and that which may be modified or omitted to advance the process of Christianization, has always been a major problem for the missionary. When Christian essentials are considered to include substantial elements of the proselytizing party's culture, the potential for alienating the target society is high. When Christian essentials are minimalized, and indigenous cultural and religious customs readily incorporated, the likelihood of religious syncretism increases.

Christian missionaries are thus compelled to take a path between the twin opposing dangers of cultural alienation and religious syncretism. They tacitly presume that such a path exists. However, there is another school of thought on the subject of Christianization—one which challenges the universal or "catholic" character of the Church and of Christianity. Philosophically, its origins may be found in the life and writings of the Emperor

[1] The totality of the belief-attitude-value-behavior construct of a society will hereinafter be referred to as its BAVB.

[2] Some of the eighth-century problems are discussed in David Keep, "Cultural Conflicts in the Missions of St. Boniface," in Stuart Mews, ed., *Religion and National Identity,* SCH, no. 18 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), pp. 47–57.

Julian (d. 363), and for that reason it may be referred to as "Julianism."[3] Julian believed that each ethnic and national group had its own unique origin, character, and god, and that it was ill-advised to attempt to modify the cultural and religious traditions derived from this organic uniqueness. Although Julian's view has not been frequently articulated throughout history,[4] and is based upon Julian's personal social observations and religious speculation, Julianism anticipates some contemporary concerns regarding the portability of religion.[5]

The Christianization process is significant from sociological, anthropological, and psychological perspectives. Accounts of Christian missionary efforts constitute some of the earliest and best-documented sources of attempted group BAVB modification.[6] Attempts at Christianization are more unusual than instances of acculturation in which an immigrant group assimilates the cultural characteristics of a much larger host group. In the

[3] Recent biographies of Julian include Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), and Constance Head, *The Emperor Julian* (Boston: Twayne, 1976). An important critique of Browning's work is Peter Brown, "The Last Pagan Emperor: Robert Browning's 'The Emperor Julian,' " in Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 83–102. An evaluation of Julian's religious attitudes may be found in Polymia Athanassiadi-Fowden's analysis of the surviving fragments of his *Contra Galilaeos,* in *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 161–71.

[4] One who did articulate Julian's position was Oswald Spengler, who stated: "Each Culture possesses its own standards, the validity of which begins and ends with it. There is no general morale of humanity. It follows that there is not and cannot be any 'conversion' in the deeper sense" (*The Decline of the West,* trans. Charles Francis Atkinson, vol. 2 [New York: Knopf, 1926], p. 345). Spengler's explanation of what does occur in certain instances of religiocultural interaction may be found in ch. 7 of vol. 1, which is entitled "Historic Pseudomorphoses."

[5] See, for example, John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, ed., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1987). A critique of the pluralistic view is presented by Peter C. Phan, "Are There 'Saviors' for Other Peoples? A Discussion of the Problem of the Universal Significance and Uniqueness of Jesus Christ," in idem, ed., *Christianity and the Wider Ecumenism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990), pp. 163–80. Also of interest in this volume is Joseph H. Fichter, "Christianity as a World Minority," pp. 59–72, who hypothesizes that "the status of Christianity declines with the declining status of the Western nations, while simultaneously the non-Christians of the world are growing in prestige. The religious superiority of Christianity was closely allied with the secular superiority of Western civilization. . . . The importance of Christianity has declined with the decreasing power and influence of the Christian nations" (p. 61). Within Europe today there remain challenges to Christianity that seek the restoration of a pre-Christian religiosity. Representative of these challenges are Sigrid Hunke, *Europas eigene Religion: Der Glaube der Ketzer* (Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lübbe Verlag, 1983); and Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981). An American critique of the effects of Europe's Christianization may be found in Lawrence Brown, *The Might of the West* (New York: Joseph J. Binns, 1963). A recent overview of contemporary Western "neopaganism" from a Christian perspective may be found in Thomas Molnar, *The Pagan Temptation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987).

[6] The value of these accounts is emphasized by Jon Miller, "Missions, Social Change, and Resistance to Authority: Notes Toward an Understanding of the Relative Autonomy of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32:1 (1993): 29–50.

Christianization process, it is usually a smaller proselytizing group which seeks to transform the religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices, as well as various cultural characteristics, of the host group. The methodologies of the Christian missionaries should therefore be significant to anyone interested in studying the modification of societal BAVB.[7]

Christianization is neither a process of organic evolution within a society nor of cultural assimilation, although each of these functions is usually operative and may influence the success of Christianization efforts. When a fundamentally non-Christian society is targeted for Christianization, the process is usually led by a small cadre of external agents who ultimately seek to transform not only the society's religious attitudes, but also the underlying ethos and world-view[8] of the society. However, the extent of the Christianizing party's intentions is not always apparent to members of the targeted society. Whether such radical change is possible or even desirable merits serious consideration, for the ethos and world-view of a society constitute the essence of its identity.

Yves M.-J. Congar has suggested that religious conversion may involve a number of factors that reach beyond religion itself:

> It entails an ensemble of psychological and moral changes and of intellectual and affective motivations. Factors dependent upon a milieu may also have an influence, especially an inhibitive one, as can be seen in studies of the psychology of European working classes or of conversions in mission countries, in areas subject to Islam, etc. Certain cases, known to the author of this article, would even lead one to ask whether a certain atavism does not sometimes influence conversions from one religious sect

[7] Some of the most interesting American research in this area has been done by Milton Rokeach, and Sandra Ball-Rokeach. For an introduction to their BAVB model, and an account of its experimental application to the controversial area of television programming, see Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, Milton Rokeach, and Joel W. Grube, *The Great American Values Test: Influencing Behavior and Belief Through Television* (New York: Free Press, 1984).

[8] The terms "ethos" and "world-view" are used here in the sense described by Clifford Geertz in "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) pp. 126–41. Geertz states: "In recent anthropological discussion the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term 'ethos,' while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated by the term 'world view.' A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their world-view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order. . . . The tendency to synthesize world view and ethos at some level, if not logically necessary, is at least empirically coercive, if it is not philosophically justified, it is at least pragmatically universal" (pp. 126–27). The background of world-view analysis is discussed in "World Views and National Souls," in W. Warren Wagar, *World Views: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), pp. 1–14, while contemporary American and Indian world-views are compared in Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), pp. 355–69. See also "The Structure of Worldviews," in Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* (New York: Scribner's, 1983), pp. 54–61.